

**FRENCH-SPEAKING MEMBERS MEET
BY ALAIN BERGER
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT**

French-speaking members from every part of Los Angeles converged on the Los Angeles Friendship Center May 14 to hold their monthly meeting. “Le Groupe Foncophone,” as it is called, comprises French-speaking members from all around the world, including Africa, Europe, North and South America and the Caribbean.

The group truly exemplifies SGI President Ikeda’s description of America as a multiracial nation integrating diverse cultures in leading the way toward world kosen-rufu. As a tribute to this diversity, the theme of the meeting was “Discovering our True Identity.”

The meeting got off to a spirited start with Fabrice Vignat playing the guitar and singing Aznavour’s “*Formi/formidable*,” transporting the assembly, so to speak, back to a little bistro in Marseilles.

After an explanation of the practice by Tobias Maxwell for the several guests in attendance, everyone was treated to a delightful recounting of Anne Fiser’s experience of how she first landed on these shores as a young woman with no knowledge of the English language, and how horrified she was at not being able to find Evian or pâte anywhere. She did find the SGI though, and after surmounting numerous obstacles, she was able to show tremendous actual proof of her practice and raise a wonderful family. Her adult children now practice, as does her mother who was in the audience.

A study presentation on our “true identity” by Simone White and Chantal Cangi was followed by a rendering of President Ikeda’s poem “The Sun of *Jiyu*” translated into French. LA/Coastal Region Women’s Leader Melanie Merians closed this very spirited reunion by using the words of the French anthem “*Allons les Citoyens*” to exhort everyone to rush to the Gohonzon rather than to the barricades.

It was evident from the high energy dialogue afterwards that the guests were determined to investigate this philosophy for themselves. The members left refreshed and with a renewed sense of determination to expand the circle of friends belonging to the wonderful world of the SGI. *Au mois prochain* (until next month)!

For more information on the French-speaking group, please contact Renu Jiandani at SGI-USA membership services by phone at (310) 260-8942 or by e-mail at rjiandani@sgi-usa.org