

**AIMING TOWARD FURTHER GROWTH
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In the midst of his busy November schedule, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima made a whirlwind trip to Oklahoma City, Columbia, S.C., and Fort Walton Beach and Fort Lauderdale in Florida to express his appreciation to the members in each area for their dedication to their communities and to encourage them in their efforts in propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. It was Mr. Naga-shima's first visit to Oklahoma City, Columbia and the Gulf Coast area since being appointed general director in December 1999.

At a guidance meeting at the Oklahoma Community Center on Nov. 12, Mr. Nagashima expressed his gratitude to the members for attending (some from as far away as Lawton, Tulsa and Dallas) and said: "Oklahoma was a target of terrorism in April 1995. We recently experienced more terrorism in America. It is important in Buddhism to recognize the significance behind such horrendous occurrences. As the Daishonin states: 'Great events never have minor omens. When great evil occurs, great good follows' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1119). We accomplish this by returning to the basics of faith, practice and study."

At another guidance meeting, held on Nov. 13 at the South Carolina Community Center, Mr. Nagashima energetically spoke to the members who traveled all the way from Greenville, Charleston, Augusta and other neighboring cities. Touching upon the depths of the Buddhist teachings, he stated: "The importance of fusing our lives with the Mystic Law is the touchstone, allowing us to move from the microcosm of our innate Buddhahood to the macrocosm of the world and universe and gain the wisdom to live with the courage and vitality of a lion. Our elevated life-condition is the most important attribute we will be able to carry with us after death. As the Daishonin states, 'Single-mindedly chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and urge others to do the same; that will remain as the only memory of your present life in this human world'" (WND, 64).

At yet another guidance meeting on Nov. 14 at the new Gulf Coast Activity Center located near Fort Walton Beach and Pensacola, the general director encouraged pioneer members, expressing his hope that they become vital players in propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism in the Gulf Coast area, rich with nature's beauty: "Let's refresh our *shakubuku* spirit, which is vital for our happiness. Nothing is impos-sible when we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo wholeheartedly. Great joy and conviction well up from within. People today, especially after Sept. 11, are seriously looking for something that can be the source of fearlessness. The time has truly come for us to share Buddhism with them for their peace and happiness."

The final leg of Mr. Naga-shima's guidance trip was the Miami Community Center, where he attended a guidance meeting on Nov. 15. Thanking local members for their sincere efforts in propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism and nurturing new members in faith, he stated: "The spirit to spread Buddhism is what makes us courageous. Practicing for ourselves and others allows us to manifest our compassionate nature and develop good fortune. Sure, spreading Buddhism is a difficult task, but the more you try the more you will experience joy in your life. Let's win in life by showing great actual proof. Victory based upon our sincere and vigorous daimoku and consistent effort in propagation will cause our kosen-rufu movement to gain further momentum."