

FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR EMISSARIES FROM THE FUTURE

Greetings to the readers of *Living Buddhism*. What a wonderful and exciting summer this has been. Throughout the United States, young people are joyfully participating in our Victory Over Violence Family Youth Festivals. As of this writing, nearly 80,000 people have attended twenty festivals across the SGI-USA, including the Caribbean. Twenty-four festivals are still to come, although most of them will have taken place by the time you read this.

A new generation of young people is demonstrating its passion. Youth are polishing their ability, deepening their sense of responsibility and taking the lead to create the future.

Last summer, SGI President Ikeda wrote a poem dedicated to members in the United States. In it, he declares:

*The Bodhisattvas of the Earth
have emerged!
They have arisen!
They have started to stir, to move!...*

*In this great land of America
— the world in miniature —
new waves, a new movement,
have arisen and begun!
(Songs for America, pp. 9–10)*

As I've been traveling across America, witnessing our beautiful SGI family wholeheartedly celebrating the vigorous activities of young people, I felt the truth of these words. These youth are those Bodhisattvas of the Earth, sharing their joy and conviction in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. There is no doubt in my mind that they will exert themselves in this new century and contribute to establishing a culture of peace and a society based on humanism. These joyful family festivals, dedicated to proclaiming Victory over Violence, are proof that a new wave — a new movement — is truly beginning throughout our country.

But what does it mean to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth? In *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, we find the passage: "It is the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo that are the great pure Law that will be spread widely in the Latter Day of the Law. And it is the great bodhisattvas who sprang up from the earth in numbers equal to the dust particles of a thousand worlds to whom this was entrusted" (p. 430).

Bodhisattvas of the Earth, then, are those of us who have emerged in this lifetime to take up the banner of humanism and respect for the sanctity of life. They include this generation of young people who will truly enable a transition from the twentieth century — the century of war — to a new century of life.

If we see our youth as precious emissaries from the future, then we can understand the importance of cherishing them, inspiring them with great ideals and developing their great potential. When we unite as a family to embrace these young bodhisattvas, we will see the results in ten to twenty years. The challenges that they willingly take on are not only a cause for their future but also for the future of the SGI-USA and for the future of society. Their development and growth will truly determine all our futures.

Throughout America, we are holding grand and dynamic festivals. But everything in our organization comes back to the essential spirit of gathering in small groups and encouraging one another through dialogue. Our youth express their energy and dynamism in these festivals, but their true growth and development are nurtured within our districts. Though these festivals are proof that a new generation of young people is taking flight, this visible proof is based on the unseen efforts within each district.

Though we can celebrate grand victories, we must not forget that our real challenge is in one-on-one discussions and in the struggles we face within our daily lives. As President Ikeda wrote in his New Year's poem:

*From one individual to another,
Starting in our immediate environment,
From small, modest efforts,
Let us steadily carry on our movement.
A commitment to treasure each person —
In that daily, unceasing practice
Lies the dynamism
To transform the entire planet.
And there, too, shines a life
Of unparalleled value-creation.
(Living Buddhism, January 2001, p. 6)*

A new century will be created starting from our immediate environment. The dynamism to transform the entire planet can be found within the dynamism of transforming our own lives. This is the concept of human revolution. This is the meaning of value creation. And this is the spirit with which we undertake our daily practice of Buddhism.

So let us celebrate our joy, inspire society with our vision and share with many people the great future at which we are aiming. At the same time, let's remember that the engine for our entire movement is not the grand festivals but rather the individual efforts each of us makes within our own spheres of endeavor. Treasuring one another is the true action of Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all your sincere and dedicated efforts. I am looking forward to meeting and speaking with you, however briefly, during my travels across America.

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