

**Gen'l Dir. Gives 3 Points for Rest of Year**  
**By DAVE McNEILL, Managing Editor**  
**Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., June 28**

**At Central Executive Committee meeting, Mr. Zaitso also reports on Diversity Committee. 'Action plan' devised.**

At the first Central Executive Committee meeting of the year, General Director Zaitso urged joint territory leaders today to work with him to prepare the SGI-USA for the next century.

Referring to SGI President Ikeda's hopes that the U.S. organization will become the "main stage" of the SGI's worldwide efforts, Mr. Zaitso asked: "Are we ready to accept this role? Unfortunately, I have to say, 'Not yet.'"

Mr. Zaitso went on to outline how he feels the organization should grow to meet that challenge. In response, the participants later devised an "action plan," with specific targets, for the second half of the year.

The general director also reported to the leaders gathered at the Florida Nature and Culture Center about the SGI-USA Executive Committee on Diversity. Mr. Zaitso formed this committee a year ago to begin looking at how to better address the needs of the organization's diverse membership.

### **Three Points**

With less than four years until the new century, Mr. Zaitso said that the organization is at an important juncture. He focused on three points for the SGI-USA's growth — dialogue, gaining trust in the community, and sharing this Buddhism with others. He expressed his confidence that by working together in the spirit of many in body, one in mind, the SGI-USA can fulfill its important mission.

One-to-one dialogue is the most effective way to advance our cause, he said. Citing a recent speech by President Ikeda, the general director reminded the leaders that only gathering people for meetings is not effective in the long run.

Rather, he said, quoting the SGI president: "Visiting each person one by one and house to house is the way to encourage our friends. A person who does this can be called a true leader."

All other measurements of the organization's growth — number of new members, discussion meeting attendance, number of subscribers — start with the leaders giving heartfelt encouragement to one person at a time, he said. Moreover, such reasoned, personal conversations, and the friendships that result, are the best way to clear up any confusion members may have about the priesthood, which is actively trying to recruit SGI members.

Mr. Zaitso next addressed the geographic reorganization taking place across the country. It is important gain even more trust from our communities, he said, "so we do not create an image that the SGI is a closed, strange Buddhist organization separated from the community." Reorganization efforts are worth the many difficulties entailed in implementing them, he said, because the organization will become more deeply rooted in the community, better able to support our members and to reach out to our neighbors.

Finally, the general director focused on sharing this Buddhism with others. "Propagating this Buddhism is the key to our human revolution and the most direct way to transform our destiny and that of society, thus leading to lasting happiness and peace," he said, quoting President Ikeda.

Title: Gen'l Dir. Gives Three Points for Rest of Year  
Subject: World Tribune 07/11/97 n.3147 p.1 WT970711p01 Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 06/28/97  
Author: Dave McNeill  
Keywords: 06/28/97 Dir. Florida Genl Gives Goals Lauderdale National News Organization Points Rest Three Year

He asked that all leaders share a determined prayer for propagation.

After Mr. Zaitso's speech, the leaders broke into small groups to devise specific action points for the next six months. The resulting plan focused on increasing readership of the publications, completing the geographic reorganization, propagation and studying the essence of the priesthood issue. Each organizational unit is encouraged to set its own goals in these four areas.

### **Diversity Committee**

Mr. Zaitso formed the diversity committee last October, in response to a growing number of voices within the SGI-USA that the organization look into issues resulting from its diverse membership. The 22 men and women — representing various races, language groups and sexual orientations — have met six times since.

“In the beginning it was a very difficult experience for everyone,” Mr. Zaitso reported to the leaders. “But as we continued to meet, we found that we could talk about these issues much more freely.”

He said that the committee, which will give a detailed report to the organization in a future *World Tribune*, had confirmed two main points:

- Racial prejudice exists in everyone's life because we all possess the ten worlds. Therefore, each of us should challenge ourselves to overcome the life-condition of discrimination. As an organization, we should have a keen sense of this issue and make every effort to enhance the spirit of equality and compassion among ourselves and our membership.
- Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches the dignity of life, human equality and respect for each individual's character and differences. We have the great philosophy that is the key to finding a solution to these important issues of diversity.

The current committee will continue to meet until the end of the year. At that time, it plans to provide basic guidelines and materials for each joint territory to form its own diversity committees in early 1998.

(A report on revisions to the personnel manual and other CEC discussions will appear in future issues.)

**WT**