

MESSAGE TO THE MEN'S DIVISION
BY RICHARD SASAKI, SGI-USA MEN'S DIVISION LEADER

To my fellow men, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your commitment and untiring contributions to kosen-rufu. We are about to enter the third quarter of this year. In this quarter we celebrate the day President Ikeda joined the Soka Gakkai on Aug. 24, 1947. For the men Aug. 24 is of particular significance, because it has been designated Men's Division Day. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's resignation from the presidency of the Soka Gakkai in Japan, an act precipitated by the jealousy and arrogance of the priests of Nichiren Shoshu. This injustice could have been a great setback for the kosen-rufu movement. But rather than defeat, we have witnessed unprecedented growth during these 20 years, particularly in the international communities. It is none other than President Ikeda's leadership, based on his prayer and commitment to his mentor, Josei Toda, that transformed greater injustice into great advancement.

In the new "Century of Humanism," it is imperative that we study the Daishonin's teachings and the SGI spirit through President Ikeda's writings and guidance to ensure an uninterrupted flow of the kosen-rufu movement. What must we do? Of course, understanding the profound concepts of Buddhism is paramount. However, as ordinary human beings, no accomplishment is greater than putting Buddhist philosophy and President Ikeda's guidance into daily practice in our lives. In February, President Ikeda said: "Kosen-rufu is a movement of unsurpassed humanism, a movement that values and respects each an every individual to the highest degree. We must always strive to exert utmost concern and consideration for others and always think what we can do to be of service and assistance to others. We must act with such sincerity and integrity that people are moved — and astonished — by our example. This is the very life of the SGI."

President Ikeda recently revised his well-known poem "Youth, Scale the mountain of the 21st Century" to express his deepest feeling and resolve for the growth and happiness of youth in our organization. He states: "We know that the new century hopes and awaits in expectation for such outstanding young leaders. People have begun to realize that only in life itself can we find the value of true human happiness. Today what matters is not popularity, fame or wealth! Inherently wise, the people respect and long for leaders of integrity and character!"

The future of any movement is dependent upon the growth of youth. Let's embrace our young women and men, create a warm environment where they will grow limitlessly, and develop an indestructible bond with SGI President Ikeda. Join me in spearheading this most valuable undertaking.

The third quarter of the year marks the period of publication promotion. How perfect! Let's make reading our publications a vital part of our daily practice, promote them among our fellow members and further solidify the foundation for peace in the United States.