

## **WHAT WORKED FOR US**

### **BY DAVID AOYAMA, LOS ANGELES REGION #4 LEADER**

Making financial contributions is an important part of our faith and practice in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Those who do so will certainly gain great fortune. The goal of the May contribution activity is that every member knows about, understands the spirit of and has the opportunity to participate in making contributions for kosen-rufu. Reaching every member with a correct understanding of the significance and spirit of contribution does not happen without effort on the part of leaders. To accomplish this goal, it is a practical necessity that we need excellent planning and courageous action, both based on abundant daimoku. This is what we did last year:

### **PRACTICAL TIPS**

**EARLY** preparation. We highly recommend starting the promotion and preparation in March. There is also time to save money so we can participate without hesitation.

**DIFFERENT** strategies by each area. The Area leaders took the initiative and played an active role in planning for the activity, but not because they were told to do so. As a result they felt trusted and more responsible.

**USE** the strength of divisions. Because divisional communication is strong in our area, letting each division come up with its own respective plans also worked very well. In our case, the women led the entire promotion. The men fully supported them. That was our secret strategy. The youth came up with special certificates for those youth who made contributions that were collected at their Sunday youth meetings. We believe that many more youth participated proudly because of this.

**SPECIAL CERTIFICATE.** Two areas made special certificates and receipts for those who participated. Many members told us that it was a good idea and that it made them feel very special about contributing during the May Commemorative Contribution.

**COLLECTION** in each district. In one area, which is widespread geographically, the Area leaders decided to visit each district to collect people's contributions. Because the community center is so far away from them, the leaders' efforts were really appreciated; they made it comfortable for the members to participate. For instance, the area leaders did morning gongyo with the local leaders of the district. Afterward several of them stayed to collect contribution or give personal guidance, while others did home visits. The district house was open all day for people to drop in to participate or to have dialogue.

*I believe creating a good atmosphere during the activity also enhanced the successful promotion of contributions. We did this by doing the following:*

**REFERRING TO THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN...** Following SGI President Ikeda's guidance, we always used the *Major Writings* for encouragement. We prepared passages for leaders to use to share a correct understanding of the significance of contributions with people.

**CREATING A WARM ATMOSPHERE.** It is important to create a warm atmosphere at collection sites. We decorated the rooms and made sure to welcome and appreciate each person making a contribution.

**TAKING CARE OF THE MEMBERS.** Our daily efforts of home visits, personal guidance and care added to members' appreciation of the organization.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** The benefit we receive from contributing is not an immediate material benefit but the good fortune we build in our lives by contributing freely for the sake of the kosen-rufu movement. The act of contributing itself is already a great benefit, because it shows the person is manifesting the life state of Bodhisattva.