

**SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE FNCC YOUTH
PERFORMANCE GROUPS CONFERENCE:
EXPAND YOUR NETWORK OF FRIENDSHIP**

I would like to convey my sincerest congratulations on the holding of your hope-filled Youth Performance Groups Conference. In addition, thank you always for your continuing efforts.

Youth possess infinite strength. Boundless hope and a promising future await you. Buddhism teaches the source of hope. Therefore, I would like each of you, the youth of SGI-USA, to live out your youthful years like strong-hearted kings and queens.

With these strong hearts that you have developed through faith, please value "friendship" above all. Nichiren Daishonin states, "You have associated with a friend in the orchid room and have become as straight as mugwort growing among hemp" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 23). As this passage explains, the bonds among good friends in faith will enable you to shine and to follow a correct course in life. With hearts of strength and richness, please chant sonorous daimoku and walk with dignity straight along the path of kosen-rufu, engaging in SGI activities freely and to your heart's content.

Please be convinced that your performances will express the bright, fresh life force that you have polished through faith, giving hope and courage to many people.

I pray that you will thoroughly enjoy your conference as you expand your network of friendship.

Please give my warmest regards to those who could not participate in today's conference.

Daisaku Ikeda
July 6, 2000