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e-bulletin



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SGI President Ikeda issues 2012 Peace Proposal

Human Security and Sustainability: Sharing Reverence for the Dignity of Life

In his 30th annual peace proposal, released on January 26, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda called for a nuclear abolition summit to be held in 2015 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to ensure that the growing momentum toward abolition of nuclear weapons becomes irreversible.

President Ikeda says that holding this summit on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of these cities, and in the year of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, would bring home to world leaders the terrible destructive capacity of nuclear weapons and help ensure the necessary action toward their abolition, thereby marking the effective end of the nuclear weapons era.

The full text of the Peace Proposal in English can be accessed from the SGI-UK website at www.sgi-uk.org

In calling for nuclear arms abolition, President Ikeda is responding to a historic declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons by second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda on September 8 1957.

Hiroshima Peace Days have been held at the South London National Centre

for a number of years and two national Hiroshima Peace Days have been held at Taplow Court to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to reflect on the horrific nature of nuclear war.

President Ikeda issued a proposal entitled 'Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition' in 2009.

Responding to Sensei's call, SGI-UK Youth Division members have formed a Youth Peace Committee.

In this year's Peace Proposal, titled 'Human Security and Sustainability: Sharing Reverence for the Dignity of Life', President Ikeda points to the possibility of a more hopeful phase in the struggle to realise a nuclear-free world, seeing signs of a tipping point where a 'cascade' of governments will support adoption of a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) to comprehensively ban nuclear weapons.

President Ikeda strongly reaffirms his endorsement of the idea of a NWC, stating that we must take "the determination



Courtesy of Seikyo Press

President Ikeda in the doctoral robes of the University of Buckingham with Mrs Ikeda in Tokyo in November 2011

WORDS OF THE WEEK

February, the SGI's traditional month to take on challenges, is here.

Let's take the initiative and take action.

Let's muster up our courage and confidently share this Buddhism with others.

Brimming with a youthful spirit, let's cheerfully make every effort to challenge ourselves and break down those obstacles and limitations that we ourselves have built.

– Daisaku Ikeda,
January 30-February 5, 2012

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2012 Peace Proposal

from page 1

... that humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist, and give it concrete form as a binding legal agreement expressing the shared conscience of humankind”.

He calls for the formation of an action group for a NWC, comprising supportive governments and NGOs, and urges that if arguments from the perspectives of human rights and sustainability are mustered alongside those from international humanitarian law, this will expand the groundswell of grassroots efforts pushing for nuclear weapons abolition.

Reflecting on the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March 2011, President Ikeda urges Japan to make a rapid transition to energy policies not reliant on nuclear power generation, and to intensify its involvement in renewable energy technology and research, both domestically and to support efforts in developing countries. He calls for a strengthening of the global role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in dealing with the impacts of nuclear power plant accidents and the decommissioning of obsolescent reactors.

Considering the suffering caused by an increasing prevalence of natural disasters around the world, President Ikeda calls for responses to be centred on a human rights approach and proposes that the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) be officially expanded to include provision of relief for people displaced by such disasters. He also stresses the importance of empowering women to play a greater role in disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Towards the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development being held this year in Rio de Janeiro, President Ikeda calls for a broader debate on the concept of Sustainable Development Goals. He urges a comprehensive approach that will address the full range of sustainability and human security concerns in both developing and developed countries.

President Ikeda has issued proposals analysing the key issues facing humankind on January 26 every year since 1983, commemorating SGI's founding on that date in 1975. He offers insight from a Buddhist perspective and makes concrete suggestions in a spirit of contribution to the global dialogue centred around the United Nations. Many of his proposals have borne fruit.

Taplow Court exhibition to celebrate Olympic pioneer

An exhibition celebrating Lord Desborough, known as “the best all-round sportsman” of his time and President of the 1908 Olympics, will be staged at Taplow Court from April 15 – September 16 to coincide with the London Olympics this year, write Sue Thornton and Sanda McWilliam.

We hope that many local people will come and learn about this early Olympian who lived in their local community. We also hope that many SGI-UK members will feel this is a great opportunity to bring family and friends to Taplow Court.

