

**Commitment Generates Support**  
**One young conductor's refusal to give up on his dream results**  
**in music supplies for South Africa**

**By HENRY MOODIE**  
**NEW YORK**

I grew up in South Africa, where I studied music ever since I was a child. But one of the things I never had in all my music classes at school was records or a record player.

When I was old enough to start borrowing records from the public library, I would take home as many as I could. I lost myself in different worlds of music — especially opera.

I had the great fortune to come to the United States two-and-a-half years ago to study with a great conducting teacher at the Juilliard School. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, near the Juilliard, became one of my favorite hangouts. And one of my favorite events there is their annual sale of secondhand books and records.

Each year, I would see the quantity of stock left over after the sale and think to myself how much I would love to send it all back to South Africa. This was a daydream in the beginning, and I thought it would be impossible to organize.

Well, I'm happy to report that last December an air delivery was made to Johannesburg of 12,000 records and approximately 2,000 books and copies of sheet music. When I chanted daimoku and took action based upon my desire, the protective forces came to my assistance. I chanted, telephoned, spoke, had meetings, faxed, pleaded, negotiated — then started the whole cycle over again — and finally achieved a victory.

In the end I managed to rally the assistance of the Public Library for the Performing Arts, South African Airways, the media in South Africa — *The Cape Times* covered the story — and various foundations and sponsors.

I also learned that obstacles will arise in the most unexpected places. Sometimes the greatest obstacles come from within oneself or one's surroundings. For instance, I had asked a friend, a fellow member, to help out at the crucial last stage of the project — and we disagreed on many things. But I was determined that we would not be defeated.

In any case, the materials are now being distributed to about 400 schools in South Africa. It is my fervent prayer that a new generation of musical leadership for my country will arise based on the distribution of these materials.

In "On the Buddha's Behavior," we learn of the Daishonin's unwavering determination even in the face of the severest obstacles. On his way to be executed at Tatsunokuchi, Nichiren tells his disciple Shijo Kingo: "Tonight, I go to be beheaded. This wish I have cherished these many years" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 181). I have often wondered about this particular quote. Now I realize that Nichiren was expressing how he was prepared to make the biggest sacrifice ever. By making that commitment to the Lotus Sutra, the universe came to his assistance.

The lesson for me is that when I made the commitment to do what I thought was impossible with this project, the forces of the universe also came to my assistance. I believe that it was only with that sort of fierce determination — and my daimoku coupled with action — that I achieved my goal. I am determined to continue our mission toward creating world peace using every opportunity — possible or impossible.

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