

# **Singapore Soka Association (SSA)**

## **2017 Annual Report**

### **Staff**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, there were 98 staff employed by the Association. The number of staff employed for the operations and functions of the SSA headquarters was 72, while the number of staff employed for Soka Kindergarten was 26.

### **Membership**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, the estimate membership count was 33,136; and the outreach estimate was 40,000.

### **Governance for Transparency and Accountability**

#### **(a) Compliance with Code of Governance**

Singapore Soka Association adopts and complies with the Code of Governance for Charities. The Association's Annual Returns of the Governance Evaluation Checklist for the year 2017, reported that the Association is keeping in full compliance with all the Requirements of the Code of Governance. This is the Association's sixth year of reporting under the Enhanced Tier guidelines required of large charities.

#### **(b) Board Policies**

The Association has in place policies governing:

- Induction and Training of Board members;
- Declaration of Conflict of Interest by Board members;
- Annual Self Evaluation of Board performance;
- Internal Audit;
- Financial Reserves;

These policies are annually reviewed by the Board to ensure their relevancy to current thinking and practices.

### **Declaration on Salary of Top Executives and Related Party Transaction**

For financial year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, the Management Committee declares that:

- (1) There is no top executive who received annual remuneration exceeding \$100,000.

- (2) There is no transaction with a corporation in which the trustees/office bearers and key management staff have an interest.

### **Key Event highlights for the Year 2017:**

2017 marks SSA's 50th anniversary of kosen-rufu movement in Singapore. From one single district in 1967, the movement for peace has grown into a network of 504 districts. In commemoration of SSA's Golden Jubilee, a series of commemorative events were held:

- a) Singapore Kosen-rufu Day (9 February) Commemorative Meetings where two sessions of SSA Pioneers Appreciation Meeting were held on 12 February 2017 to honour and pay tribute to the SSA's pioneers for their hard work and selfless contributions that led to the growth and development of present-day SSA.
- b) Presentation of more than 2,000 pots of Dendrobium Kaneko Ikeda to some 1,000 SSA pioneering members from June to August in appreciation of their tireless efforts for Singapore Kosen-rufu.
- c) Nationwide District General Meetings (which kickstarted from 11 November till December.)
- d) SSA Youth Friendship Concerts - where four sessions of performances and sharing was held at the SSA Headquarters, with a total of more than 4,300 audience who showed up. Close to 1,300 attendees were new friends. Themed "Youth is, Hope is, Joy is", the concert was supported by some 330 performers and 370 backstage crew and volunteers.

### **Some of our external engagements in the areas of Peace, Culture and Education include:**

**Istana Lunar New Year Open House (29 Jan)** – 21 members of SSA's Sunflower Ensemble and 25 members from the Soka Youth Dance Crew (SYDC) performed at the Istana Open House in the presence of Singapore President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam and members of the public on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Lunar New Year. This was the third year SSA was invited to perform at the Istana for the LNY Open House.

**Chingay Parade** - 2017 marked SSA's 33rd participation in the Chingay Parade, the largest street parade in Singapore. On February 10 and 11, a contingent of 350 SSA Future Division representatives performed in Chingay Parade 2017, in the fourth segment of the parade, "WeCare—Singapore, City of Dreams".

- SSA Chingay 2017 item received two awards, the “Audience Favourite Contingent” and “Most Popular Contingent” at the Chingay Awards Presentation Ceremony 2017 and Appreciation Night that was held on March 14.

### National Day Parade

This year marks SSA’s 32nd participation at the NDP since 1981 and her 23rd consecutive year since 1995. On August 9, 560 members and friends represented SSA at National Day Parade (NDP) 2017, celebrating Singapore’s 52nd birthday. The mass display item put up by the SSA in Act 2 titled “Growing Together” conveys how strong and united families form the foundation of Singapore.



Arising from SSA’s past years of cultural participations, the following commendations took place in 2017:

- On March 16, a team of senior officials from the People’s Association, led by Chief Executive Director Mr Desmond Tan, graced the SSA Headquarters and presented the Community Partnership Merit Award 2017 to SSA, and a Special Tribute to SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, in recognition of SSA and President Ikeda’s contribution to the Singapore.



- On July 13, Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Perry Lim Cheng Yeow, presented a certificate of commendation and a crystal plaque on behalf of Singapore Armed Forces to SGI President Ikeda at SSA Headquarters, in recognition of President Ikeda’s leadership. The citation, read by LG Perry Lim, recognises President Ikeda for his “leadership, wisdom, empathy and foresight have set the direction for members of the Singapore Soka Association.”

One of the key events for SSA Golden Jubilee was the holding of the “The Lotus Sutra – A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” Exhibition from 1-25 October. The exhibition was held at the Arts House and was opened by Guest-of-honour Mr Baey Yam Keng, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. The exhibition was jointly organized by The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (Japan), Dunhuang Academy (China) and SSA, and supported by The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and International Academy of Indian Culture. Singapore was the 16th country to host the exhibition.



