

**SAN FRANCISCO LEADERS MEET WITH GENERAL DIRECTOR
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San Francisco Bay Area leaders welcomed SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima to the Masonic Auditorium Aug. 5. The focus of his message was SGI President Ikeda's recent poem to America, "Soar — Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" Mr. Nagashima reported that during the July 18 headquarters leaders meeting in Japan, the SGI president spoke about America to a combined audience of 3 million, sharing his "unbelievable expectations" for America.

"This poem reflects President Ikeda's heart, his mission and his determination," said Danny. "It also describes his state of life and how we must overcome our hardships for the sake of humanity's happiness. President Ikeda's reference to us as the 'Bodhisattvas of the Earth' means we will create a new era!"

He also spoke briefly about Harvard University, the oldest college in America, founded 364 years ago, which was intended to foster future leaders in the Puritan tradition. Likewise, President Ikeda is looking toward the distant future by establishing Soka University of America, as he expects young students to come together from the world over, to lead in the worldwide propagation of Buddhism.

"Since I was in college, President Ikeda has been talking about May 3, 2001," Danny explained. "Now there are only 270 days left!" In looking toward next May, he explained the best way to prepare is to become truly happy individuals. "When you chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, you can experience joy as long as you are able to fuse with the Gohonzon," he said. "Then you can reach into the depths of the universe and reach out beyond your karma, and experience true freedom. When our lives become unlimited, that is the beginning of real freedom."