

**TO THE HEROES OF THE SGI-USA
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SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER**

Once upon a time, a man, not yet a hero but compelled by his sense of mission to save another, leapt astride his horse. Despite all risk to himself, he galloped off to battle the forces that would demean life, even destroy it. That's how he became a hero.

It's not a fairy tale—it happens every day, thanks to you, the heroes of the SGI-USA. To you, I offer my profound appreciation and deep respect.

I know for a fact that because of the men in my life, including my first group leader and especially my husband and my son, I am who I am today. They gave me the freedom to shine. They gave me the dream to stand up as a bodhisattva, reaching far beyond family and marriage.

That's why I say that the men of the SGI are the most revolutionary in supporting women. It is the strong man of a deeper kind of intelligence who not only lets others around him develop their abilities, he paves the way. You men, you heroes, are the ballast that balances our organization and confirms the universality of this Buddhism. You give weight to our activities, courage to our dreams and you applaud our victories. Thank you for it all.

SGI President Ikeda said to the men of the SGI: “My heroic friends! My noble comrades in the struggle for kosen-rufu! A decisive battle to usher in the dawn of the twenty-first century has already begun. At last, our time has come. If we do not rise to the challenge now, then when? If we do not fight today, then when?... The Daishonin writes, ‘Do not spend this life in vain and regret it for ten thousand years to come’ (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 970). Let us leap astride our white horses and gallop intrepidly across the great plains of our mission, holding high the banner of kosen-rufu.”

On this 53rd anniversary of the day that President Ikeda joined the Soka Gakkai, I congratulate you.