

AROUND THE SGI

New SGI Chapter Created in Slovenia

A new SGI chapter was recently established in Slovenia, of the former Yugoslavia, with Jasmina Una Tumpej appointed as the new chapter leader. On April 28, the newly-formed chapter held a kick-off in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.

Ms. Tumpej, a psychiatrist in a university hospital, became an SGI member 20 years ago in London. After emigrating to Slovenia, she and her mother started to introduce others to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Together with the other members in Slovenia, every autumn she organizes the Alpe-Adria Meeting at which members from the neighboring countries of Yugoslavia, Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Italy are invited to join discussions on Buddhism.

The chapter in Slovenia is the second to be formed in the Balkan Peninsula, following one in Yugoslavia earlier this year.

SGI-Paraguay Holds Culture Show

On May 20, SGI-Paraguay commemorated its 40th anniversary by hosting a music extravaganza titled, "Victory of Youth Resounds into the New Century," at the Guarani Culture Center in Asuncion, Paraguay. Around 1,200 guests and local residents attended the event, including Education and Event Vice Minister Blanca Rosa Ovelar de Duarte and renowned Paraguayan poet Enciso Yegros. In a message, SGI President Ikeda congratulated the joyful gathering of youthful successors. SGI-Paraguay General Director Kaoru Kurita introduced the SGI's guiding principles and history, and called on the SGI-Paraguay members to contribute to Paraguayan society and work for people's happiness as upstanding citizens. The youth presented traditional songs, music and dances of Paraguay, and some visiting SGI-Brazil members performed an energetic Brazilian dance.

Zeist, Netherlands, Hosts SGI's Human Rights Exhibition

On May 25, the SGI's "Toward a Century of Humanity—An Overview of Human Rights in Today's World" exhibition opened at the Zeist Castle, Zeist, Netherlands. Netherlands UNESCO Center Director Mathilde C. Guurink hosted the opening. U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers sent a taped message expressing his support for the SGI's exhibition, which he says carries a message for peace. SGI President Ikeda also sent a message that introduced the Buddhist concept of "simultaneous reverence for oneself and others," the practice of which allows people to shake free the bonds of egoism and develop respect and compassion for others.

Through the support of Zeist Mayor Bookhoven, Zeist became the 39th host city of the SGI's human rights exhibition, joining 38 others in eight countries that have shown the exhibition to date.

SGI-France Hosts Lecture on Culture and Humanity

On May 18, SGI-France sponsored a lecture on "Rediscovering Solidarity" by Professor Marc Lebailly, anthropologist and former professor of the University of Paris, at the SGI-France Paris Culture Center. In his talks, Professor Lebailly voiced concern about the

dangers of a society that is dictated by the pursuit of profit and the glorification of violence. The anthropologist pointed to today's human society that is united on various levels by sentimentalism, codified rules of behavior, and economic motives, and held that there is an urgent need to redefine human solidarity as based and founded upon cultural exchange. He strongly advocated that humanity work to build a truly cultural society.

Singapore Soka Youth Center Holds Open House

The Singapore Soka Association held an open house on May 12 and 13 at the newly-built Soka Youth Center. Around 3,000 local residents and friends visited the center, a hub for activities for the youth division. Visitors viewed an exhibit on the SSA youth's peace activities and enjoyed song and dance performances by cultural groups. In addition, a forum titled "Dreams and Challenges of Youth" was held in conjunction with the open house. Participants from many sectors of society, including artists, teachers, doctors and entrepreneurs, took part in the forum. Their discussions centered on realizing one's dreams and goals and leading a fulfilled existence.

Courtesy of SOKANET (www.sokagakkai.or.jp)