

**SGI FAMILY YOUTH CULTURE FESTIVALS TO BE HELD  
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This fall marks the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's historic visit to the United States. During these past 40 years, he has come to the United States nearly 30 times. Throughout these four decades, the pioneer members have struggled to make a truly American, truly global Buddhist movement based on President Ikeda's guidance. We are commemorating this anniversary with a series of brilliant festivals and celebrations in every region of the United States.

I'm hearing from many of you how hard you've been working, and I want to thank you for your efforts. These culture festivals are going to be great events.

All over the United States, there are so many new faces and new youth joining. We are seeing the emergence of a passionate and talented generation of young people—youth in their teens and early 20s—dedicated to improving the world. I can honestly say that this is a generation unlike any we've ever seen before, with truly amazing creativity and commitment.

In my opinion, these youth are emerging because of the Victory Over Violence project and many other creative activities all over the country. But it was the SGI-USA Youth Culture Festival in Los Angeles where we saw the first expression of their awesome potential.

Here in Los Angeles, this culture festival became a turning point in the kosen-rufu movement. It was through the process of preparation toward this festival that many young people first began seeking their mentor and awakened to the concept of human revolution. One year later, they are now the driving force of Southern California.

This is proof of the victory of our parents and seniors, those pioneers who, together with President Ikeda, built the American kosen-rufu movement.

The idea for youth culture festivals was born from President Ikeda's amazing wisdom. These events give youth the opportunity to challenge their limitations and discover their hidden potential. They are the greatest venue to inspire and activate a new generation of youth. When you look back, each major culture festival marked a significant turning point in the history of kosen-rufu.

It is time for the youth all over America to write our new history of kosen-rufu, alongside our mentor, President Ikeda.

In his message to the first SGI-USA Culture Festival, he said: "I am determined to continue the solemn work of creating venues and opportunities for you to enact the grand drama of your lives."

True to his determination and promise, next year we are holding SGI Family Youth Culture Festivals in each zone.

During the September Headquarters Leaders Meeting, President Ikeda said that the greatness of Martin Luther King Jr. was his ability to draw in bystanders, to inspire and activate those people who normally stand on the sidelines. This is exactly why we want to hold these culture festivals—to draw the youth out of the woodwork. President Ikeda said during his speech that "Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream. We, too, have a dream. Our dream is kosen-rufu." Just as Martin Luther King Jr. was able to inspire people to join in the common cause of civil rights, our culture festivals will inspire youth to join in the noble drama of kosen-rufu.

How many new youth will emerge? How much will this be a turning point in your organization? This is entirely up to you! This is your time to create history. Youth, let's not hesitate to take the initiative to ensure that these festivals draw all the youth to join in our great dream.

When it comes to matters of faith and experience, no one beats our men's and women's division members. So let's really seek them out.

When it comes to creativity and initiative, the youth of the SGI-USA are unmatched. So let's take full responsibility.

Toward May 3, 2001, each day is so precious. Let's make the most of each significant day. Crucial to the success of these festivals is that each of us have our own personal goal. And as we count down the days, let's use each day as an opportunity to grow and progress in our lives. How much value will we create each day? And how will we measure what we've done? With the opening of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo as our target date, let's fight to accomplish our goals, let's bet our lives and let's have no regrets. And let's unite to welcome President Ikeda back to America with thousands of new youth members!