

**NEW WORLD CULTURE CENTER OPENS
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The much anticipated reopening of the SGI-USA World Culture Center was held Aug. 22 in Santa Monica, Calif. SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda was on hand to welcome Santa Monica Mayor Michael Feinstein, representatives from the city and county of Los Angeles, and more than 600 guests to the lively celebration.

The center was completely rebuilt over a period of three years, including a substantial facelift for the adjacent World Peace Ikeda Auditorium. The auditorium features a brand new, state-of-the-art sound system, with 10 channels for simultaneous language translation. The comfortable new chairs are modular, allowing for any number of seating configurations, up to a maximum capacity of 1,100 seats. Also included is retractable theatrical lighting, making the space suitable for dramatic productions, music concerts, lectures and SGI-USA meetings.

Presenting a proclamation from the city of Santa Monica, Mayor Feinstein commented that “the inner beauty and happiness that people seek through religion and spirituality has definitely been reflected in the beauty of this building.”

In a message commemorating the center’s reopening, SGI President Ikeda wrote: “As you know, the World Culture Center is a meeting place that I have visited time and again. It is a place where we have struggled together to create the history of American kosen-rufu. The joy I feel at this new beginning is indeed immeasurable....

“The emergence of Soka University of America, the palace of education, and the birth of the new World Culture Center, the castle of faith and the Law, are proof that the SGI-USA has entered a new era, where the substantial expansion of kosen-rufu is certain to take place. So please live a fully satisfying existence through your courageous and correct faith.

“My heartfelt request is that you devote yourself to encouraging and nurturing youth. I ask that you use your new edifice as the site to foster young capable leaders of Soka, thus developing the World Culture Center into the true home of peace, culture and education.”