

NEWSBRIEFS

SOUTH CAROLINA

Capital Chapter Holds Open House

COLUMBIA, S.C., Nov. 16 — Capital Chapter welcomed more than 30 guests from the community today to participate in “Friends For Peace.” Everyone who entered was welcomed warmly with a smile and were offered a “Friends for Peace” sticker. People were free to walk around and read the displays of SGI President Ikeda conducting dialogue with world leaders, see the awards and accomplishments of the organization, and watch a videotape that described the mission of the SGI.

The climax of the open house began with the reading of an essay written by Denise Thomas, one of Columbia Chapter’s newest members, about nuclear weapons and their impact on our environment. Also on the agenda was a presentation from the Department of Health and Environmental Control, which urged each individual to become a “champion of the environment.” There was also an open dialogue session that began with the question “What kind of action can you take to promote world peace?” Children and adults stood up to share their ideas.

— *DENISE THOMAS and PEGGY WADE*

CHINA

SGI President Meets Chinese Premier Li Peng

TOKYO, Nov. 13 — President Ikeda met with Chinese Premier Li Peng at the State Guesthouse today. During the meeting, the first in five years, the two discussed friendly China–Japan relations and the importance of cultural and grass-roots exchange. The SGI leader stressed that exchanges beyond the realm of politics and business are invaluable. A constant flow of grass-roots exchange creates constant waves of friendship, he said. If we compare politics to a ship and economic ties to the ship’s cargo, President Ikeda suggested, then the waves of friendship propel the ship forward. And the force behind those waves is cultural exchange.

JAPAN

SGI President Reunites With Dr. Bryan Wilson

TOKYO, Nov. 10 — President Ikeda met today with Dr. Bryan Wilson, professor emeritus of Britain’s All Souls College, Oxford University. The SGI leader asked Dr. Wilson why clergy in various religions tend to grow decadent over time. Such behavior, the British sociologist said, can arise when any group, not only clergy, gains a monopoly. Once they savor the heady taste of power, he said, they can’t give it up.

Citing the example of the Catholic Church, he pointed out that various rituals and concepts such as Purgatory only came into existence around the 9th century. They were the invention of clergy who sought to make their believers’ faith dependent on them, he said. Mr. Ikeda said that this predilection can be seen in Buddhism as well.

On the subject of education, Mr. Ikeda cited author H.G. Wells, who asserted that human

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history has become a contest between catastrophe and education, and philosopher Bertrand Russell, who insisted that education is the key to a new world. The SGI leader said that education is the only means by which we can create a genuine age of humanity. The British sociologist agreed that the future of the world depends on education, adding that it is never too late nor too time-consuming to focus on education.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

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