

The mission of Soka University is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.

(Daisaku Ikeda, Founder, Soka University of America)

"It is my hope that you, the youth of America, will appreciate the significance of having this university in your country — a university that will serve as a great center for peace in the new millennium."

— SGI President Ikeda, Feb. 25 *World Tribune*

"I hope that young people will gather from all over the United States and the world to study on this campus, and that from this campus they will set out into the world once more. I hope that many future Nobel laureates will appear from among their ranks. I also hope that those of you who may not be able to study at this school will somehow support those who do."

— SGI President Ikeda, Feb. 25 *World Tribune*



Mottoes of Soka University of America

- ❖ Be philosophers of a renaissance of life
- ❖ Be world citizens in solidarity for peace
- ❖ Be the pioneers of a global civilization

Are you thinking about SUA and Jan. 15, 2001?

The staff of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, is preparing to receive applications by the Jan. 15 deadline for the entering class of 2001.

At the forefront of SGI President Ikeda's mind is the opening of SUA, Aliso Viejo and the welcoming of 100 students to usher in a new millennium of hope. He states, "The significance of the birth of SUA, which is destined to

invigorate the world of education in the 21st century, is immeasurable. I ask for your kind support in recruiting students for the university and in all other aspects involved in making it a success" (July 7 *World Tribune*).

In this short amount of time, we ask for your support in these two areas:

1. Finding and encouraging prospective students to apply, and
2. Encouraging students to talk with SUA Admission counselors for help in completing their applications.

We are finding that some students are really struggling to get their application materials together before the deadline. Some of their struggles include getting letters of recommendations, SAT deadlines, writing the essay, concerns about financial aid, or experiencing lack of confidence in their grades. Please embrace and help these precious students, making sure that no one misses out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Together, let's realize President Ikeda's dream of SUA. ♪

30 Reasons to Apply to Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo

30. You are applying to other colleges and want to widen your chances of finding the best education.
29. You are a non-traditional student seeking a personalized education.
28. You want a modern education to prepare you for a global work environment.
27. The food.
26. A room with its own private bathroom and brand new living quarters.
25. Where else will you have so many opportunities to start traditions and build a new university?
24. You don't want to rule out that your parents may be right about SUA.
23. You want to make 99 close friends.
22. You want to be in a program that supports your study abroad interests without worrying about how your professors will view it, if you'll be able to graduate on time, credits, etc.
21. Financial aid and scholarship money is promised to students who need it.
20. The vision of SGI President Ikeda for youth as future world leaders, evidenced in his university addresses and peace proposals.
19. The Soka school system is second to none in humanistic education.
18. You believe college is for students.
17. You want to live in a setting where one-to-one interaction is the norm.
16. You want to sit in front of an awesome fountain.
15. You'll have your own laptop computer (included in tuition) and ports in the gathering areas outside.
14. The state-of-the-art library and the good possibility of finding your book not checked out.
13. You think professors should have office hours set aside for students and be accessible.
12. You want the professor to evaluate your work and remember your name.
11. You don't want your voice to echo over an auditorium in Freshman Biology.
10. You want to create your own on-campus activities.
9. The good outweighs the application headache.
8. The beach is just minutes away...and skiing is only an hour.
7. Be on a first-name basis with administration.
6. The opportunity of a lifetime to be the first graduating class of a university.
5. The breathtaking beauty of the campus buildings and landscape.
4. Becoming friends with some amazing, talented and creative people.
3. The caliber of the faculty and the wealth of their experience.
2. You want to change the world.
1. Create a dream together with SGI President Ikeda!

Soka Spirit

The Essence of November 18

By Monica Ong, Chicago

Nov. 18 is truly significant because it commemorates what it takes to make dreams come true. It was when the Soka Gakkai was founded in 1930—the birth of a dream held by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of this movement and first Soka Gakkai president. It is also the day that Makiguchi passed away in prison in 1944, standing by his convictions and never compromising his belief in the dignity of human life. We see that this day illuminates the very essence of the Soka Spirit.

