

SGI President Donates 1,000 Books to Aliso Viejo Library
By DAVE McNEILL, Managing Editor
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To support Soka University of America's efforts to be a resource for the community, SGI President Ikeda is donating 1,000 books to Aliso Viejo, Calif., home to the university's main campus, now being built. As founder of the university, Mr. Ikeda is personally donating \$10,000 a year for five years to the Friends of Aliso Viejo Library, which will disburse the funds to the soon-to-be-completed library.

University officials presented a check on July 26 during the intermission of a public concert at one of the city's parks. In his message, Mr. Ikeda wrote:

"As a youth maturing during the horrendous war years in Japan, I took great consolation and satisfaction in my friendship with many people of good heart through their writings. As a young man, my development of character and understanding of the world around me was greatly assisted and molded through the works of profound Western thinkers such as Hugo, Tolstoy, Emerson and Kant, together, of course, with the rich history of Eastern thought. With these thoughts in mind, and praying for the humanistic development of the youth in Aliso Viejo, I offer this gift."

This was the second check to be presented, the first being in May 1996. Each \$10,000 gift will cover the acquisition, shipping and handling of 200 books.

The donation is somewhat unusual, according to Carin Sung, senior administrative librarian and branch manager, in that Mr. Ikeda left it up to Ms. Sung to personally choose those books that will, as Mr. Ikeda wrote, "most directly create value for you and your fellow community members."

"We really appreciate the freedom this kind of gift gives us," Ms. Sung says. "And, on behalf of the community, I want to thank Mr. Ikeda for thinking of us."

Eric Hauber, Soka University's vice president of academic affairs, says the donation fits with the message he wants to share with all Aliso Viejo residents: that Soka University is their university. "Soka University is not just located in Aliso Viejo," Mr. Hauber says. "It is part of Aliso Viejo."

Considering the SGI's promotion of values and peace, many of the books Ms. Sung plans to acquire with the gift deal with philosophy, social science, religion, history and literature. One item in the planned purchase is the six-volume *Reader's Advisor* — the "librarian's bible," Ms. Sung says — which is a standard reference on the best books in print.

Also included are a set of *Great Books* and many titles for children, such as *Peace Begins With You*, *My Wish for Tomorrow: Words and Pictures From Around the World* and *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America*.

The 15,000-square-foot library will have an initial collection of 80,000 volumes, growing eventually to 120,000. The collection will be determined in part by demographics. "Whenever I go to Aliso Viejo I see parents with young children, so much of the library's collection will be devoted to those people," Ms. Sung says. Leisure World, a senior community, is also nearby, she notes, so the library will carry many large-print books. "And since many Aliso Viejo citizens are commuters, we will also have books on tape," she adds.

The library's grand opening will be Dec. 13, and the books purchased with Mr. Ikeda's donation will then be on display.

With reporting by Diane Stiles.

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