

A Cure for All Ills
By MICHAEL DAY
El Paso, Texas

I am a 22-year-old college student and have been a member of the SGI all my life. My father, an American, and my mother, a native of Japan, have raised me to respect and appreciate all people, for they taught me that every human being carries within them the Buddha nature. I often wonder that if my parents were not members of the SGI and did not chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, would they have raised me with these same principles? I would like to think so, but I will never know for sure. This gives me an even greater appreciation for the Gohonzon, for we are fortunate to have this great treasure in our lives.

Since I was “born into” this Buddhism, so to speak, I remember as a small child believing that all families were Buddhist like mine. That all little boys and girls did gongyo with their parents each morning and evening. It wasn’t until I was about 7 or 8 that I realized, or rather, other children pointed out to me, that I was the different one. They said that everyone else believed in a person named God, and that Buddhist people like me were going to burn in Hell. As you can imagine, this was very traumatic for a young boy like myself.

Throughout my grade school years other children picked on me not only because I was a Buddhist but because of my Japanese background as well. Still, I never became ashamed of being Buddhist or Japanese. On the contrary, I was very proud of it. By the time I was in high school I think everyone who knew me knew that I was a Buddhist. I was always determined never to hide my true self.

I remember once in high school a girl I was dating introduced me to a friend of hers who, immediately after our introduction, matter-of-factly announced that she could never date a Buddhist and that she was surprised my girlfriend didn’t have a problem with it. I didn’t know how to respond to such an unexpected statement; I simply smiled and remained very polite and friendly toward her.

Now that I am in college, I have yet to experience any form of discrimination. In fact, I believe that in today’s society people are much more accepting of and show an increasing interest in Buddhism, particularly among college students. I think that college students are at the age where they no longer blindly follow what society approves and disapproves of. They are at a point where they have to find their own place in this world and redefine themselves. This includes religion and the search for spiritual satisfaction.

I have experienced great joy in celebrating human diversity. In my college, there are literally hundreds of students from all over the world with one goal in mind, to receive an education. It is exciting to meet so many different types of people from all walks of life and to develop meaningful relationships with them.

It saddens me to know that racism and discrimination is such a great obstacle in America and in our kosen-rufu movement, when it is so satisfying to break the barrier of prejudice. I think it is clear that the disease of racism that plagues our country is a fatal one. And I sincerely believe that a cure, a solution to the end of racism, can be found, and that the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin are crucial in that endeavor. I also believe that the root of all evil stems not from greed but rather from hate. Hate is directly linked to the lowly state of Hell, and one who hates must truly suffer within themselves.

Nichiren Daishonin taught that the fundamental cause of human suffering is ignorance — ignorance of the Buddha nature, the great and glorious treasure that exists in the lives of each one of us. Each and every human being carries the seed of Buddhahood within them and by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo possesses the power to conquer that ignorance and

bring forth the Mystic Law, eventually attaining Buddhahood. The Daishonin's Buddhism is uniquely based on this ideal, that all human beings, regardless of race, gender, background or sexual orientation, have the ability to grasp their innate Buddha nature and the potential to reach enlightenment.

We must educate ourselves, our children and our country. We must show actual proof in our lives. We need to accomplish our own human revolution and share our joy with others.

Most of all, we need to faithfully continue our practice, for this true Buddhism is the cure for all the ills of humankind.

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