During the Central Zone celebration in Chicago on Nov. 4, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima said, "Have a dream." He echoed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who in 1963 declared, "I have a dream today!" To have some kind of mission is in itself an act of courage. We all have talents and insight into our lives. Having a dream will allow us to share those gifts with others. It presents opportunities for us to temper our weaknesses and to appreciate the obstacles we face. The bigger the dream, the more we can learn. When we can live without acting like we know it all, we can live with exemplary humility and respect for others.

Why are dreams hard to actualize? Dreams ask a lot from us, often requiring things that we may find painful or hard to do. Dreams ask for our commitment. Dreams ask for us to love. Dreams want us to be bigger and better than what we merely think we are capable of. Dreams become real when we actualize that which is the very best in all of us.

Dreams are inherently aligned with truth. They are derived from the fact that we are perfectly endowed beings with infinite potential. Our task is for us to align ourselves with truth. It is only when we are dishonest with ourselves that we let dreams slip out of our grasp. Thus, let's understand that chasing a dream comes hand in hand with refuting doubt and dishonesty. We have a responsibility to cultivate a clear understanding of truth and recognize its diverse expressions. That's why we study.

Once we have a dream, we need tremendous effort and commitment to see it through to the very last

moment of our lives. We will face strong enemies and devilish functions, which will try to persuade us not to continue. In our hearts, we will understand the pain of injustice and suddenly feel a kinship to those who want something better and more meaningful than the delusions and animality they see from day to day. Here is our chance to develop the sort of courage that all dreams hinge upon. Here's our opportunity to challenge evil, to stand up for truth, to believe in ourselves. This is the Soka Spirit. This is the purpose of faith.

Let's not compromise our principles, our belief in what's right and true. Let's not put away our dreams simply because we don't think we can do it. Let's not settle for less because we don't believe in our goodness and our beauty. Those doubts are loud only when our convictions are silent.

We have two chances every day to crank up the volume on our convictions, to let our greater selves, our Buddha nature, speak loud and clear—twice a day to say that we are going to make our wildest dreams come true, twice a day to say we are going to stick to doing what's right, even if it scares us, even if danger is looming right next to us. We have those times to chant

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, to develop the courage it takes to be the human beings that we've always dreamed of becoming. The rest of the day is our chance to remind others. And we will, because our strength in those crucial moments will encourage them, because our unwavering dedication to truth will inspire them, because our respect for ourselves and others will deeply move their hearts. This is why we practice.

For me, Nov. 18 is a very special day. It's the day I renew my determination to fight for kosen-rufu as President Ikeda does; the day I accept the challenge of construction, of building a life and a dream with my own sweat and tears as second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda did; the day I renew my commitment to challenge injustice even at the cost of my own life just as President Makiguchi did; and the day I celebrate Soka Spirit. ♪



Dreams ask for our commitment. Dreams ask for us to love. Dreams want us to be bigger and better than what we merely think we are capable of. Dreams become real when we actualize that which is the very best in all of us.



YOUTH *Study* JANUARY 2001

What does "mission" mean? What is my "mission"?

By Youth Study Committee

Buddhism expounds the principle of "three thousand realms in a single life-moment." This principle holds that each life-moment is endowed with 3,000 different functions, which influence not only our own lives but those of all around us. They also influence society, our natural environment and the earth, and encompass the entire universe. Therefore, once you have decided to do something, the 3,000 functions and your entire being start working to help you reach your goal. The entire universe also starts moving toward the fulfillment of your goal. If you pray, "This is how I want to be," and continue to work toward your dream, you will gradually realize the future you have envisaged.

An ascending life, where you keep striving to grow and improve—this is what we mean by human revolution. Human revolution doesn't mean becoming something special or different from who you are; it simply means striving to improve yourself, no matter what challenges you face. Your future self does not exist in some far-off place; it exists in the heart and mind of your present self. That is why you have to face and tackle the realities that confront you. Just wishing to be a certain way and not making any concrete efforts will get you nowhere. (Feb. 25 *World Tribune*, p. 5)



me years to figure this out, an important thing to remember is that everyone is different and that everyone has his or her own pace.

