

## **FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR ACTIVITY CENTERS TO OPEN SOON**

*Dearest Friends!*

May 3 marks the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's inauguration as the third president of the Soka Gakkai. I am so happy to be extending greetings to all of you on this occasion! Because of the endless series of victories during these past 40 years, we now see an unprecedented and prosperous level of growth in the spread of Buddhism throughout the world. The widespread propagation of the Law is Nichiren Daishonin's will, and I can never fully express the appreciation and pride that I feel for having the opportunity to participate in this historic undertaking.

As I described in a letter sent to each of you this month, we will again hold our May Commemorative Contribution this year beginning April 28—the anniversary of the founding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism—until June 4. I sincerely hope every member will be able to participate at this significant time.

In my travels throughout the country in the past months, I have met wonderful SGI-USA members who are truly taking the initiative to help the SGI-USA flourish in their community. I believe when individuals feel this kind of pride and responsibility, our future is assured. Our May Commemorative Contribution allows each member to take this kind of responsibility in a concrete way. Thank you in advance for your help in strengthening our foundation in America.

In line with this, I want to share some exciting news with you. Currently, we have 67 community centers and culture centers throughout the SGI-USA. This year we are scheduled to open three new community centers: one in Orlando, Fla., another in Southern Virginia, and the third on Long Island in New York. Congratulations! We intend to continue to increase the number of community centers in the United States in order to support our steady growth.

However, since there are many locations with a significant concentration of SGI-USA members that are a long distance from the nearest community or culture center, the board of directors recently approved a plan to open smaller-scale activity centers. While the organizations in many areas are not yet large enough to support a full-scale community center, the members are still sincerely working to advance kosen-rufu, and often travel many hours to support their community centers. Therefore, these facilities will be suitable for gathering 60–70 people and allow many areas to conduct local activities with total freedom. How exciting! These activity centers will be a base for members to expand our propagation movement and publications promotion until a full-scale community center can be opened. With this vision in mind, I am pleased to announce that 15 such activity centers are planned to open throughout the United States as early as the end of 2000. The locations of these new centers will be announced soon.

Throughout America, we have a goal of two new members per district. Our growth as an organization isn't measured by how many buildings or facilities we have; rather, it is the happiness of individuals that demonstrates our growth. Therefore, while we are proud to announce our physical expansion, let's aim toward July 3 of this year, the halfway point of the year 2000, as a time for each of our districts to welcome one new member to our organization.

I earnestly applaud your efforts. Thank you again for your sincere support of the May Commemorative Contribution. Let's make this May 3 a fresh start with President Ikeda, and continue the challenge toward May 3 next year and the victorious opening of Soka University of America. Thank you very much!

*Sincerely,  
Danny Nagashima,  
SGI-USA General Director*

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