

50TH CEC MEETS TOWARD 2001
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The 50th Central Executive Conference was held Dec. 1–3 at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif. In addition to reviewing this year’s activities and discussing plans for next year, the CEC welcomed SGI Women’s Leader Yumiko Hachiya and SGI North America Bureau Chief Norimasa Saito.

The SGI-USA Council, whose members are responsible for approving any change in the organization’s bylaws, also met to discuss administrative issues.

A new team of national youth leaders was appointed, including new Young Women’s Leader Wendy DeSouza and Young Men’s Leader Steve Mortan (please see page 5 for all new leadership appointments).

In her comments to the conference, Mrs. Hachiya said: “SGI President Ikeda recently commented that in the SGI, there is no higher or lower ranking. Everyone is equal. The fact that each one of us is practicing this Buddhism to become happy is what makes our organization great. The SGI exists solely for the sake of each individual’s happiness. I hope that you can all come together and create a beautiful, harmonious kosen-rufu movement in America based on equality and humanism.”

Mr. Saito shared that throughout this year, a great source of encouragement for the Soka Gakkai members in Japan has been the members of the SGI-USA. “Whenever the Soka Gakkai discusses how to introduce the SGI,” he said, “the first thing they mention is the SGI-USA’s youth-led Victory Over Violence project. SGI members all over the world are talking about this VOV movement. This example is further proof that America is the center of worldwide kosen-rufu. So if America is healthy, the world is healthy.”

Please see pages 4–5 for speeches from the Dec. 3 teleconference, including General Director Nagashima, Women’s Leader Matilda Buck, Men’s Leader Tariq Hasan, and the young men’s and young women’s leaders.