

KING OF TONGA VISITS SGI PRESIDENT THE KING OF TONGA AND SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA DISCUSS WHAT KIND OF LEADERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE COMING CENTURY.

On Nov. 13, SGI President Ikeda received His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV and Her Majesty Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho of the Kingdom of Tonga at the Seikyo Shimbun building in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. The royal couple's entourage included Tongan Deputy Prime Minister S. Langi Kavaliku and Labor, Commerce, Industries and Tourism Minister Hulioo Tukikolongahau Paunga.

The royal guests from the South Pacific were warmly welcomed by Soka Gakkai youth division members and visiting SGI members from 55 countries and territories, who were in Japan on a training course.

During the visit, the King of Tonga bestowed a certificate on the SGI leader naming him Honorary Professor of Education of the Tonga Institute of Education and the Tonga Institute of Science and Technology, in recognition of his "outstanding service to peace and education for all peoples of the Pacific." The two institutes are both teacher-training colleges and nearly all Tongan elementary school teachers have graduated from one or other of these schools. Many students from countries throughout the Pacific Rim who aspire to become educators also come to Tonga to study at these institutes.

Delivering the award citation, Deputy Prime Minister Kavaliku, who is concurrently Tonga's minister of education, introduced President Ikeda's achievements, including his founding of numerous educational institutions such as Soka University and his wide-ranging activities for peace. King Taufa'ahau Tupou then personally presented the certificate to the SGI leader, who expressed his deepest appreciation for the honor bestowed upon him.

Also during the visit, an honorary doctorate from Soka University and the SGI Humanitarian Award were bestowed on King Taufa'ahau Tupou. After Soka University Board of Directors Chairman Hiroshi Okayasu introduced the achievements of the Tongan monarch, President Ikeda presented King Taufa'ahau Tupou with both the honorary degree and the award. In addition, the Soka Women's College Award of Highest Honor was conferred upon Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho.

In his acceptance speech, King Taufa'ahau Tupou said he and Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho were happy to be in Japan and share "a moment of history with you and Mrs. Ikeda amidst the sea of smiling faces and the warm welcome of the Soka Gakkai International and Soka University people." He added that the people of Tonga look forward to developing closer ties of cooperation and sharing with the SGI and Soka University.

King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, 82, is a graduate of the University of Sydney in Australia. He served as Tonga's minister of education and prime minister before acceding to the throne in 1965, after the death of his mother Queen Salote Tupou III. For more than five decades, he has worked to promote education, culture and economic development in Tonga. King Taufa'ahau Tupou is well known for his steadfast commitment to justice and peace.



Following the presentation ceremonies, SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda held a discussion with King Taufa'ahau Tupou and Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho. Mr. Ikeda hailed the Tongan

monarch as a “great king of culture and peace,” and expressed his delight at welcoming him into the Soka University community as the holder of an honorary doctorate. President Ikeda also took this opportunity to express his sincere appreciation for the honorary citizenship he and Mrs. Ikeda received from Tonga in February of this year, and to say how humbled he was to have a beach on Tonga’s Tongatapu Island named after him in July.

The SGI president said he believes there will be a strong demand in the coming century for leaders who have a genuine love and appreciation for culture and the arts. And he suggested that King Taufa’ahau Tupou — who is also an accomplished composer — would serve as a fine model for future leaders. Mr. Ikeda expressed the hope that further cultural exchange would be developed between Japan and Tonga.

Asked by the SGI leader for a message for the youth and for the sake of posterity, King Taufa’ahau Tupou said that, first and foremost, he hoped young people would study hard, learn from both tradition and the wisdom of the past, and strive to accumulate knowledge. He hoped they would put all they acquire through such efforts to good use for the future.

Turning to the subject of the responsibility of politicians, King Taufa’ahau Tupou stated his conviction that those in public office must never forget for a single moment that they are there to serve the people, nor must they ever think of exploiting their position for personal gain. Education is of paramount importance in raising politicians who are worthy of the people’s trust, he said.

A discussion of the history of Tonga then ensued. The SGI leader said he concurred with King Taufa’ahau Tupou’s assertion that unless we correctly understand what happened in the past, we cannot make sense of the present. Relating that his mentor Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, often urged young people to study history, Mr. Ikeda maintained that a correct grasp of history is an indispensable requirement for leaders, and in this respect also, education has a vital role to play.

In the course of their discussion, King Taufa’ahau Tupou said he wanted to engrave a quote from the SGI leader on a Monument to the New Millennium that he will build in Tonga. The purpose of the monument, which will also be engraved with a quote from the king and pay tribute to the friendship between the SGI and Tonga, is designed to serve as a lasting record of the king’s meeting with the SGI leader for the sake of future generations. The monument will be in the shape of a sundial, inspired by the fact that Tonga, situated just west of the international date line, will be the first place in the world to greet the dawn of 2001. Plans call for the monument, which will be constructed on grounds belonging to the royal family, to be unveiled on May 3, 2001.