Lord Desborough (William Henry Grenfell) who in 1867, at 11 years of age, inherited Taplow Court from his grandfather, was one of the UK's greatest-ever Olympians. As founding president of the British Olympic Association, he made it happen for London 1908.

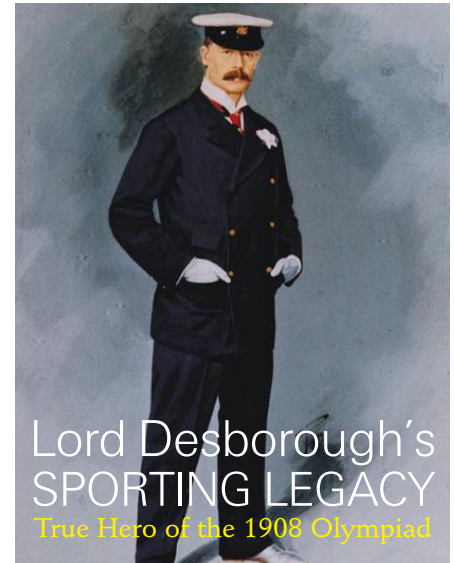
He excelled at sports and athletics and, at six feet five inches tall, he was a striking figure. His sports achievements included rowing, sculling, punting, swimming, climbing and fencing. At the age of 50, he fenced for Britain in the 1906 Athens Games. His great organisational talents, public spiritedness and sporting connections were to be used to the full when he became the President and driving force behind the 1908 Olympiad, held in White City, London.

During the run-up to the 1908 Games, he was described as “a man absorbed in the actualisation of a dream”. He was deeply committed to the wider mission of the Games – “a dominant idea of the old Hellenic Games was peace... The same idea of peace and unity in connection with international athleticism is capable of a modern application.”

For the first time the exhibition will use the ground floor of the House, and at the moment the exhibition is envisaged to be as follows:

- Main entrance and foyer: Exhibition theme, Lord Desborough's Sporting Legacy.
- Dining (Smoking) Room: “Lord Desborough, Sportsman, Adventurer and man of Influence”, explaining about Lord Desborough's life.
- Norman Hall: “About the 1908 London Games”. Theme inside hall, “Against the Odds”.
- Sections in hall : “Athens 1906”.

Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, later remarked that one's inner life is the true Olympics. Life itself is an Olympics where we strive each day to better our own personal records



The determination to win is the better part of winning – Daisaku Ikeda

“London 1908”. “Women and Sport”.

- Reception room 1, Grenfell Room: “For King and Country”. Theme inside room, “Sport and War”.
- Reception room 2, Desborough Room: “Children and Sport”.
- Themes inside room: “Sport and the family”. “Fine Citizens” (working title).
- History of Taplow Court rooms: Children's Activity Area.
- Outside in the grounds: There will be a Heritage Trail and Games.

When will the exhibition be open?

- For the general public and SGI-UK members: Sundays April 15; May 6 and 20; June 3 and 17; July 1 and 15; August 5 and 19; September 2, 9 and 16. House & grounds open to the public 2.30-5.30pm.
- School Groups: Tuesday and Thursday daytimes from April 17 to September 27 inclusive – only available by making a booking online. There will be a volunteer team of teachers who are SGI-UK members on duty to support the school visits. We are hoping that many schools in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire will bring many of their students to the exhibition.
- Other Groups: By personal arrangement
- No entrance fees apply.

Successful GKI exhibition in East Anglia

Finally, after 18 months of planning and preparation, January 16 became a momentous occasion for East Anglia South HQ, write Fay Laflin and Lyn Downes.

Not only were we hosting the Gandhi-King-Ikeda Exhibition as an HQ, but also holding it in two venues, one in each of our chapters. We were proud to host this exhibition and for it to coincide with Martin Luther King Day, observed on the third Monday of January each year in the US.

Essex Chapter hosted the exhibition at Chelmsford Library for two weeks and from the moment it opened it drew out many varied reactions and opinions from visitors. This gave all the guides who were supporting the exhibition a great opportunity to engage in dialogue with members of the local community. It was clearly not only a departure for us but also for the library to be hosting an exhibition of this nature with over 300 visitors to the exhibition during the two weeks.



