

## Byakuren Reevaluate Mission, Structure

BY LISA JONES

Los Angeles, Oct. 28

**The group solicits suggestions for a new name** as part of its progressive reassessment.

Quick quiz: What do Byakuren members do — aside from make their purple uniforms look good?

If you don't know off hand or haven't given it much thought, that's an indication that the Byakuren members in your area are doing what they do so well: working tirelessly behind the scenes to protect the members and support the organization.

"What we do goes way beyond vacuuming the community center and cleaning the restrooms," says Leng Ho, national Byakuren chief. "We're fostering the development of young women, fighting for justice, striving to embody the mentor-disciple relationship."

As a group, the Byakuren is in the middle of a progressive re-evaluation of its mission and structure.

"We're planning for the 21st century," Ms. Ho explains. "So it's healthy for us to revisit our basic assumptions and open a dialogue about who we are and where we're going."

For example, the Byakuren is revamping its handbook. "We're taking out all authoritarian language," Ms. Ho says. In addition, they're decentralizing their structure by creating local, three-member councils with decision-making power.

"The point is to create more opportunities for young women to take responsibility," Ms. Ho says. "We also want to attract more and younger members. We can do that only if we're a fresh, vibrant group." There are currently 700 Byakuren members in the SGI-USA.

The group's revitalization initiative also involves the formulation of a new mission statement and a reassessment of its name; *Byakuren* is Japanese for white lotus. "We'd like to find a name that's more descriptive of what we do," Ms. Ho says. "If anyone in the SGI-USA has a name they want to suggest, we'd like to hear it." Members can send their suggestions to: Leng Ho, SGI-USA Byakuren chief, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

"We won't change the name every year," says Reiko Groshell, SGI-USA young women's division chief. "If people want to keep the current name, we'd like that input, too."

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Title: Byakuren Reevaluate Mission, Structure

Subject: World Tribune 11/07/97 n.3164 p.1 WT971107p01

Author: Lisa Jones

Keywords: Byakuren Divisional Mission News Organization Reevaluate Structure Youth