

## FAITH

The following essay by second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, appeared in the January 1, 1956 issue of the Soka Gakkai's study magazine, *Daibyakurenge*. This year marks the 100th anniversary of his birth.

There was a member I once knew, a middle-class housewife, who was not particularly well-educated, nor did she engage in propagation efforts very strongly. She was a good-natured, easygoing person, but she believed in the supremacy of the Gohonzon, and was confident that the guidance of the Soka Gakkai was the best guidance a person could follow. At the time she was leading a peaceful life, so she naturally thought that it would continue that way. "I have good fortune," she thought. "The Gohonzon takes good care of me." She felt that because of her husband's strong faith, the Gohonzon would protect her even if from time to time she only read once through the sutra during gongyo.

Then a disturbing thing happened. Her only son, perhaps due to the emotional stress of adolescence, suddenly became depressed and lethargic and stopped attending school. To this woman, his mother, it was like a sudden storm. Thrown into a state of confusion, she suffered day after day, becoming even unhappier than her son. Realizing that nothing good could happen unless she did gongyo, she began to ponder her situation deeply. Then, the Gohonzon rose to the forefront of her thoughts much more clearly than in the past.

One night, as if drawn by her own suffering, she marched off to a discussion meeting. There she heard someone explain how the deceased could attain enlightenment through the prayers offered for their sake by the living. At that time she reflected deeply. "If daimoku can even help a dead person change, then there is no reason why my son, who is still living, can't recover through the power of daimoku," she thought.

From that point on, she devoted herself to praying to the Gohonzon day and night. Until then she had lectured to her son, argued with him, tried to find someone who could talk sense into him, or in some way or another tried to win his favor. But now she completely abandoned all such tactics. Instead she prayed for her son with all her might to the Gohonzon. Within about two weeks, her son recovered his vitality and cheerfully returned to school.

Actually it wasn't her son who was saved by the Gohonzon; it was she herself who was saved. Her face began to shine and her life became peaceful once again. One morning her husband turned to her and asked with a laugh, "Now what do you think about the Gohonzon's great benefit?" "I'm in love with the Gohonzon!" she exclaimed with a big smile. From then on she told people that no matter what problem they might have, they could solve it with the Gohonzon.

Some time later she and her husband were visited by her nephew. He was unemployed and pleaded with his uncle to find him a job. She later turned to her husband and said, "His attitude is no good. It's wrong to think that you can rely on other people. He should first have a mind to pray to the Gohonzon." "Did you tell that to your nephew?" her husband inquired. She replied with a bright smile, "I told him a story about a woman I know. She was upset because she had no spending money, so she prayed with all her heart to the Gohonzon, and her daughter who had been out of work found a find a job earning 250 yen a day. She had not the slightest inclination to borrow money. Instead, when she was hard

pressed, she relied totally on the Gohonzon. I told him that I really respect that woman's attitude."

I think that there is something to be learned from this woman's experience of how to practice this faith. Also, "I'm in love with the Gohonzon" is an interesting expression, isn't it? □