



# ORGANIZATION MEMO

**DATE: MARCH 16, 2018**

**MEMO: 2018-ORG-017**

**DISTRIBUTE TO: District through Territory Leaders and Zone/Territory Offices**  
**FROM: SGI-USA Organization Center**  
**SUBJECT: SGI-USA Statement on Strengthening Unity Amidst Diversity in Our Organization**

SGI-USA is very fortunate to have a truly diverse membership that is representative of the full spectrum of people in American society. This is the result of the unique, profound and unifying philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism and the humanistic philosophy of Soka.

Nichiren encourages his disciples to "...chant Nam-myoho-renge-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." (WND-I, 271). It is a result of the efforts of the founding Presidents of the Soka Gakkai towards kosen-rufu, coupled with our members' sincere efforts in propagation, as Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

At the same time, it's important that we acknowledge that our organization is a microcosm of American society. The divisiveness and factionalism currently impacting our nation also affects each of us. That's why it's so important, especially as we move towards our Lions of Justice festival in the fall, that we remain aware and ever-vigilant of currents, both in society and within the organization, that have the potential to disrupt our unity.

In order to preserve and further strengthen our movement, we would like to reaffirm the following:

1. In keeping with SGI President Ikeda's philosophy of global citizenship, SGI-USA recognizes and indeed, celebrates our members' and all of humanity's diversity and differences.

Simultaneously, SGI-USA will strive to create an ever-widening and welcoming circle of solidarity and mutual respect for all - regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, spoken language, political views, age, legal, social or economic status - based on core Buddhist principles of:

- Absolute respect for all people, as everyone without exception possesses the Buddha nature; and
- The profound understanding that one can never create one's own fortune or happiness based on the suffering of others.

2. District- and Group-level discussion meetings are oases for small-group interchange and dialogue, taking place in thousands of members' homes in diverse and varied geographies. These are and will always be the core activity and the main venue for propagating Nichiren Buddhism and fulfilling our unique mission. This is a crucial principle bequeathed to all of us by the successive founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai, and a key reason for the successful growth of our global organization.
3. We will continue to celebrate and honor our organization's heralded diversity and the common cultural backgrounds or social experiences of our membership through the offering of various conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. ***However, it is not our policy to carry out such activities within our local organizations.***

In the poem "Sun of Jiyu Over A New Land," SGI President Ikeda urges us to rewrite the destiny of America based on the uncompromising spirit that Buddhahood is the common denominator of all of humanity:

*"When neighbors distance themselves from neighbors, continue your uncompromising quest for your truer roots in the deepest regions of your lives.*

*Seek out the primordial "roots" of humankind. Then you will without fail discover the stately expanse of Jiyu unfolding in the depths of your life.*

*Here is the home, the dwelling place to which humankind traces its original existence - beyond all borders, beyond all differences of gender and race. Here is a world offering true proof of our humanity."*

As we seek to awaken the next generation of Soka lions in this era of social turmoil, SGI-USA is committed to its mission of advancing kosen-rufu for the sake of all people, without exception. To that end, each of us has the responsibility to ensure that our united efforts are neither deterred nor destroyed by the formation of groups or factions within the organization that can cause members to separate from one another or discriminate against each other based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, spoken language, political views, age, legal, social or economic status. Our goal is to protect and expand our web of unity, based on the oneness of mentor and disciple, and deepen our bonds of friendship and comrades in faith who share a vow to advance Kosen-rufu.

Sincerely,

**SGI-USA National Leaders**

*Adin Strauss, General Director*

*Tariq Hasan, Senior Vice General Director*

*Danny Nagashima, Executive Advisor*

*Barbara Snyder, Vice General Director*

*Lee Malone, Vice General Director*

*Akemi Bailey-Haynie, Women's Leader*

*Cliff Sawyer, Men's Leader*

*David Witkowski, Youth Leader*

*Olivia Saito, Young Women's Leader*

*Michael O'Malley, Young Men's Leader*