

## OFFERING FROM THE HEART

In 1996, SGI President Ikeda stated: “We have only four more years before the new century.... How you will be able to take off in the 21st century will be determined by how you spend these next four years going down the runway.” This encouragement has helped not only me, but many of my fellow members with whom I have shared it. Whenever I hit a stalemate in my practice or look at the false illusions of my circumstances, such as a weak bank account, this guidance helps me challenge my ability to manifest my Buddhahood and experience the impact it has on my environment.

Early in my Buddhist practice, I hoped that by making financial donations to the organization, my fortune would return to me tenfold. Today I no longer chant for money or feel resentment and frustration because I didn’t get my “reward” for a good deed. Now I chant to manifest my Buddhahood and give myself permission to move forward and accomplish what I want. When I appreciate myself and awaken to what is special about me, the problems start to resolve themselves. Benefits flow in my life and there is a renewed joy in my determination to help support and work for world peace, one day at a time, as I take off down the runway of the 21st century.

— *BABE EVANS,*  
*Griffith Park Chapter*  
*Women’s Leader,*  
*Los Angeles*

My husband, Joe, and I are district leaders of Morning Sun District in the western suburbs of Minneapolis, Minn. One of my seniors in faith encouraged me to look beyond our district or the state of Minnesota and recognize that financial contribution is an opportunity to further worldwide kosen-rufu. We try to encourage members to participate in contribution from their hearts, with a sincere attitude, not because of obligation. I feel it’s a privilege to contribute financially to kosen-rufu. I believe contribution is an opportunity to give back for all the wonderful benefits I’ve received. When I have that attitude, I develop even more fortune in my life. We are helping SGI-USA members in our area develop the same feeling through home visits.

I feel encouraged by the following letter from Nichiren Daishonin, “Whether you chant the Buddha’s name, recite the sutra or merely offer flowers and incense, all of your virtuous acts will implant benefits and good fortune in your life” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 4). Time and money are great ways to contribute to our kosen-rufu movement.

— *DONNA CARR, Women’s District Leader,*  
*St. Louis Park, Minn.*

Last year in 1998, when it was time for the contribution activity, I made sure that I did not forget or wait until the last minute. I participated early and met my determined amount. Not only did I contribute, but once after a short gathering of youth, I was talking to a young woman. During our conversation, I asked her if she had participated in the activity, NOT how much she had given. She responded that she did not have any money and I reminded her that she had the change from the soda machine sitting on the table in front

of her. She thought it wasn't enough. I explained to her that it is not the amount of the contribution but the spirit with which it is given. She got up and went to make her own contribution. It was very natural for us to have this discussion especially since I had had my own contribution experience. It is never easy to talk about money with members, but it is easier to talk about the spirit of offerings.

— *SANDIE RICE,*  
*Young Women's Region Leader,*  
*Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*

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