

FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA A GREAT MOVEMENT BEGINS WITH US

The SGI-USA's summer activities, which include publications promotion and propagation, are discussed by SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima.

My dear SGI-USA friends, recently, traveling across the country, I have been reuniting with old friends while making new ones. And as I reflect on all the seen and unseen causes you have made to advance the kosen-rufu movement in America, I am filled with great appreciation. In particular, I am touched and invigorated by all your efforts to support our youth and the 43 festivals occurring throughout the country this summer. Thank you so much!

Seeing your action, I am reminded that each one of us—together with our mentor, SGI President Ikeda—is a pioneer of the 21st century. I cannot even begin to tell you how moved I have been to hear the many dramatic stories and experiences of how new people have joined SGI-USA.

These feelings of appreciation brought to mind something President Ikeda spoke about in Okinawa, Japan, several years ago: “*Jiga sakko* means the will to blaze a trail in an unexplored area, set an example and lay a foundation for the many who will follow. It suggests possessing a positive vision of and great confidence in the far-off future, and making oneself the starting point, the pioneer in creating the foundation for a new history.

“Your fathers, mothers, elder brothers and sisters, as well as your seniors in faith, who opened the path to kosen-rufu, embody the spirit of *jiga sakko*.... You, too, are pioneers for the wider propagation of the Mystic Law in the ten thousand years to come.... A mighty river begins with you, and I expect you to practice with the realization that you are the starting point” (*Buddhism in Action*, vol. 7, p. 164).

I feel such a sense of gratitude towards the sponsors that introduced each one of you to the SGI and Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. It takes tremendous effort and prayer to sponsor even one person to begin practicing. This kind of care is exactly at the heart of SGI-USA. As I travel around the country, I am thrilled to learn that so many of you are sharing this practice with others.

It is my greatest hope and prayer that each one of you, through your activities and festivals, can experience the joy of having your friends or families begin practicing Buddhism this year.

We are also now focusing our energies on the promotion of our publications. Subscribing to, reading and promoting the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* is the cause to advance kosen-rufu one step further. I sincerely thank you for your efforts to promote our publications behind the scenes.

President Ikeda recently quoted Nichiren Daishonin as saying, “The Buddha saves people through the written word” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 153). President Ikeda goes on to say, “How immense is the mission of the *Seikyo Shimbun* [the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper], which has embraced the great compassion of the Buddha as its own spirit and, by means of the written word, is working tirelessly for people's happiness” (June 22 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

The *World Tribune* is our *Seikyo Shimbun*, our source for inspiration. Let's take full

responsibility to inspire ourselves and encourage our friends and families, connecting them to this lifeline of hope. When we earnestly struggle to propagate Buddhism, when we labor for the sake of another's happiness, these publications become a pivotal source of encouragement for our continuous efforts.

I wish to ask everyone — the men's, women's and youth divisions — to please rack your brains and break new ground in utilizing our publications to propagate Buddhism and advance the kosen-rufu movement in America.