

## 2001 YOUTH CONFERENCES AT THE FLORIDA NATURE AND CULTURE CENTER

This year, seven of the Florida Nature and Culture Center conferences will be geared toward youth. These are precious opportunities for us to deepen our understanding of Buddhism through youthful exchange. It's key to keep in mind that many participants go to the FNCC because someone close to them took the time to share the value of going. Quite simply, going means growth.

Think of how in a forge, steel is shaped and hardened at its hottest, most vulnerable moment. If properly treated, forged steel will emerge with resilient structure and incredible durability. Relating this to our own lives, since strength is the necessary foundation for true success, we can liken the workings of a forge to our days as youth.

These difficult times are the precise opportunity to lay the foundation for becoming brilliant, noble people. Such development involves many aspects, but one of the most central is our warm interaction with friends in a nurturing environment. The FNCC was designed for this purpose. We can build great futures for ourselves there. SGI President Ikeda declares that the exertions we make this year will determine our capabilities for the rest of our lives. These FNCC conferences will be a crucial part of this advancement.

### *Young Men's Division Conference: July 5-8*

**Focus:** As the future of the kosen-rufu movement in America, young men will gather from across the nation to celebrate the historic 50th anniversary of the founding of the young men's division. This conference is for any young man who desires to better himself, fulfill his dreams and contribute to our movement. Together, we will unite for the second set of seven bells and create a glorious history based on President Ikeda's vision for America and the 21st century.

**Who can attend:** Open to all young men's division members ages 13 and older.

### *Young Women's Division Conference: July 12-15*

**Focus:** Young women will open the gateway to the 21st century. This is your opportunity to learn from the heroic stories of other young women from around the country. Any breakthrough or dream you seek, you will find some anecdote, some friend that will take you by the hand, some presentation that will stimulate your mind and heart to seek further. This will be the time to uncover your true self and shine — to answer the questions you are facing. The conference will focus on the mentor-disciple relationship, home visitation and using the Gosho in our practice. Other themes include Soka Spirit and sharing Buddhism with friends and family.

**Who can attend:** Open to all young women's division members ages 13 and older. In particular, we would like to encourage young women in their 20s to attend.

### ***Youth Performing Groups Conference: July 19-22***

**Focus:** Talented youth performers will unite to learn the basics of faith, practice and study and form lasting bonds of friendship while deepening our shakubuku spirit.

**Who can attend:** Open to all youth division members ages 13 and older.

### ***Student Division Conference: Aug. 2-5***

**Focus:** At the Student Division Conference, we want you to experience a blossoming of joy and harmony from within your life. We will learn to never lose heart based upon our friendship, our faith and the heart of President Ikeda. This heart is the altruistic desire to seek one-on-one education that fosters a love for humankind and develops our character. This summer, let's realize our infinite potential and change the world.

**Who can attend:** Open to all student division members, college or university students, or any youth seeking to attend college or technical school in the near future.

### ***Jr. High & High School Divisions Conference: Aug. 9-12***

**Focus:** The new millennium is here, and the SGI-USA Jr. High and High School Divisions are ready to take the stage of kosen-rufu! We're excited to announce that we will be holding the 5th Jr. High and High School Divisions Conference this summer. In keeping with this year's SGI theme, "The Year of Total Victory for the New Century," we're determined to make this a groundbreaking conference, one that will electrify and inspire a whole new generation to take leadership in creating a Century of Life.

**Who can attend:** Open to all junior high and high school students ages 13 and older.

### ***Youth Peace Committee Conference: Oct. 18-21***

**Focus:** The SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee will sponsor an international youth conference focusing on the United Nations theme for the next decade, "A Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World," and Victory Over Violence.

**Who can attend:** Instructions on eligibility for participation in this conference will be published by the YPC in an upcoming edition of the *World Tribune*.

### ***Youth Division Support Groups Conference: Nov. 15-18***

**Focus:** "Raise the Bar" is the challenge we have taken as members of BSG—Byakuren, Soka Group and Gajokai. In our 1st BSG conference of the new millennium, we will unite as youth, pledge to protect our mentor and precious members and proudly declare victory!

**Who can attend:** Open to all youth division members involved in BSG or who wish to join in the future. Must be 13 and older.