

EDITORIAL
THE DISTRICT: WHERE THE WORLD BEGINS
BY JEFF FARR, MANAGING EDITOR

The district is where kosen-rufu starts, where the whole world begins to change.

SGI-USA members have their own millennial anxieties. Not about the world ending at any moment but about the world beginning again. See, if we believe we are living at a great turning point in history—and that *we* are responsible for what happens from this point on—we have to keep asking ourselves what we need to focus on most.

This can be a little stress-inducing, many members have mentioned to me. There are an infinite number of things we could be doing—even *should* be doing—but time is limited.

Our district activities, I believe, should be at the top of our list. Although they may seem “small” in comparison to the big times we live in, we should never underestimate their far-reaching impact. Forty years ago, SGI President Ikeda began the SGI-USA movement by forming a district in Hawaii and holding the first discussion meeting in America. He listened to the members’ problems, did his best to answer their questions and encouraged everyone present to work for others’ happiness. It was a small meeting, a simple one, but it led to the more than 1,700 SGI-USA districts now meeting across the nation.

“The district is where kosen-rufu really begins,” SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima says. “It is the door for us to enter the world of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. In the district, based on studying this philosophy together and sharing our experiences in faith, we change the way we view our lives and the world, thus inspiring one another to break through the many problems we face.

“When I think of all the life-changing moments that have taken place at SGI-USA district meetings over the years, it blows my mind. Many, many people’s lives have been saved by something they heard at one of our district meetings.”

The district is also where, since we must work so closely together, we accelerate our human revolution. Putting together a district meeting, for instance, has always helped me to do this. I have had to have the guts to share my (sometimes unusual) ideas for the meeting. I have had to try to understand opinions completely at odds (or so I thought) with my own. I have been in the middle of a couple of personality clashes, trying to help my friends harmonize (and survived!). All these experiences have led to understanding myself more and being better able to see things through others’ eyes.

What makes the district so great is that our rough edges rub off against one another. Our differences start to complement one another. Each of us grows—the district grows—and kosen-rufu expands. The door opens wider.

In “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” Nichiren Daishonin encourages us, “All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 217). What better place to do this than the district? Our differences may be blaring in such proximity, but we surely aren’t going to get beyond them by keeping our distance from one another.

I love all the districts I have had the honor to visit and been a member of, for this is where I have seen us truly transcend many things. I have seen how kosen-rufu actually happens. And I have thus felt part of the creation of the future. The 21st century, May 3, 2001, the second Seven Bells—where do these start? Nowhere but in the district.