

**EDITORIAL**  
**SGI-USA DISTRICTS: COMMUNITIES OF JOY**  
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**When you take on the responsibility of being a district leader, you have the great opportunity to nurture a community of joy.**

Ask any of the top leaders in our organization, and they will happily tell you, “It was more fun when I was a district leader!” The reason being, in the district you get to work the closest with other members. You can really take care of them — and they can take care of you!

Nichiren Daishonin teaches that in practicing Buddhism as a community, we experience together the “boundless joy of the Law.” Those of you who have taken responsibility as district leaders have the great opportunity to help foster this joy by praying strongly for district members’ happiness, setting concrete goals for your districts and making an action plan to achieve these goals. If you have a great dream for your district and do these three things, others who are involved will feel things moving forward. People’s lives naturally start to advance.

This is exactly how the Daishonin led the way. We can think of him, in fact, as the original district leader. From 1253, when he first declared the supremacy of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, until his death in 1282, the Daishonin worked extremely hard to create a community of boundless joy among his followers. He prayed for each person, he had a clear idea of what he wanted the community to become, and, of course, he took action — he went out of his way to communicate with each person heart to heart.

While the Daishonin’s community started out quite small — and despite the fact that it was under constant attack from the authorities — it grew over the years into something big. By the end of his life, his “district” was solidified; it had many unique members of strong faith and practice, who often traveled long distances to visit him at Mount Minobu. The Daishonin thus came to the end of his life with a true sense of accomplishment.

In one of his last writings, to Nanjo Tokimitsu (who was like the young men’s district leader), the Daishonin says: “When ordinary people in the latter age believe in even one or two words of the Lotus Sutra, they are embracing the teaching to which the Buddhas of the ten directions have given credence. I wonder what karma we created in the past to have been born as such persons, and I am filled with joy” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1108). He is saying, in a sense: “Isn’t it amazing that we have brought together this community, where ordinary people finally have this chance to practice the true teachings? Aren’t we so fortunate to have played a part in this?”

Those taking responsibility as district leaders — and those who will in the near future, as many new districts are created this year — are invaluable. If the district is our heartbeat, our lifeline, our reality check, you are the doctors who assure all systems are healthy. If the district is the most potent vessel to spread the Daishonin’s teachings, you are the ones who are spearheading our advance.

Thank you for all that you have done. Thank you for everything that you do. Thank you for everything that you are going to do in the future!