

**SGI GENERAL DIRECTOR WADA VISITS DENVER  
DIALOGUE IS OUR NOURISHMENT  
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On Jan. 12, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada and SGI North America Bureau Director Norimasa Saito arrived in Denver for a whirlwind weekend of meetings with Western Zone members. Their Denver stop was part of a nine-day stay in the United States. Also visiting were SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and newly appointed Young Wo-men's Leader Wendy DeSouza and Young Men's Leader Steve Mortan.

The next morning, they participated in a leaders meeting. This was the first time the whole Western Zone, including leaders from the Texas/Oklahoma Region and the newly created Arizona Region, gathered together. They discussed the zone's goals toward propagation, publications promotion and its vision for this year.

In the afternoon, a nationwide youth area leaders teleconference was held in which Mr. Wada shared excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's recent guidance on the importance of youth taking responsibility for the expansion of our organization.

Then in the evening, the Western Zone Kick-off Meeting commenced with more than 700 members in attendance. In his remarks, General Director Wada shared several analogies that brought home some key concepts with the audience. Recounting an earlier visit to Denver, during which local members planted cherry trees, he equated the care and nourishment of a cherry tree to the care of people we introduce to the SGI.

"To successfully grow a tree," he said, "the tree needs shelter, sunlight, earth and water. Some trees grow slowly, others at a rapid pace. So they all need individual attention.

"I visited a park where many of the trees had withered, and only one was left standing. You may plant 100 trees, and only one survives. But in 100 years, you'll have 100 healthy trees."

Stressing that we must believe in the power of faith and chant to the Gohonzon no matter what happens, Mr. Wada joked, "Our faith is quicker and easier than the Internet to communicate with the universe.

"Sometimes, when we do not receive immediate conspicuous benefit, we may have doubts. However, we need to have the conviction that we will ultimately win. Through our prayer, we can gain the wisdom to decisively take the correct action."

Recalling again the cherry tree analogy, Mr. Wada said, "Dialogue is our nourishment."