

## **SPIRIT OF LEADERSHIP FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR ZAITSU**

Dear *World Tribune* reader,

When discussing leadership, the most significant question to answer is what are leaders' goals and objectives. Where are they leading people? Among the many possible objectives, SGI-USA leaders strive to guide people to happiness, to the Gohonzon, to overcoming their problems, to accomplishing their human revolution; ultimately to kosen-rufu.

This pull-out section is the first in a series being planned to discuss the concept of leadership from the Buddhist perspective. For many years, SGI President Ikeda has been giving guidance about leadership. I believe this is because it is so integral to our goal of achieving kosen-rufu. Certainly, within SGI-USA, there are many appointed leaders who volunteer to help plan and execute our organization's program to inspire the faith, practice and study of our membership.

In addition, however, and from a broader perspective, every SGI-USA member is a Buddhist leader who, in a society that is largely uninformed about the Daishonin's Buddhism, is showing everyone how a Buddhist lives. For anyone who knows us as practicing Buddhists, our every word and action has the potential to show them the humanity and depth of the Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI. In this sense, President Ikeda's guidance on leadership is incredibly valuable for our Buddhist practice regardless of what organizational responsibilities we fulfill.

A central theme in President Ikeda's perspectives has been contrasting leadership built on authority and power with leadership aimed at inspiring people and leading by example. The former method uses force to make people follow, even against their will, while the latter motivates people to naturally move forward on their own free will and desire. Since kosen-rufu is an objective that all people naturally yearn for from the depths of their lives, President Ikeda repeatedly points to leadership that releases natural self-motivation within each individual as the model we cherish within the SGI.

Just recently, he confirmed this again by stating that leaders for kosen-rufu should not be self-centered. If you are too obsessed with yourself, you will lose sight of the members. The members should always be the focus of our attention. If people assume leadership for their own sake, then they become the center of that movement. With this perspective, leaders can only consider the movement from their own perspective. In planning an activity, such individuals would think, "I hope everyone comes to this meeting so it will be clear that I am a good leader." This viewpoint includes no compassion or consideration for creating a valuable experience for those attending the meeting.

On the other hand, leaders who are focused on the members' happiness work to plan meetings that will benefit those who come. Such efforts are an expression of their concern for those attending the meeting. Ideally, feedback and input from members add to a more fulfilling activity. This fundamental care about the members' happiness and desire for their inspiration in faith is the most important element in leadership. I want to thank the Publications staff and others for initiating

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this series of discussions on leadership. It is a very significant topic. At the same time, I deeply appreciate your ongoing support of the *World Tribune*. I sincerely hope you find this new series an inspiring and instructive addition.

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