

**THE BANNER OF OUR IDEALISM**  
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On Sept. 4, 41 youth representatives from the United States arrived in Tokyo for the SGI Youth Training Course. Upon our arrival, we presented SGI President Ikeda with the newly created SGI-USA Youth Division flag—a symbol of our determination to fight for kosen-rufu in the 21st century.

The roaring lion king on the flag is the image of our mentor, a symbol of powerful and courageous advance. It is also a symbol of our resolve to unite on the path of the eternal bond between mentor and disciple.

The gold shield represents our determination to stand firmly for justice and to protect our precious SGI movement. The green laurels within the shield symbolize our firm conviction for the realization of peace through culture, education and the victory of the common people.

The tri-colors of the SGI streaking across a field of indigo blue serve as the foundation for the shield itself—a foundation of strong faith and conviction in the eternal advance of the SGI, always with the spirit of a “blue deeper than the blue of the indigo plant itself.” Red stands for victory, yellow represents glory and blue for peace.

When we arrived at the 9th Headquarters Leaders Meeting at Makiguchi Memorial Hall, we were surprised to see our flag onstage next to the altar. Our youth members were whispering, “Why is our flag on stage?” I could sense the anticipation in the youth’s faces. Something was about to happen.

When President Ikeda arrived in the auditorium, the crowd of more than 2,000 erupted in applause. I watched in what seemed like slow motion as President Ikeda made a beeline for the SGI-USA flag. Standing before our banner, he solemnly saluted. Holding his salute for what seemed like an eternity, I suddenly felt that this was a deeply significant ceremony.

In President Ikeda’s eyes, I saw a concerned father who wants to encourage each youth in America, believing in our infinite potential. It was as if he were saying to each and every one of us: “You and me together! Let’s advance kosen-rufu in America!”

As our trip continued, I kept tracing back through my mind, trying to grasp the significance of the historic flag exchanges between second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda and President Ikeda. What did the ceremony mean? What did it signify? In an essay by President Ikeda, he describes receiving a flag as a young men’s leader directly from President Toda: “As he handed the flag to me, his eyes glittered brilliantly behind his glasses, asking, ‘Are you ready to fight together with me your entire life for kosen-rufu?’ He said to me: ‘Fight hard to the very last battle, ever waving this flag high! I am counting on you Daisaku!’” (Aug. 10 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

The picture was becoming clearer. I began to feel that President Ikeda was telling us that the era of America that he has long awaited had finally arrived; that indeed it was time for us to create a new era of peace, together with him, for the sake of the world’s people.

With each passing day, SGI-USA’s Youth Division Flag takes on deeper meaning. In another essay, President Ikeda stated: “Happy are those who hold high such flags

and advance until they score the final victory in life—until the very last moment when the flame of their life force is extinguished. ‘This is the flag of my life! This is the flag of my conviction!’ is their declaration” (March 17, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 12).

Our flag is not a banner of shallow patriotism. It is a symbol of our oneness with President Ikeda. It is the banner of our idealism. Now, more than ever, it is time to dignify it with our action.