

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SGI!
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The SGI's 25th anniversary is celebrated at the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference, held on Guam, Jan. 21–23.

What better way to commemorate the SGI's 25th anniversary than a peace conference! What better way for our organization to start the new century! And what better place to hold this conference than Guam, the site of the SGI's founding in 1975.

The 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference, cosponsored by the University of Guam, Soka University of America and the SGI-USA, echoed the World Peace Conference that gave birth to our organization 25 years ago; it brought people of diverse backgrounds together to discuss new initiatives for peace. Government leaders, high chiefs and SGI-USA representatives from many Pacific Islands nations attended the conference, held Jan. 21–23 at various locations on Guam.

At the University of Guam on Jan. 21, delegates discussed “What Unique Role Can the Pacific Islands Play in Creating Global Peace?” These islands had the unfortunate history during World War II of becoming the stage on which superpowers attacked one another. “Who would have thought that a place so untouched and distant would be the very fields that foreign warring nations in World War II would fight so long and hard to capture?” asked John Gonzalez, executive assistant to the governor of the Commonwealth for the Northern Marianas Islands.

Many voices at the New Millennium Peace Conference called for the islands to be so united for peace that war can never again touch their shores. Many also mentioned that the islands should set an example for the rest of the world to follow in maintaining a peaceful society.

“It has been observed that societies providing the broadest civil liberties are the most stable and least likely to engage in or serve as sites for organized, violent conflict,” Kuniwo Nakamura, president of the Republic of Palau, pointed out in his message to the proceedings. “Let us stand proudly as examples of peaceful members of the world community. Let us show by example the life that can be enjoyed when basic human rights and participation in one's own fate are guaranteed. And let us always demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the greatest respect for freedom at home and encouraging freedom throughout the world.”

This is, after all, what the islanders call the Pacific Way, a way of harmonious social life that they see as their heritage, a way of life befitting the meaning of the word *pacific* — peace.

The Pacific Way was evident in the New Pacific Peace Resolution the delegates all signed, and it permeated the three days of events. There were book donations by the SGI, a commemorative luncheon with a mini-culture festival, and the dedication of a Friendship Pavilion and groundbreaking for an SGI peace memorial at a seaside park. (See pp. 4–7 for full coverage, including the New Pacific Peace Resolution and participants' impressions.)