

VICTORIOUS MARCH 16TH
BY ED FEASEL,
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION LEADER

This March 16, the youth of SGI-USA celebrated Kosen-rufu Day by sponsoring joyful and refreshing introductory meetings across the nation. The meetings were a great success. We had over 10,000 youth participants, nearly 4,000 guests, and together with the men's and women's division members who attended, we had over 16,000 people attend our March 16 meetings. On behalf of the youth, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the men's and women's divisions for their support. I have received reports from around the country about the great success of these meetings. The creativity and energy that went into the preparations is simply awesome and inspiring.

The youth division felt it was altogether fitting that we celebrate March 16 by holding introductory meetings. March 16 is the day when each of us reconfirms our determination to make steady efforts toward realizing kosen-rufu, and what better way to reconfirm this spirit than by sharing this Buddhism with our friends and family! With the great success of our meetings, it is important that we continue to follow up with the guests who attended and help them gain a deeper understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI.

In this next quarter, the entire organization will focus on May commemorative contributions. This is a great opportunity for each of us to support our SGI movement of peace, culture and education. In April, we will also have our SGI-USA Entrance Exam. While we engage in these activities with our goal of having 100 percent participation, I think it is crucial that we maintain the momentum we have established in our propagation efforts.

Our March 16 activity has definitely created an exciting energy and atmosphere for propagation. As youth, we have to be the ones to revive this spirit. The youth division is the key to creating this new momentum and we must not be mistaken in the slightest about this point. In *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda describes a scene where the Soka Gakkai had accomplished their goal of a 2 million membership six months earlier than they had planned. He writes:

In every region of Japan, the youth division members had led this advance. They were responsible for thirty to forty percent of the new membership each month, proving again that young people were the driving force for the fresh development of kosen-rufu. Indeed, this is an unchanging principle for the spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4, pp. 192–93).

This is the mission of youth! With our hearts full of compassion, let's utilize our energy and passion to share this great Buddhism with those who are struggling and suffering. Beginning with March 16, we have initiated a new rhythm of propagation throughout the SGI-USA. The question remains, however, what history will we leave behind from our youth? What greater history to leave behind than the initiation of a whole new era of propagation: an era where the youth, holding high the banner of humanism, spread the great ideals of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to every corner of our country. In fact, this history of unprecedented propagation is precisely the history that President Ikeda left behind in every organization that he assumed responsibility for during his youth.

This spirit to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism for the sake of the people is also the path of mentor and disciple. In another chapter of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda describes the scene where he finally is exonerated on all charges stemming from the Osaka incident, for which he went to jail. President Ikeda mentions how happy and proud his mentor, President Toda, must feel. At the end of the chapter, he writes:

The Daishonin writes "The lion fears no other beast, nor do its cubs" (MW-1, 241). To spread the Mystic Law is to follow the lion's path. Only those of dauntless courage, conviction and integrity can undertake the rigorous challenge of propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism. The path of the lion is also that of mentor and disciple, a path that can only be realized by disciples who make their mentor's spirit their own (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 5, p. 291).

Let's continue to follow the lion's path. For the sake of America, for the sake of the world, let's stand up as youth and increase the momentum that we have built this March 16.