

AROUND THE SGI

SGI-Philippine Young Men Participate in Reforestation Activity

The SGI-Philippine young men's division members have been recognized for their environmental preservation activities in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao Island, the Philippines. In recent years, the Philippine government's Department of Environment and Natural Resources has designated June as Environment Month. In support of this program, in June 1999, SGI-Philippines young men on Mindanao began planting trees in the Malasag hills. Every two months, dozens of young men take a 30-minute drive into the Malasag hills to plant 400 saplings, including oaks and mahoganies, in a two-hectare area assigned to them by the government. The site is close to the SGI-Philippines Cagayan de Oro Community Center. On Jan. 27 of this year, 40 members participated in this activity, their 10th effort since the start of the reforestation project.

Book Fair Featuring Daisaku Ikeda and Jin Yong Opens in Macao

On March 2, the "Quest for a Bright New Century — Jin Yong and Daisaku Ikeda's Joint Book Fair" opened at the UNESCO Center of Macao. Hong Kong literary scholar Jin Yong attended the opening ceremony as special guest together with 200 representatives from every sector of society, including Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Chui Sai On. Mr. Jin Yong delivered a lecture following a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The book fair commemorates the 3rd anniversary of the publication of *Quest for a Bright New Century*, a dialogue between Mr. Jin and Mr. Ikeda, and celebrates Macao's third anniversary this year as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The book fair will be held at the UNESCO Center through March 4, then travels to various venues through the end of March, including the University of Macao. The Cultural Institute, the Education and Youth Affairs Department of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the University of Macao, the *Macao Daily* and SGI-Macao are sponsoring the book fair.

Singapore Soka Association Raises Money for Gujarat Quake Victims

The Singapore Soka Association raised approximately \$30,500 for victims of the recent disastrous quake in Gujarat State, India. A fundraiser was launched Feb. 4 at a World Peace Prayer meeting at the SSA headquarters and continued through Feb. 8. The funds were entrusted to Mr. Lim Theam Poh, manager of the International Services Division of the Singapore Red Cross Society. The donation supports the organization's international relief efforts being carried out in Gujarat.

Italian Translation of 'Spiritual Lessons of the 20th Century' Introduced in Salzana City, Italy

On Feb. 15, the Italian translation of *Spiritual Lessons of the 20th Century* (working English title), a dialogue between former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and SGI President Ikeda was introduced in Salzana, Italy. In the book, the two men explore various topics, such as politics and philosophy, in search of universal humanistic values for advancing civilization in the 21st century. The guest speakers at the ceremony were Liguria Province Environment Councilor Pietro Lazagna and former La Spezia City

council member and deputy culture department head Mario Farina. Mr. Lazagna, a renowned education, peace and human rights activist, told the audience that the serious discussions for the cause of humanity's advancement between the two authors appealed to the human conscience. He said that Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Ikeda both advocated the idea of global citizenship to prevent political subterfuge, radicalism and human massacre, and that he wholeheartedly supported their view.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia Opens New Center in Inpoh City

On Feb. 18, Soka Gakkai Malaysia opened the SGM Perak Culture Center in Inpoh, Perak State, Malaysia. Approximately 1,200 attended the opening, including local SGM members. Among the guests were Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy, and Dato'Ong Ka Chuan and Mr. Ho Cheng Wang, both members of the Perak State assembly and executive council. SGI President Ikeda sent a message to the opening, expressing his hopes that the "cultural palace" would be a hub for cultural exchanges in the community. Mr. Chan congratulated the SGM members and asked that they worked to spread the "wisdom of Soka" from their new cultural center.

Courtesy of SOKANET (www.sokagakkai.or.jp)