

SHARING THE JOURNEY BY MARGIE HALL, MANAGING EDITOR

One of the rare gifts of our life's journey on this planet is the discovery of people with whom we can develop sharing and caring relationships. As SGI members, sharing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with others at gatherings formal or informal, cozy or large, provides one major avenue through which we can seek out our fellow human beings. Many express an interest to join the SGI-USA and try the practice; others jump right in. And many others keep expressing their interest.

What motivates our friends, relatives and acquaintances to join the SGI and start practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism? Possibly our warm, engaging personalities? The profundity of Buddhist teachings and great "vibes" at meetings they attend? The one thing we say to them that they can't shake loose? Possibly the flow of undeniable benefits we've experienced...and they've witnessed? Or their desire to be involved with a grass-roots peace movement? The reasons are as varied as the people themselves. But one thing is for sure — they have hopes and dreams they dare to wish to fulfill.

So they take their first step on their new journey of faith and spirituality — in one moment voicing their desire to learn about the practice and, some months later receiving and enshrining the Gohonzon in their homes.

Amazingly enough, those of us who introduced them to this Buddhism, along with other members in our respective districts, begin on our own profound journeys simultaneously — to discover our capacity to share our lives deeply and fully with them. For they not only bring to the SGI community their fresh sense of creativity and energizing seeking spirit, but also at times a sense of alienation, loneliness and despair in the face of overwhelming personal difficulties and seemingly unjust situations.

How we respond to them on a consistent basis, ideally throughout our lifetimes — with focused prayers to the Gohonzon, a phone call, a note, a personal visit — demonstrates a genuine and sincere, compassionate concern for their well-being and happiness, and for their hope and vision for their future. With this kind of care, individuals blossom into fully participating members of the SGI.

Those individuals who have a confident and powerful sense of hope and whose future vision is solid and strong are more likely then to have the competence and confidence to share deeply and fully with others.

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