Photographers: Sonia and Michael Collins, Pat Cunningham and Jennie Peters-Smith



An evening event to support the exhibition was held at the Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford on January 20. Dame Claire Bertschinger gave an inspiring lecture based on her life experiences of nursing in war-torn countries, where she came to realise that if she wanted to see a change she had to start with herself. The event was a great success, attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chelmsford, local faith leaders, SGI members and people from the local community.

On the final day of the exhibition, two men from Gandhi's birthplace happened to be in Chelmsford and came into the library. They viewed the exhibition and spoke to the guides about Gandhi and then asked about Daisaku Ikeda as they had not heard of him. The guides had amazing dialogue with them and found it was the perfect end to a challenging but incredible activity.

The exhibition is now at the second venue, University Campus Suffolk. It opened on January 30 and will run until February 11.

Librarians' conference held at Taplow Court

IOP-UK hosted the 86th Annual Conference of the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) on January 27, writes Sarah Norman.

This organisation endeavours to enable librarians who manage these libraries, specialising in collecting materials on South Asia (often working solo), to meet with one another and build up links in order to support and help each others' institutions. These libraries have to deal with non-European languages (often in a different script) and the attendant difficulties of cataloguing effectively – for example, we hold stock at Taplow in about 20 languages. If not catalogued well, the books effectively 'disappear' – no researcher will be able to find them.

At this year's conference the 14 participants (as well as IOP-UK representatives) came from the British Library (both the India Office Records and the Thai, Lao & Cambodian Collections); the National Library of Scotland; Cambridge University Library; the library of the School of Oriental & African Studies (University of London); the Bodleian Library (Oxford); the Royal Asiatic Society Library; Cambridge University Library and the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies.

This year's theme was Buddhism: Texts and Tales and, after a potted history of the IOP-UK library at Taplow Court (almost unbelievably it is more than 20 years since it was set up), we heard two papers on ongoing research into Buddhist manuscripts held in Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian. A third paper looked at meditation manuals, held both in the Hugh Nevill Collection of the British Library and in Thailand and Sri Lanka.

For many of the participants this was their first visit to Taplow Court and the guided tour round the house was a big hit thanks to John Fagence's expert and knowledgeable guiding. Also thanks, as ever, to the Lilacs who supported the day.

Notice to parents – a date for your diary!

Young Eagles Summer Course 2012:
Dates: Friday July 27-Sunday July 29.
Venue: Sayers Croft Field Centre, Ewhurst, Surrey
www.sayers-croft.org.uk
More details to follow in a future issue.
Gary Driver, Young Eagles leader
gary.driver@sgi-uk.org

SGI-UK members at Holocaust commemoration

On January 26 Winchester Cathedral was the venue for the second time to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, writes Gary Nichols.

Seating was removed from the cathedral giving the huge open space a medieval atmosphere. The title of the evening, 'Space for Peace', was reflected in the interior.

The evening was supported by the Dean of Winchester Cathedral and the Mayor of Winchester along with seven choirs and a large standing audience.

About 200 men, women and children were assembled in choirs on the steps leading up to the altar. Adding to this were solo cantors from the Jewish, Muslim and Hindu faiths. Also on the steps was a group of SGI Buddhists: this year there were eleven members attending from as far afield as Fareham and Salisbury. The choirs and an audience of several hundred sang 'Peace Vigil Chants at Close' written by June Boyce-Tillman, a professor from the University of Winchester. Then each choir one by one sang its choice of music for peace and one by one processed



SGI members Jill Dealey, Elaine Roberts, Carole Rees-Williams, David Vane, Giuseppe Mangano, Gary Nichols, Matt Challoner and Stevie Knight

away to their allocated corner of the cathedral including our group chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

We enshrined an Omamori Gohonzon in our designated area and chanted evening gongyo and daimoku for an hour alongside the coffins of medieval kings and queens. Many members of the audience showed interest in the quiet relaxing sound of the daimoku including the Mayor and Mayoress. With a 'd' on the organ being played we reassembled back on the steps of the altar and sang 'Peace Vigil Chants at Close' again, after which everyone dispersed to meditate for a while before leaving.

