

CEC Discusses a New Wave of Propagation
By DAVE McNEILL, Managing Editor
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How do you help people become happy? When you help them clearly understand the basics of faith, practice and study, people will practice joyfully and with self-motivation, thus gaining the full benefit in practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Based on this fundamental principle, the Central Executive Committee decided this weekend to concentrate on three specific goals in the next six months:

- To ensure that each member knows about, understands the importance of and is inspired to propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism,
- To ensure that each member knows what district he or she is in, understands the district role in nurturing members and promoting kosen-rufu, and participates in district activities, and
- To ensure that each member knows about, understands and has the opportunity to subscribe to the *World Tribune*.

The leaders agreed that spreading understanding and inspiration will help members to deepen their faith and receive immeasurable benefit. Happy people will in turn not only attract more people to the organization's cause but will have a great positive impact on society.

This year's three focuses — happy members, nurturing youth and strengthening families — are best served through an emphasis on these basics of faith, it was agreed. In a lecture on the Daishonin's writings, General Director Zaitzu said that this age of soft power and self-motivated practice shouldn't keep us from teaching people about all parts of the practice, especially the spirit to help others and see this Buddhism spread widely.

"I think it is very important for us to develop a natural spirit or heart to pray for kosen-rufu," General Director Zaitzu said. "We should develop warm hearts to care for others' happiness. Those who care for others' happiness surely care for kosen-rufu."

Continuing on this theme of teaching people the basics of faith, he quoted SGI President Ikeda: "If you put 1 percent effort into faith and practice, you will get out 1 percent of the benefit.... If you put in 100 percent effort, you will get 100 percent of the benefit."

Mr. Zaitzu reiterated the goal for each district to welcome two new members per year but also expressed his wish that each person try his or her best to share this Buddhism with others. Just as you wouldn't expect others to do gongyo for you or ask someone else to read the Daishonin's writings on your behalf, propagation is an activity from which each person can experience great joy, he said. "Even when a guest comes to a meeting," he said, "I hope that everyone has the spirit to engage that person in dialogue about Buddhism and their lives."

Remembering the up-and-down cycles of propagation activities in the past, Mr. Zaitzu also said that now is the time to "establish the most appropriate way to propagate our faith, not just for the next five or 10 years but for a long time into the future — a way in which people won't get tired but will find continual joy."

In other business:

- A different approach to CEC meetings in 1999 is being considered. Several ideas are being proposed, including reducing the size of the CEC, now more than 150 people, to around 30 or 40. Opinions are being sought over the next few months on this.
- A "temple issue hotline" has been established to answer questions and collect information. The phone number is (818) Gakkai1 or (818) 425-5241. There is also a new e-mail address for the same purpose: templehotline@sgi-usa.org.

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