

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### **Building Peace Within**

Tonight, I was ever so grateful to read SGI President Ikeda's words for Sept. 21 in the *Daily Guidance*, volume 4: "Even gigantic buildings will collapse some day. Something that has been built upon *myoho*, however, will never collapse. Our movement of kosen-rufu for world peace and mankind's happiness will enable us to save ourselves along with our ancestors and descendants. This is the most valuable and praiseworthy undertaking."

How comforting were his words in the face of the photos of the Grand Main Temple being torn down! I know with my entire life that President Ikeda's words are true.

I am in my 26th year of practice. The Main Temple was being constructed soon after I joined. Due to my dire circumstances, I was unable to attend the Main Temple ceremonies or to ever see the Dai-Gohonzon. Many friends who did participate in these auspicious events no longer practice; in fact, they stopped many years ago.

I suffered greatly because I was so poor and encumbered with so much responsibility, caring for my toddler when I was barely out of my teens. By sticking with NSA and now the SGI-USA, I've built a fortress of faith and good fortune in my life that is far beyond my wildest dreams. While others search ceaselessly outside of themselves to find life's meaning, I live each day with purpose and a deep sense of mission to do my part to make this world, my world, a fantastic place to be.

To witness the construction and the destruction of the Main Temple in my lifetime makes me reflect on the timelessness of President Ikeda's wisdom and guidance. And my active participation in this grand scale movement for world peace is truly my most valuable undertaking. The universe praises me for my actions by gifting me with a joyful countenance, a vigorous life force and a passion to share compassion, wisdom, hope, courage and confidence with everyone I meet. Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo enables me to build peace within and to actively contribute to creating world peace in my environment....

— KAREN WILLIAMS, Cleveland

### **Thumbs Up**

I was so encouraged after reading "A Phenomenon in the Heartlands" (Sept. 11 *World Tribune*). Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., holds a special place in my heart and my mother's as well. Fort Leonard Wood was the first Army base that she and her husband were stationed at 32 years ago. As for myself, I took my Army basic training there six years ago.

Upon arrival, we had to put our personal belongings in storage (the Army provides practically everything!). However, I received permission from my drill sergeant to keep out my prayer book and beads. I did morning gongyo on my bunk each day, while the other privates were still asleep, and evening gongyo wherever I could. On Sundays, we could either go to church or stay back and do various things such as cleaning, etc. Once again, I approached my drill sergeant and asked that I could stay and chant instead of going to church. She said it was OK. I would then go to an empty room, which became my private community center, and chant abundantly. The other privates would often come in and out and hear me chanting. When done, I would always share the practice with them.

It gives me such great joy to know there is now a place for the soldiers to gather on the base and practice this Buddhism together. Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., is very fortunate to have a sergeant like Brent Oberholtzer stationed there who really cares about kosen-rufu. Thumbs up to Sergeant Oberholtzer!

— JANETTE WALCOT, South Amboy, N.J.

Title: Mailbox: 10/09/98

Subject: World Tribune 10/09/98 n.3212 p.15 WT981009p15

Author:

Keywords: 10/09/98 December July Mailbox Opinion Tribune World

### **Paternalistic?**

While I do not wish to contradict or criticize either Greg Martin or the anonymous vice president Mr. Martin quotes in his article “Three Goals Outlined at Teleconference” (Sept. 25 *World Tribune*), I do wish to take exception to a point made in the article about propagation. Mr. Martin says that this vice president told him how “young people and new members work together with experienced men’s and women’s division members when sharing this Buddhism with friends” and quotes the vice president as saying: “Propagation requires conviction in faith. Senior members have the confidence based on years of experience, while young people and new members can often bring guests. Doing propagation activities together with young people will help them to gain confidence.”

I do agree with the above in that there are always roles to be fulfilled in working together to help people start practicing, but the inference made is that the actual introduction and bringing of guests to meetings is the job of new members and young people. I believe this is an old, paternalistic attitude that will never help us get anywhere. Among other unproductive effects, it causes many people to excuse themselves from the courageous and crucial act of challenging themselves to propagate this Buddhism, which unfortunately leaves so many people with no chance to hear about this Buddhism.... We are not Japan with 8 million members already. We are a huge country where only a very tiny fraction of people have been exposed to the SGI and the Mystic Law. If we don’t tell someone we come across who is seeking something more for his or her life, then who will?

Naturally, some people are better at getting people to actually attend a meeting than others, but the spirit to take responsibility for it and to make efforts in that direction...is not something that should be delegated to others out of hand. I remember hearing once that the organization in the United States is like the youth division of the world, such is the hope of America. In that light, we are all youth division, and the world awaits us!

— MARI GORMAN, New York

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