

SGI President Interviewed for Documentary on Zhou Enlai
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To celebrate the centennial next year of the birth of the late, great Chinese premier, Zhou Enlai (1898–1976), Chinese television is producing a biographical documentary. The program will feature reminiscences and anecdotes of those who shared close or meaningful ties with Zhou Enlai.

SGI President Ikeda was asked to contribute to the program and taped an interview this afternoon with the producer, Zhou Erjun, who is related to the late Chinese leader.

On camera, Mr. Ikeda recounted how he met with the premier in Beijing on the evening of Dec. 5, 1974 — a little more than a year before his death. At a farewell banquet on his second China visit, the SGI leader recollected, he was called aside by the late president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, Liao Changzhi, who unexpectedly informed him that Mr. Zhou was waiting to see him. They then made their way by car to the hospital where the ailing premier was being treated.

Despite his illness, the 76-year-old premier was up and dressed to greet the young Soka Gakkai president three decades his junior with a firm handshake. The two had regularly exchanged messages for 10 years through mutual friends and associates.

Moving on to China's development and the international arena, Mr. Zhou voiced his belief that the last 25 years of this century would be of vital importance to China and that the countries of the world should strive to advance henceforth in a spirit of mutual respect and support. He also expressed a strong desire to see an early conclusion to negotiations on the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty — an agreement that was finally signed four years later in 1978.

Lauding the broad overview of history and world affairs, the penetrating insight into the human condition, and the phenomenal grasp of facts and figures possessed by this gentle yet iron-willed leader who selflessly devoted his life to serving the people, Mr. Ikeda compared Zhou Enlai to a latter-day Chuko K'ung-ming, the brilliant and heroic prime minister who appears in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In a world where all too many leaders pursue only their own interests, the SGI president declared, Premier Zhou's dedication to the people is truly an exemplary model for leaders everywhere, embodying as he did the bodhisattva spirit.

President Ikeda said that Premier Zhou showed great generosity to Japan by declining to seek reparations after World War II, believing that the Japanese people were just as much victims of Japanese militarism as the Chinese and that to seek reparations would only inflict further suffering. For this reason, Mr. Ikeda asserted, the Japanese must never forget the profound debt they owe Zhou Enlai and the Chinese people.

Mr. Ikeda also said that he enjoyed numerous meetings with the premier's wife, Madame Deng Yingchao. On one occasion, Madame Deng said with regret that she and her husband had never had their photo taken together under the two cherry trees in their garden at home before one tree withered and died. Today, at Soka University, a cherry tree has been dedicated to Zhou Enlai, and another pair of cherry trees dedicated to the Chinese couple grow beautifully together.

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