Noheed Broira

Kick-off meetings

Photographers: Geoff Young, John Bath and Teely Cheach



● Yorkshire and Humber HQ got 2012 off to a great start in Bradford, writes Monica Scotto. Our theme was Fostering Future Successors to Establish a Life-state of Total Freedom in perfect harmony with the Year of Developing a Youthful SGI. Two inspiring experiences were shared by a young man and a young woman. Nancy Cunliffe, Young Women's Division Area leader, gave a powerful lecture on the Goshō, 'King Rinda'. HQ leaders of all divisions shared with us their determinations to expand their lives as well as our movement, based on a youthful spirit. We ended with the Youth Division singing one of the SGI-Europe songs, 'Come What May', and the children showing what they had created during their activity. What a wonderful day!



World News

Beijing, China: The Central University of Finance and Economics named President Ikeda an honorary professor on January 12 in recognition of his pioneering declaration for the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, as well as for his efforts to build bilateral friendship. Soka Gakkai Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda accepted the honour on behalf of his father.

Osaka, Japan: Kansai Soka Junior High and High School participated in NASA's new MoonKAM (Moon Knowledge Acquired by Middle school students) programme. The educational outreach programme allows students to take pictures of the lunar surface from cameras on two satellites. The two Kansai schools were participating for the 37th time from January 31 to February 3.

Tokyo, Japan: The Ukrainian Peace Council presented President Ikeda with an Honorary Award in recognition of his contributions to building peace. The conferral ceremony was held at the Embassy of Ukraine in Japan on January 25. Soka Gakkai President Minoru Harada accepted the award on behalf of Sensei.

Len East



● A joyful programme of guidance, experiences, and entertainment was packed into the kick-off for Mid Wales and the Marches HQ in Leominster Community Centre on January 8, writes Len East. The afternoon started with two men, Pat Gardner and Phen Reynolds, both from Camlad District, receiving their Gohonzons from Les Gibson, Men's Division leader for Wales and the Borders Area. A lively musical interlude comprised a Beethoven piano duet, played by Gillian Gregory and Jan Lumley and a Japanese song from Naomi East. Kyoko Gibson, Women's Division Area leader, shared her thoughts on the direction for 2012. The emphasis was on carrying out the three elements of our practice: faith, study and practice. We ended with a buffet of food to share and a chance to catch up with friends.

New trustees appointed



Sue Thomson

● Paul Williams and Jennie Peters-Smith have been appointed as SGI-UK trustees. If you would like to see the full list of trustees and learn more about their role, visit the SGI-UK website at www.sgi-uk.org and view the section on governance.

February AoL: an explosion of joyous dialogue



In SGI President Ikeda's editorial this month, we find the words of Gandhi who said: 'Life becomes perpetually renewed every day.

This knowledge should be helpful in uplifting us.'

February is a significant month in SGI. If you would like to 'renew your life each day' and find out how to make February a significant month in your life, Art of Living is filled with inspiration to enable you to make each day a turning point for happiness.

● On January 15 at the Farsett Centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland HQ kicked off a year of joyful activities, writes Koichi Samuels. Members shared experiences filled with victory, hope and gratitude for benefits they had received and friends they had introduced to the practice. HQ and chapter leaders shared their determinations and visions for the year ahead. Matt Faris was thanked for his incredible work, dedicating himself for 9 years as Young Men's Division HQ leader. Members united to sing 'One

Amanda Mudd



Europe With Sensei' and the Men's Division performed 'I Can See Clearly Now'. We joined together for a photo and a birthday cake-cutting for Sensei's 84th birthday.



Rod Leach



● Greater Manchester kick-off was held on January 14, writes Glenn Cunningham. The 'Year of Developing a Youthful SGI' banner was the backdrop to an inspiring lecture from Sue Marcus on the Goshō, 'King Rinda', followed by heartfelt experiences, determinations and entertainment. It was a great day, with everyone a winner!