

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA VISITS HONG KONG

SGI President Ikeda last month visited Hong Kong, where he met with old friends, attended two SGI Hong Kong–Macau executive conferences and received an honorary professorship from China’s Guandong University of Foreign Studies.

President Ikeda’s first activity in Hong Kong was a Feb. 14 visit to the Chinese University of Hong Kong. At a luncheon in the SGI president’s honor, he and Vice-Chancellor Arthur K. C. Li agreed that a global educators conference needs to be held to address the many problems now facing humankind. Mr. Ikeda explained that both the Soka Gakkai’s first and second presidents were educators, and that education will eternally remain a central focus of the SGI.

On Feb. 16, President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, met with internationally acclaimed Chinese painter and calligrapher Madame Fang Zhaoling. The SGI president shared his ideas on peace and culture with Madame Fang, saying that “unless the world is brought together by culture and art, war will never end, and tragedy will never disappear. We cannot overcome the cruelty in people’s hearts through political and economic ties alone. This can only be achieved through culture and art. This is the conclusion I have come to in life. This is also what Buddhism teaches.... We must create a society where artists are recognized and valued as making great, profound contributions to the nation, the world, peace and humanity. A society that cherishes artists — I advocate this!”

President Ikeda spoke Feb. 17 at an SGI Hong Kong–Macau executive conference that commemorated the 25th anniversary of the SGI’s founding. “Life is meant to be enjoyed,” he stated. “The purpose of life is to become happy and to contribute to the happiness of others. To actually do this, despite the hardships one may meet along the way, is the supreme way of life for a human being. This is exactly what all of you are doing. As individuals striving to advance kosen-rufu, you are living the noblest lives. As one who is your senior in faith, I am chanting with all of my being for your happiness and longevity.”

On Feb. 19, representatives of GUFUS traveled to Hong Kong to confer on President Ikeda an honorary professorship in recognition of his work in the field of education. In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda shared the following anecdote: There was once a king who decided to honor the person who had done the most for his country. There were so many outstanding candidates — business people, doctors, scholars — that the king couldn’t pick one. The final candidate introduced was an elderly woman with white hair. “Who is she?” the king asked. It turned out that she had been the teacher of all the other candidates. This nameless educator wound up receiving the king’s highest honor.

In a subsequent discussion between the SGI leader and GDUFS President Huang Jianhua, the Buddhist view of education came up. President Ikeda said that learning and education are vital to conveying Buddhism in an accessible manner. Buddhism is, after all, a universal teaching, he said — for all people, regardless of age, gender or race; it is not a teaching designed to enslave people with rigid doctrines. Down through the ages, he went on, this spirit has unfortunately been lost, and Buddhism has become the province of priests. President Ikeda explained that the mission of the SGI is to bring Buddhism back to the people, with whom it belongs.

At another SGI Hong Kong–Macau executive conference, on Feb. 20, the SGI leader shared his belief that the SGI is the only organization working to realize Nichiren

Title: SGI President Ikeda Visits Hong Kong

Subject: World Tribune 03/10/00 n.3284 p.6 WT000310p06 Hong Kong

Author:

Keywords: Hong Ikeda International Kong President Tribune Visits World

Daishonin's ardent wish for the worldwide propagation of the Mystic Law. People do not exist for religion; religion exists for the people—this is the true spirit of Buddhism, President Ikeda stressed. He asked the gathered members to spread the spirit of love for humanity throughout society.