



SGI-USA MEN'S DIVISION SPECIAL INSERT

THE  
**Summer.**  
OF *Champions*

DAISAKU IKEDA



WORLD  
TRIBUNE  
SPECIAL



# Win in the Summer of Champions



Tariq Hasan

by Tariq Hasan  
SGI-USA Men's Leader

**Thank you** for your tireless efforts to support the youth division toward their historic Rock the Era culture festivals in July! On the most profound level, these festivals are entrustment ceremonies, gatherings of young bodhisattvas who are vowing to take the lead for worldwide kosen-rufu.

Beyond the festivals, SGI President Ikeda has continually emphasized the encouragement: Now is the time to raise a steady stream of youthful successors. In his essay "My Vow for the 80th Anniversary," he writes: "At the end of this milestone year marking 50 years since I first became president, I am determined to proudly announce to [second Soka Gakkai president Josei] Toda: 'Our youthful successors have magnificently adorned the Soka Gakkai's 80th anniversary with total victory! The future of kosen-rufu is secure!'" (March 26 *World Tribune*, p. 5).

Our ability to overcome our difficulties and to manifest the power to realize our dreams lies in direct proportion to our shared commitment with our mentor to adorn the 80th anniversary with total victory.

This is because, when we act to ensure the continuous flow of kosen-rufu, responding

strongly to our mentor in this crucial year, we also advance our lives, just as Nichiren Daishonin writes: "A blue fly, if it clings to the tail of a thoroughbred horse, can travel ten thousand miles, and the green ivy that twines around the tall pine can grow to a thousand feet" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 17).

In his essay "The Courageous Champions of the Men's Division" (see pp. C-F), President Ikeda speaks about his mentor's profound concern for the youth: "Like a father, who, out of concern for his children, quietly supports them, Mr. Toda was always thinking about what he could do for the youth . . ."

"I myself strive to emulate Mr. Toda's behavior, chanting wholeheartedly each day for the health and victory of all our members, particularly the youth of such behind-the-scenes groups as the Soka Group, Gajokai and Byakuren who are doing their utmost to support members in northern regions at this cold time of year" (see p. D).

I hope that we, too, can emulate such profound compassion toward the youth who are ready to shoulder the future.

President Ikeda has also urged us to be champions. In the same essay (see p. C), he writes:

*Courageous champions—  
overcome the storms of  
hardship  
and create history.*

Whatever difficulties we may be experiencing or dreams we are striving to fulfill, this is the summer to declare victory. Let's be confident that we can do so based on President Ikeda's guidance to us that this is the year to "acquire colossal benefit," and that we are guaranteed to reap the "ultimate reward of eternal Buddhahood" (Dec. 25, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

President Ikeda shares with us



**Lions**—SGI President Ikeda greets jazz legends and SGI-USA men's division members Wayne Shorter (far right) and Herbie Hancock at a Soka Gakkai headquarters leaders meeting, Tokyo, 2007.

how much more power and wisdom we can manifest when we practice with a vow toward the 80th anniversary: "The lives of all of you who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and exert yourselves for kosen-rufu are infinitely noble and respectable. You have as yet tapped only a fraction of the boundless power of Buddhahood you possess, and revealed only a tiny portion of your limitless Buddha wisdom" (March 26 *World Tribune*, p. 4).

Let's take this guidance to heart to advance in every aspect of our lives. President Ikeda writes: "When men in the prime of life brim with energy and vigor, they can be a vital driving force for growth and victory—in their families, workplaces and communities. Also, in the organization, when the members of the men's division are solid, the members of the women's, young women's and young men's divisions can carry out their activities with confidence and peace of mind" (see p. D).

August is the month that President Ikeda joined the Soka Gakkai 63 years ago on Aug. 24, 1947. It is the time for us as men to renew our vow. Let's determine to have a clear-cut victory by the 80th anniversary and validate our mentor's guidance.

August is also a traditional month of propagation. Let's make this August another historic month by uniting with and giving our full support to the youth as we respond to the following encouragement: "Mr. Toda declared: 'Share Nichiren Buddhism with the powerful conviction "Kosen-rufu is my responsibility!" Give your all in the place of your mission.' With this spirit, let's challenge ourselves again" (Dec. 25 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

With deep conviction, let's reach out to every man, including the many who joined this year, and help them develop their faith through participating in the August men's division-sponsored discussion meetings and the 2010 Introductory Exam to be held in October.

President Ikeda further encourages: "We live in a time when people are becoming more and more alienated from one another. Men who are able to offer warm and openhearted encouragement, rather than those who are merely dignified and silent, truly shine with a golden light . . . The important thing is to care for others, reach out to them and talk with them, and not become surly or self-conceited. Such sincere behavior is the first sure step toward cre-

ating a happy family and advancing kosen-rufu in the local community. For men, the key to positive change lies in their immediate environment" (see p. D).

How can we guarantee victory? We can look to the example of a great men's division member from the time of Nichiren, Shijo Kingo, a samurai who was threatened not only with the loss of his livelihood and his possessions but also his life. In the end, he completely won over his desperate hardships. How did he do it? President Ikeda explains in his lecture on "The Three Kinds of Treasures": "What is admirable about Shijo Kingo is how he always sought Nichiren's guidance and followed it unerringly. Because he strove in a spirit of oneness with his mentor, he could triumph magnificently over all obstacles. The mentor-disciple relationship is the driving force for victory in life and in kosen-rufu. This is an eternally unchanging principle of Buddhism.

"When Shijo Kingo faithfully put his mentor's instructions into practice, profoundly determined never to disgrace the Lotus Sutra or behave servilely, his situation changed dramatically" (July-August *Living Buddhism*, pp. 66-67).

There is nothing holding us back. Together with all of you, I am determined to create a "Summer of Champions." **WT**

## The Summer To Declare Victory

Please see the Men's Division Guidelines for August on p. H.

# THE Summer.

## OF Champions

GUIDELINES FOR THE SGI-USA MEN'S DIVISION:

- Win every morning through abundant chanting and strong prayer.
- Reach out to every member of the men's division and enable him to fully participate in the August discussion meeting, which also serves as the SGI-USA Men's Division General Meeting.
- Enable the youth to take the lead in creating the greatest propagation and discussion meeting participation results in the history of the SGI-USA during August, this traditional propagation month.
- Be great examples by being the first to help one new person begin practicing Nichiren Buddhism with the SGI-USA and receive the Gohonzon in August.
- Demonstrate the power of faith by overcoming a challenging obstacle or achieving a cherished dream, and report a resounding victory to our mentor, SGI President Ikeda, during this significant 80th-anniversary year.

**“Men of America: Fight Like Champions To Open the Way To Victory!” Attend one of our upcoming Florida Nature and Culture Center conferences:**

**Sept. 10–13:** Men's #2  
(open to all SGI-USA men's division members)

**Nov. 12–15:** Men's #3/Young Men's (for chapter through zone men's and young men's leaders)

For more information, contact your local zone office or visit [www.sgi-usa.org/fncc](http://www.sgi-usa.org/fncc).



JONATHAN WILSON