

SGI President Begins Tour of China
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Just three months after visiting Hong Kong, SGI President Ikeda began a visit to China this week. Mr. Ikeda, who has long offered his hand to the Chinese in friendship — even when others have not — is visiting this country at the invitation of the China-Japan Friendship Association and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

At a banquet to welcome the SGI leader on May 11, President Zhao Yunjun of the Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries lauded the Soka Gakkai's great contribution to hastening the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan and the conclusion of the China–Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty in the 1970s. He also acknowledged the Soka Gakkai's steadfast opposition to militarism during World War II and expressed his hope that their two organizations would continue to work together for peace throughout Asia and the rest of the world.

On May 12, Shanghai University conferred an honorary professorship on Mr. Ikeda. The university stands on a site once reduced to rubble by an invading Japanese Imperial Army. The chancellor, Qian Weichang, said that he shared the firm belief that exchange not only on a government level but between the ordinary citizens of both countries is vital in building deeper understanding and friendship, an undertaking that the SGI leader has long stressed and actively pursued.

In his address, Chancellor Qian said how happy he was, as someone who had once worked for Zhou Enlai, to share the late premier's memory with Mr. Ikeda, who had also nurtured a deep bond of friendship with him. The Chinese and Japanese people he said, must try to put the tragic history inflicted by Japanese militarism behind them and create a new history of friendship throughout future ages.

In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda expressed his joy at China's dynamic development and increasingly active role on the world stage. The Chinese writer Lu Xun, he noted, had declared that the appearance of a leader of unwavering conviction in the face of all obstacles and criticisms enables the people to display their inner brilliance. Mr. Ikeda commented that the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, shared the same conviction. Makiguchi held fast to his beliefs, fiercely opposing Japanese militarism and declaring that Japan was making a fundamental error in invading China, Mr. Ikeda said.

Having now become an honorary member of Shanghai University, the SGI leader said he was resolved to work energetically together with the faculty and student body toward the realization of a century of humanity, a goal that had also been the cherished aspiration of Premier Zhou.

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