

FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA A GREAT CONCLUSION TO THE YEAR

Hello everyone! I hope you are all in great health and spirits. There is not much time left to go before Jan. 1, 2001. Let's continue to make this a year filled with victorious accomplishments. I feel that this year's end is the cause for a great beginning in the new century and in welcoming SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda back to America.

This year, I have also been challenging myself to meet as many of our members as possible and have been greatly encouraged by every person I have met. Through this column, I will share my encounters in the hope of passing on the inspiration you have given me.

Recently, I participated in chapter meeting in Killeen, Texas. The members there have such a tremendous seeking spirit and have been introducing many people to this practice. Since the beginning of this year, 21 members have received the Gohonzon. I discovered that the key to the Killeen members' success is their continuous effort to home visit and care for each member. They are on fire!

At the Central Zone 40th anniversary celebration on Nov. 4, I enjoyed the event with almost 4,000 members representing 13 states—some even spent 12 hours traveling just one way to be there!

One remarkable woman who was able to attend this event is Etta Moten Barnett, who is 100 years old. She was a professional dancer and was the first African-American woman to be invited to the White House. She gracefully performed for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Etta is still vigorous and was overjoyed at having the opportunity to see President Ikeda on video at the meeting. I was so moved by her beautiful spirit to continue to advance kosen-rufu throughout her life.

Immediately following this celebration, I flew to Denver, where I attended a Victory Over Violence Summit on Nov. 5, held against the backdrop of the breathtaking snow-capped Rocky Mountains. Despite the heavy snowfall, the members of the Rocky Mountain Region gathered almost 2,000 members from places as far away as Wyoming, Utah, Albuquerque, N.M., and Phoenix. The activity was a tremendous success, and I'm sure it will serve as a historic launching pad for the members of the Rocky Mountain Region.

I will continue to travel all over the United States, attending activities and doing many home visits in hopes of meeting each of you and, together, creating a new SGI-USA. Please take good care of yourselves and your families, and I hope to see you soon!