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In addition, 3 lectures were organised in parallel to the Lotus Sutra Exhibition over the 3 weekends in October. A total of more than 500 people attended these three lectures.

In response to the overwhelming request, the Lotus Sutra exhibition was extended from 1 - 18 November at the SSA Headquarters. A grand total of 62,522 visitors viewed the exhibition in the Arts House and in SSA over a 43-day period.

### **SSA also actively partners many key institutions such as the Singapore Management University**

- The Second Wee Kim Wee-Soka International Seminar on Global Peace and Understanding was held on February 23 and 24 the Singapore Management University (SMU). The seminar was attended by some 200 invited guests, members of the public as well as SMU faculty staff and SSA representatives. At this platform, the SGI President Ikeda was the inaugural recipient of the Wee Kim Wee Gold Award in recognition of his contribution to global peace and endeavours in treasuring humanity and diversity.



- On November 20, the Third Annual Ikeda Peace and Harmony Lecture was held at the SMU School of Law, with over 800 people in attendance. Titled “Creating Interfaith Dialogue and Understanding in a Multicultural World”, the lecture was delivered by Sri Ravi Shankar, a noted humanitarian and ambassador of peace.



### **One of the other breakthrough was when SSA Youth Division gained the Collaborative Partnership with People’s Association Youth Movement**

On October 21, SSA Chairman Michael Yap represented SSA Youth Division in the People’s Association Youth Movement (PAYM)-Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Ceremony at Our Tampines Hub. SSA Youth Division was among nine new youth partners to be on board the PAYM-Partnership MOU. Through the MOU, SSA youth division now have opportunities to expand friendship with Youth Executive Committees (YECs) in PAYM and other youth partners.



**We also actively engaged our friends from the Interfaith and Interracial front:**

On January 17, SSA hosted the ‘Camp Culture’ interfaith programme, a youth-initiative organised by OnePeople.sg to increase student’s cross-cultural awareness through exposure to various religions in Singapore. Two delegations of total 77 students from Temasek Secondary School attended a two-hour programme at the Senja Soka Centre over two sessions where they learn about Nichiren Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai International peace movement.



On August 26, SSA hosted Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Adviser of Cashew (Holland-Bukit Timah GRC) and 10 members of the Cashew Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCC) in Senja Soka Centre for the IRCC Appointment Ceremony.

**In the areas of Community Service, we held the following events:**

- On January 12, more than 50 members from the Soka Volunteers Group (SVG) joined 30 friends from SPD to tour the streets of Chinatown, immersing themselves in the festive Lunar New Year (LNY) atmosphere. In its 7<sup>th</sup> iteration this year, the annual LNY Chinatown walkabout is a well-loved activity that many SPD members look forward to.



- On February 6, performers from five SSA Arts and Culture Groups brought the festive cheer of Lunar New Year through a heart-warming outdoor mini-concert at Singapore General Hospital through the SGH Culture Night. More than 120 patients and visitors gathered at the hospital’s amphitheatre for this event, which consisted of an hour-long instrumental, song and dance performance by the Golden Lion Dance Troupe, Rainbow Chinese Orchestra, Soka Junior Choir, Soka Youth Dance Crew, and the Women Division Tulip Choir.



- On November 11, over 40 members of the Soka Volunteers Group supported the Orange Ribbon Walk organised by OnePeople.sg as water point volunteers, to show our support in the promotion of the message of racial harmony.



- On November 24, over 70 performers from SSA cultural groups - Rainbow Chinese Orchestra, Peony Group, Men Division Choir and Women Division Choir added much cheer to patients and visitors at the Singapore General Hospital through a feast of cultural performances at the SGH Culture Night.



- On December 13, Soka Volunteer Group (SVG) members spent a meaningful afternoon at SPD @ Toa Payoh to celebrate the year-end festivities, and to mark the second year of friendship between the seniors and the volunteers of the Elderly Befriending Programme. The SVG volunteers prepared a series of classic oldies in both English and Mandarin.



Over the years, SSA have gained the support of many partners and friends in the course of our growth and development as a faith organisation. SSA held the Community Partners Appreciation Night in commemoration of SSA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre on 10 June. The Guest-of-Honour was Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Finance and Member of Parliament for Tampines GRC. Close to 200 community partners and pioneering leaders who had at least 43 years of faith attended the dinner event. 33 commendation awards were presented to SSA's Community Partner Organisations in appreciation of their friendship.

The above are some of the key highlights in 2017, rounding up an eventful year in our Golden Jubilee of SSA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of kosen-rufu movement in Singapore. The Management Committee would like to extend our appreciation to all SSA members and staff for their great support and participation.

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