

FINAL QUARTER'S FOCUS ON DISCUSSION MEETING PARTICIPATION BY MARGIE HALL MANAGING EDITOR

The 45th Central Executive Conference convened Sept. 26 at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif., with approximately 75 nationwide representatives from 27 regions attending.

General Director Fred Zaitzu welcomed everyone with a report on his trip to Japan last month for the SGI Youth Training Course. Sharing SGI President Ikeda's recent guidance, Mr. Zaitzu related: "Let's take good care of our members. Neither doctrine nor speeches will capture people's hearts. Kindness toward others is what really matters. As President Ikeda stated: 'Buddhism is win or lose. In this important realm of supreme good against the most extreme evil, no battle can be fought halfway.' With the spirit of a lion king, we should exert our full effort. This is the kind of spirit and action that is required at this time. Study of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings is also vital. President Ikeda said it is especially important to use the Goshō in our efforts. I sincerely hope our members can joyfully carry out expansion activities and enjoy discussion meetings in the final quarter of this year."

During the conference, national women's leader Wendy Clark emphasized the importance of heartfelt dialogue and home visits to ensure success in the upcoming general meetings that will be held throughout the country to commemorate Nov. 18, the founding of the Soka Gakkai. It was suggested that large districts hold these gatherings at the group level.

In town for an extended stay in the United States, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada and SGI Vice Women's Leader Yumiko Hachiya also attended the CEC. Mrs. Hachiya shared her personal experiences regarding introducing this practice to an acquaintance and having successful, meaningful dialogues with a member in the temple organization. Foremost in her talk was her encouragement for all to continue in our efforts with a positive outlook and embracing each individual with sincerity.

Mr. Wada focused on the importance of supporting and raising the youth. He also emphasized that the strength of the Soka Gakkai lies in a person's character and an all-embracing approach. One's depth of character is determined by daimoku, he said. People who gain respect from others are individuals whose practice is strong, whose prayer is deep, whose guidance is clear and whose sense of direction for kosen-rufu is strong.

A highlight of the CEC was a report given by Dave McNeill, managing editor of book publishing in the SGI-USA Publications Center. He announced the launching of Middleway Press, a new division of SGI-USA Publications, and Treasure Tower Books, SGI-USA's children's press (see story, page 1). Currently available at community center bookstores or by mail order are the "Winning in Life" pamphlet in Spanish and in Chinese; and *For Today and Tomorrow*, a book of daily encouragement from President Ikeda. Next month, the much-anticipated one-volume compilation of the Daishonin's teachings—which contains all seven volumes of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*—will be in SGI bookstores. Upcoming projects include publishing *Faith Into Action* (a book of excerpts from President Ikeda's guidance by subject); *A Youthful Diary* and an inspirational date book for 2000 called *Dawn of the Century of Life*.

For the year 2000, SGI-USA's quarterly focus will continue to be propagation promotion in December, January and February; contribution efforts in March, April and May; the promotion of publications in June, July and August; and district meeting participation in September, October and November.