

Young Eagles (SSA Student Division Song)

Background of the Song:

In the editorial of April 1962 issue of *The Daibyakurenge*, "To the Student Division (SD)", Shin'ichi wrote: "...Among all our young people, it is the SD members in particular who must have a sense of responsibility and an awareness of their role as trailblazers." Right at the outset, Shin'ichi declared that it was their mission to lead the way in the *kosen-rufu* movement and went on to express his belief that the SD was the only hope for the future. He concluded: "All the Youth Division members are Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have a mission to shape a new age. But you, the SD members, who will have undergone academic training before setting out into society, have an especially important role to play as leaders of the intellectual world. I hope you will become the new backbone of the Soka Gakkai, great leaders in every field in Japan, men and women of outstanding ability who will contribute greatly to the world." ...

The SD members who had read Shin'ichi's editorial were awestruck. They realized anew the limitless expectations he held for them and what an important mission each of them had to fulfil... Their deepening awareness that they were the vanguard of *kosen-rufu*, that they would forge the way to the future, kindled a flame of joy in their hearts. (Excerpts from *The New Human Revolution (NHR) Volume 6, "Young Eagle"* Chapter. Shin'ichi is the pen name of SGI President Ikeda in the novel.)

[That year, the SD of Japan achieved a great leap of 10,000 membership in mid-April, launched their new flag and new SD song and also started a series of Goshō lecture study conducted personally by President Ikeda.]

As he read the "Young Eagles" Chapter, the then SSA SD Chief Lim Poh Lye, was greatly inspired by what President Ikeda said, "The whole point of a song is for people to sing it, ...a new song that everyone will enjoy singing". A thought came to him — to compose a local SD song that will evoke hope and courage for everyone, in particular the SD members who sing it.

In December 1997, a group of eight SD in-charges and members gathered to brainstorm in composing a SD song that depict the new SD motto towards May 3rd 2005, "Successors of Soka, Leaders of Humanism"; one that is refreshing and will be sung by everyone.

After two months of tenacious efforts in fine-tuning the lyrics and the music, finally, on February 21, 1998, the new local SD song was launched at the 14th Anniversary of SD Formation Day! Its title was derived from the NHR chapter, "Young Eagles", where President Ikeda expressed his great determination and exerted great efforts to nurture the SD members into capable leaders for *kosen-rufu*. The song depicts the strong determination of the SD members to spread their wings and soared high into the skies of the new era; to become the protagonists of an era of peace and humanism in the 21st Century.

With a light-hearted, easy-to-sing-along rhythm and catchy lyrics, this song was well-liked by not only the SD members but everyone who got to sing it. In no time to come, it became the "hit song", so much that subsequently the lyrics were amended slightly to be the theme song, "Grow Now Together", of the Youth Peace Carnival held in year 2001.