

**SGI-TONGA FRIENDSHIP EXPANDS
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The Tonga-SGI Friendship Monument was dedicated on July 4 to commemorate the historic meeting between SGI President Ikeda and His Majesty, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in Japan in November 2000. This was, incidentally, the King's 83rd birthday, a national holiday in Tonga. An SGI-USA delegation led by General Director Danny Nagashima was on hand for the event.

SGI-USA Vice General Director Gary Murie designed the monument. The inspiration for the monument, which includes a sundial, came from the ancient Tongan solar time keeper, the Tongan Triathlon (*Ha'amonga*), and the fact that Tonga is known as the "Land Where Time Begins," the first land west of the international dateline.

During the unveiling celebration, a lengthy poem written by President Ikeda to the King was presented and the Royal Tongan Peace Builders Award presented from the King to President Ikeda. In this way, their mutual respect and friendship was continued.

On July 5, General Director Nagashima and others met with the King for more than an hour. The King expressed his fond memories of meeting with President Ikeda and the kindness extended to him at that time. In the course of their conversation, the King commented on the linkage between Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President Ikeda, saying: "Men who advocate peace and equality all too often experience violent opposition at the hands of people who cannot believe in those things. Those who oppose equality amongst groups actually oppose justice. They believe that violence is the only means to achieve their goals."

When asked what he thought Tonga's greatest export to the world is, he replied, "The friendship and kindness of the Tongan people." Through these interactions, bonds of trust and friendship with a far distant land and people were nurtured; bonds strengthening the fabric of the world community.