

## **NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION HONORS SGI PRESIDENT AND MRS. IKEDA**

**Receiving the NAPF's World Citizen Award, SGI President Ikeda says that a world citizen is someone with the willingness to learn from the world, someone who makes efforts for and works on behalf of society.**

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation on March 16 conferred its 1999 World Citizen Award upon SGI President Ikeda, and bestowed the title of Peace Ambassador upon Mrs. Kaneko Ikeda. The conferment ceremony was held in Tokyo at a joint graduation ceremony for the Soka Elementary School and the Soka junior and senior high schools of Tokyo and Osaka.

In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda thanked NAPF President David Krieger, who was in attendance, for bestowing such honors on him and his wife. President Ikeda stated their determination to continue their efforts for peace, opening the way forward for the students of the Soka Schools and the youth of the world.

He went on to explain that, for him, a world citizen is someone with a willingness to learn from the world, someone who makes efforts for and works on behalf of society. In any age, he added, a person who takes action and champions justice will have a great presence, naturally becoming the target of envy and persecution by those in positions of authority. We see proof of this throughout history—this may be the fate of those with a global perspective, he said.

The SGI leader mentioned that Dr. Krieger has suffered much criticism in his struggle against nuclear weapons and war. During his youth, Dr. Krieger opposed the Vietnam War and refused to enlist in the army, inviting harsh criticism. However, with his wife Carolee's support, Dr. Krieger has stayed true to his convictions, the SGI leader stated. (Mrs. Krieger also attended this event.)

President Ikeda concluded by saying that true happiness means to create hope even when it does not exist. He encouraged all the students to establish hope in their lives, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the determination to keep pressing toward peace, hope and victory, no matter how bleak the situation may seem. Advance with an invincible spirit and live a life of value-creation, the SGI leader urged.

In Dr. Krieger's congratulatory speech, he asked the students to work to realize second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's and President Ikeda's ideal of a world without war, voicing his confidence that they had the ability to do so. He referred to Mr. Toda's 1957 "Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons," in which President Toda asked the youth to take the lead in creating a better world.

When the Earth is viewed from outer space, Dr. Krieger continued, it becomes apparent that national borders exist only on maps and in the minds of human beings. The truth, he said, is that the world is one, and we are all one people.

But this is not what we have been taught in school, he explained. We have been educated to be loyal to one country, as citizens of that one country, which constitutes only a small fraction of the whole planet. Such education for the purpose of benefiting the nation, not all humankind, does not unite, but divides, Dr. Krieger said. In order to become global citizens, individuals need to be reeducated, coming to understand their inherent rights as human beings.

Dr. Krieger said that the SGI leader was chosen as the recipient of the foundation's World Citizen Award, which has previously been presented to CNN founder Ted Turner, in recognition of his life as a world citizen and the SGI's gathering of more than 13 million signatures in a petition to abolish nuclear weapons. Dr. Krieger explained that the SGI president has traveled around the globe, transcending borders and holding dialogues with world leaders, opening the door to mutual understanding. Further commending President Ikeda, Dr. Krieger said that the SGI leader has planted and carefully nurtured the seeds of peace and worked to create a future in which all people can live with human dignity.

The title of Peace Ambassador, meanwhile, praises Mrs. Ikeda for her contributions in "creating a world community based on international law, justice and human dignity." Previous recipients of this award include former U.N. secretary-general Boutros-Boutros Ghali, former president Jimmy Carter, Czech President Vaclav Havel and President Ikeda, who received this honor in 1997.

NAPF is a Santa Barbara, Calif.-based international education and advocacy organization that focuses on issues of international peace and security. It is also a nongovernmental organization affiliated with the United Nations.