

## YOUTH FOCUS TOWARD JULY 3, 2000, ANNOUNCED

*A nationwide youth region leaders teleconference was held on Sunday, April 30, announcing SGI-USA's youth division focus toward July 3, 2000. In the next two months, we will unite our efforts toward: 1. Promotion of the World Tribune, and 2. Propagation—following up with the more than 5,000 guests that attended our March 16 introductory meetings. Below are excerpts from the speeches of SGI-USA Young Women's Division Leader Renu Jiandani and Young Men's Division Leader Cory Taylor.*

**Renu Jiandani:** Every day when we do gongyo, we vow to think at all times to make causes for other people to become Buddhas. Isn't that amazing? Recently, everything about the *World Tribune*, people's experiences and determinations has been teaching me about this bodhisattva spirit.

Last week, I attended a memorial service for a member who had been practicing for over 30 years. He was a musician. Since he had no family, he had written his will 30 years ago. He put in his will that each person who attended his memorial should receive a three-month subscription of the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. There were over 200 people and more than half who attended this memorial were his non-member musician friends. I was so moved by the determination of this member to share the publications and to share this Buddhism at his own memorial.

Recently, one pioneer woman shared with me that she had home visited a woman whose husband has cancer. She found out that this member is not receiving the *World Tribune* due to financial difficulties. She encouraged her by saying now is precisely the time for you to inspire yourself with President Ikeda's encouragement and strengthen your bond with President Ikeda. She encouraged her to save \$5.00 a month and until she was able to order the *World Tribune*, this pioneer member would bring over a *World Tribune* every week.

This woman made a determination to receive her own copy and they chanted together. The very next day, she received an unexpected check from an insurance company and immediately called this pioneer member and said I want to subscribe for one year. Through this encouragement this member experienced the power of determination which has already given her a new outlook on her present struggles.

One young man, Mike Firoved in Los Angeles, has simply been asking people one-on-one if they subscribe or have sent in their renewals. For those who do subscribe, he encourages them to do a gift subscription to someone they would like to introduce to this practice. He is really a very shy person but he made a determination that he wants everyone to have the *World Tribune* as their own personal letter from President Ikeda. As a result, he has challenged his shyness and within the past week and a half encouraged 67 people to subscribe. He told me that he is experiencing so much joy in his own practice as he has been encouraging others about the *World Tribune*.

**Cory Taylor:** A dear friend of mine and cinematographer for National Geographic Television recently took interest in Buddhism. Having filmed the Youth Grand

Culture Festival held in Los Angeles last fall, he witnessed the profound growth and change in the youth participants who put on this festival. He was moved by their courage and their extraordinary diversity. He decided, based on what he had witnessed, to start chanting with the desire that some day when he has kids, they will grow up in the SGI.

My friend is constantly traveling for work. Since he is rarely home, it has been difficult to be with him to teach him the basics of practice. But we kept challenging together. Recently my friend went to Borneo to shoot a film for CBS. He worked on a project with 10 other cinematographers — most of whom were more experienced than he. But, challenging to overcome his insecurities and resolved to do his best, he chanted furiously.

Within three days on the island – the director was using his footage as an example of excellent work to assist the others. He showed actual proof. He quickly was offered the most challenging work and was recognized as one of the top professionals on the crew. Before his return to America, he planned a three day underwater diving trip with his fiancé on the island of Sipidan. But somehow his reservation was botched due to overbooking and he had to visit a neighboring island instead.

By day he and his fiancé would travel by boat to Sipidan, at night, they would return to the other island. One week ago, while he was on the neighboring island, religious terrorists kidnapped 20 tourists off of Sipidan where my friend would have stayed. The tourists have yet to be released. My friend felt he was protected by his faith. Returning to America three days ago, my friend recounted these stories to me and on April 27, he received his Gohonzon.

All across America, youth are engaged in a pitched battle of compassion—to share this philosophy with their friends so that they have the confidence to surmount any obstacle, to resolve any impasse, to become happy and to become value creative. We will welcome a whole new group of people into membership. And we will spread the teachings of Buddhism by promoting the *World Tribune*.

Uniting in purpose towards July 3, the Day of Mentor and Disciple, let's show President Ikeda proof of the power and passion of the youth in America with solid results.