President Ikeda once said, "The purpose of faith is to become happy." In today's fast-paced world, where there exist so many opportunities to live life to the fullest, and where there are so many people who want you to do one thing or another, remember that your mission in life—your mission for kosen-rufu—is to become happy. It's a very easy thing to forget. Fortunately we have every new day to rediscover our mission.

By Ken Saragosa, Orange County, Calif.
Youth Division Study Committee

The topic of mission has been very useful to me. This is a word that we hear a lot. When I was a kid, I would think about *Mission: Impossible*, and I imagined that my mission was something that would come to me, and that I could "choose to accept it."

As I got older, I began to ask myself, "What is my mission?" It dawned on me that I was *waiting* for my mission to appear. I was looking for some sign about what my mission was, even wanting people to just tell me what my mission was!

Through my prayer, and through reading President Ikeda's guidance, I realized that my mission was *my* mission; it was something which had to come from within me. I also realized that mission didn't mean becoming something I didn't want to be, or living up to an ideal which I didn't think I could handle. Rather, realizing my mission is just another way of talking about realizing what my hopes and dreams are, and appreciating my unique talents and abilities.

According to Buddhism, every single person has unlimited potential. Whether we believe it or not, each one of us has something unique to offer the world. In reality, the question isn't whether we believe what Buddhism says; it's whether we believe in our own true potential.

Mission is another word for dreams. It is another way of saying, "I will become the person I always wanted to be." And it means believing that "I truly have something to offer the world." I realized that we don't express our mission just within SGI activities, or within our jobs or careers. We express our mission in our families, in our friendships and in all our relationships—everywhere that we are is the place that we realize our mission. ♣

INTRODUCTION

While working on the study page, we on the Youth Study Committee talked about the strong connection between a person's happiness and life's mission. This month and last month, we have been having a dialogue about "mission" with the youth of SGI-USA. From our collective experience, we have learned that to live toward our mission or discovery of our mission is a way of creating happy lives.

After reading our thoughts, please write your personal responses about how you view "mission." We really want to print your thoughts, and make this a Study Page dialogue that includes many different voices and perspectives.

Please send your responses via e-mail to seize@sgi-usa.org, or mail to Seize the Day, 606 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

By David Joray, Washington, D.C.
Youth Division Study Committee

The idea of mission has always been a difficult one for me to grasp. Though I grew up practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and have been pondering the question, "What is my mission?" for as long as I can remember, I admit that I am still baffled.

For many years, I accepted what other people—namely my parents, my professors or my seniors in faith—wanted me to accomplish and I can say that, to this day, I have achieved the dreams of many others. However, even after accomplishing these great things, I was still left with an empty, incomplete feeling in my heart. These troubled feelings became so negative that they began to compromise my faith. No longer did I understand what "my mission for kosen-rufu" signified. Why was I practicing? Was it for my parents? Was it for the SGI or for President Ikeda?

It was then that I decided to embark on a personal campaign, chanting every day to specifically discover what this idea of mission was all about and what it meant to me. This was several months ago and I feel that now I have a greater understanding. And though some might say that it has taken

MATERIAL request

SEND IN YOUR STUFF

Our youth publication is only as strong as what you bring us.

Poems, Articles, Pictures, Stories, Commentaries, Pulitzer Prize insight ...whatever you got, get it to us.

HOW?

Postal Mail: SGI-USA
Attn: Kim Herrmann
Seize the Day
606 Wilshire Blvd.
PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427
Email: seize@sgi-usa.org

Trailblazers!



by **Daisaku Leslie**
SGI-USA Student
Division Leader

"Victory Lies in the Challenge"

"The journey from Kamakura to Kyoto takes twelve days. If you travel for eleven but stop with only one day remaining, how can you admire the moon over the capital?...How swiftly the days pass!" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1027)

It's hard to believe that a whole year has passed. It feels like we just celebrated New Year's Day a month ago. The other day I thought about the year 2000, the goals I set and what I was able to accomplish. Honestly speaking, I didn't accomplish all of my goals, but I did accomplish most of them. I set very high standards for myself, but this does not justify the fact that I didn't read all the books that I had set out to read. But there are still nine days left in the year.

