

'Grown-up' Appreciation
By REIKO GROSELL
SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

With regard to the debt of gratitude owed to one's parents...it would be difficult to say to which parent one is the more indebted. But it is particularly difficult to repay the great kindness of one's mother. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 251)

I pick up the Goshō periodically to inspire myself to keep studying and recently came upon this letter. After reading it through once, I went back and read it again and highlighted many points. I got excited about it and shared some of the points with my friend, who also got interested.

Nichiren Daishonin is responding to a letter from Sennichi-ama, Abutsu-bo's wife. He expresses that only the Lotus Sutra declares that women can be enlightened. He also says that because he was born a human being and encountered the Lotus Sutra, he is indebted to his parents. I was so moved by this. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "If, in desiring to repay it [one's debt of gratitude], one seeks to do so by following the outer scriptures..., he will be able to provide for his mother in this life, but he cannot assist her in the life to come. Although he may provide for her physically, he will be unable to save her spiritually" (MW-6, 251).

Now that I am a "grownup," I can truly appreciate my mother for sharing with me this Buddhism. Even though I went through the regular process of not wanting to practice or thinking how embarrassing it was for me to be a Buddhist, having to belong to an organization and — *what!?* — introduce others, I have realized through study and actual proof how fortunate I am to have encountered all this. Although I try to support my mother as much as I can physically and materially, I realize that my contribution to her eternal well-being all comes from my prayer of appreciation for her. Knowing my mother very well, for she is my best friend, I know all she wants for me is to further my development and solidify my commitment to this practice. Through doing this for myself, I am in turn repaying my debt of gratitude to her every day.

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