

A Time for Renewal

There's an old story about a chicken and a pig walking down a country road. They come upon a diner with a sign in the window: "Bacon and eggs, \$1.79."

"Well, well, would you look at that!" the chicken says. "What would breakfast be without my contribution?"

The pig looks at the chicken in shock. "It's OK for you," he says. "For you it's a contribution — for me it's total commitment."

SGI leaders are more like the pig — we often say we're totally committed. But do anything long enough and it's easy to fall into a rut. It's easy to forget the real purpose of taking responsibility as an SGI leader: to help ourselves and others develop harmonious families, become happy and overcome obstacles. "We can consider these the three eternal principles of the Soka Gakkai," writes SGI President Ikeda in *The New Human Revolution* (vol. 5, chapter 6).

In recent Central Executive Committee discussions about establishing three-year, renewable terms for SGI-USA leaders, one of the most often raised points was that terms will give those in leadership positions a chance to examine their effectiveness and personal commitment (please see "CEC Adopts...", July 18 *World Tribune*, p. 1). During the review period before a term ends, leaders can refresh their determination and commit to another term of caring for others. For some, personal circumstances may not allow them to continue in their present positions, and they can look forward to contributing in other ways. And some may feel it's time to let the next person take over.

Terms are not completely new to the SGI-USA. Since 1990, the general director and vice general directors have had renewable three-year terms. Senior Vice General Director Guy McCloskey says the terms make him seriously reflect on why and how he contributes to the SGI movement. "It makes me look at how much my contributions are based on my small ego as opposed to a nobler desire for kosen-rufu," he says.

Progress, innovation and growth demand we refresh our sense of purpose continually. And this spirit of renewal is important in all our commitments — in home, work and society.

In *The New Human Revolution*, Shin'ichi Yamamoto speaks on the qualities demanded of leaders in our organization.

"Soka Gakkai leaders," he says, "must have no interest in personal fame or glory. And it is a grave mistake to presume that just because you have been a leader for five or 10 years, you will always remain in such a position. If this attitude takes root, then the Gakkai will be no different from any other organization or company. There is no room in the Gakkai for leaders who rest on the laurels of past achievements and do nothing now, or for those interested only in the status or recognition that a position can bring."

He goes on to talk about the spirit that leaders should have when passing the baton of responsibility: "I think it's important for leaders to have the spirit that, when the time comes to hand their chapter position or any position over to a younger person, they willingly go back to the organization's front lines — without any position for a while if need be — and work there for the members and kosen-rufu" (vol. 5, chapter 6).

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism offers solutions to the problems the people of our country and the world face every day. It is up to us to develop ourselves and our organization so that we can spread this message most effectively. Remembering our mission — and refreshing our commitment — is crucial in that endeavor.

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