My reflection on this past year reminded me of an experience I had in graduate school. I was required to write a master's thesis of more than 100 pages. I struggled with many issues that final year in graduate school. I was a full-time student, doing SGI activities, and struggling to make ends meet by working 30 hours a week. In order to write, I felt I needed to spend more time on my studies.

I took a chance at a scholarship and cut down on my working hours, only to find that the scholarship didn't go through and my pockets were empty. I couldn't even afford to take a bus or train to the library, let alone pay for the books and make copies for my research. I was stuck in a very hard place.

The Gohonzon looked at me as if to say, "I'm here, talk to me." I chanted earnestly to overcome this situation in the blistering heat of a humid summer.

Then one day I received a phone call: "Can you work and interpret for a choir touring Japan for a month and a half?" I thought, "Another six weeks of not working on my thesis?" But I needed funds to do my research, so I accepted the job. When the job was finished, I had three months to write my paper, and as I began the research, the focus and topic of my paper began to change. I read, took notes, read, took notes, wrote down my thoughts and comments on note cards along with note headings. By the time I completed all the research and developed a solid outline, there were only three weeks left

to write a 100-page thesis.

For the next three weeks I ate, slept on cardboard boxes, racked my brain, and wrote like my life depended upon it. I determined that I had to finish the paper as if it would cost me my life. In 17 days, I was able to complete my thesis. As a result, I was offered entrance into the doctoral program.

The moral of this story is that time is not the most important factor in life, but rather the strength of one's determination and the spirit to not give up; to challenge oneself to the very end so that you can "admire the moon over the capital."

IMPRESSIONS of SUIA

"I am confident that the university's presence will be a great source of hope for the entire world."

— SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, May 12, 2000, *World Tribune*

"With the sound of construction reverberating far and wide, I ask that America lead the way in raising the curtain on another new phase in the worldwide kosen-rufu movement."

— SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, May 12 *World Tribune*

"The United States will be a focus of the new century, and I want to establish a fine educational institution, a world center of learning, there. This is my wish and my determination as the university's founder."

— SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, Aug. 4 *World Tribune*

"I hope you or someone you love will have the great fortune to attend SUA now or in the future. If your experience is anything close to what I've gained from my Soka education, it's bound to become the most valuable four years of your entire life."

— Craig DeRousse, Sept. 1 *World Tribune*

"Most of all, I am deeply indebted to Soka University for nurturing my son's individuality and encouraging him to respect himself for who he is. As a result, he returned a much happier person after studying at Soka University."

— Carol DeRousse-Holladay, Sept. 1 *World Tribune*

"I've had the privilege of watching our staff and faculty grow to a group of dynamic, committed individuals who are excited about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a truly unique student-centered university founded on the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life."

— Eric Hauber, July 28 *World Tribune*

"I can't explain the excitement I felt and still feel, or the wonderment that such a place exists, for this is where the lions and lionesses will dwell, accomplishing their mission "as world citizens in solidarity for peace"—where great people are going to develop into great leaders, and where the struggle for peace will begin."

— Karina Barrios, Sept. 1 *World Tribune*

www.soka.edu

President Ikeda recently stated in Singapore that the spirit of mentor and disciple exists whenever people try to elevate themselves in any realm of endeavor whether in the world of art, crafts, sports or education.

So whether or not I am able to accomplish the rest of my goals for this year, I am determined to challenge myself in the next nine days and experience how truly precious each day of life is. Moreover, acting on the conviction that how I end this year will determine how I begin the new millennium, I am confident that good fortune will follow. Victory will lie in the challenge. ♪