

CEC MEMBERS LOOK TOWARD MAY 3, 2001
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Zone and national leaders who gathered for the 47th Central Executive Conference, held in Los Angeles March 24–26, returned to the basics of leadership in the SGI. Symbolic of this, the CEC began at the Malibu Training Center, where SGI President Ikeda gave his historic guidance on leadership in 1990. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima encouraged the CEC to make a new start from Malibu toward May 3, 2001, with the same spirit to care for the members that the SGI president shows us.

SGI General Director Eiichi Wada, who was visiting from Japan, thanked everyone for their daimoku toward the Seattle Incident trial ruling. He reminded them, though, of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's guidance that "at times, even though you win, you create a cause for future defeat." Mr. Wada asked the leaders to turn the victory of the court's ruling into more victories — especially in awakening temple members to the truth of Nichiren Shoshu.

The CEC members discussed many organizational focuses for the coming months, beginning with our continuing propagation effort. Our official quarterly focus on propagation has just ended, but Mr. Nagashima emphasized that we need to continue to share this practice with many others. Because the women's and youth meetings in February and March introduced thousands of people to SGI-USA, Mr. Nagashima asked the leaders to help members follow-up with their guests and encourage them to start practicing Buddhism and receiving benefit.

He also determined again to introduce one new member himself this year. A team of national leaders was appointed to spearhead propagation, with Cory Taylor, SGI-USA young men's leader, heading it up.

Later this month, the May Commemorative Contribution will begin (April 28–June 6), and SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck led a discussion on making this the most encouraging experience possible for all participants. As one important aspect of the basics of the practice, many members will be challenging themselves to give financial donations for the further advancement of our kosen-rufu movement. The leaders shared many experiences of members who had grown through challenging themselves in last year's commemorative contribution.

After the quarterly focus on contribution will come a three-month focus on publications promotion (June–August). A team of national leaders led by Renu Jiandani, SGI-USA young women's leader, has already begun thinking of new ideas for encouraging people to renew their *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* subscriptions. Greg Martin, the SGI-USA Publications Center leader, explained various improvements the Subscriptions Department is making to serve readers better and apologized for recent problems resulting in many readers not receiving renewal notices on time. By the end of the year, Ms. Jiandani reminded everyone, our goal is to have every active member subscribe to the *World Tribune*.

Since sharing the greatness of our Buddhist philosophy through propagation and subscription promotion is so fundamental to our kosen-rufu movement, the CEC agreed that appointing district propagation and subscription promotion leaders would be a good idea.

All of our organizational goals are achievable, General Director Wada emphasized, if

based on President Ikeda's message to the CEC (see box) the leaders truly unite. "In order to unite," he said, "each of you needs to stand up with the same sense of responsibility that Mr. Nagashima has. Whether it's in dialogue with temple members, introducing new members to the practice, encouraging people to contribute financially or promoting the publications, you should feel totally responsible for SGI-USA's success. If each leader feels this way, you will have greater unity in the SGI-USA and, thus, greater victories."

Mr. Wada also encouraged the leaders to improve organizational communication. The three components of this, he explained, are communicating, reporting and discussing. "When we communicate with one another, we can create unity," he said. "By reporting, we are able to know the reality of things—how our organization is moving, and if we are moving in the right direction. And in discussing after collecting correct information, we can talk about it together and, based on this, plan the next strategy for our next victory and take action."

At the close of the CEC, Mr. Nagashima again encouraged the leaders to exert themselves toward the milestone of May 3, 2001, when Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo will open. "There are just about 400 days until then," he said. "And about 100 days from now will be July 3, the Day of Mentor and Disciple. About 100 days after that will be Oct. 13, the day of Nichiren Daishonin's death. About 100 days after that will be Jan. 26, SGI Day. Then, 100 days later, comes May 3, 2001, the day that President Ikeda has been inspiring us to work toward for many years. Let's win in each of these 100-day periods toward that day! Let's not have even one regret!"