

## REFLECTIONS ON A YOUTHFUL DIARY

*SGI-USA National Junior High/High School leaders Nobuko Kobayashi, Steve Mortan, Shan Serafin and Jomo Thorne shared with Seize the Day their impressions of the book *A Youthful Diary* (a compilation of journal entries Daisaku Ikeda made during his youth).*

**Seize the Day:** Nobuko, what is one passage that inspires you?

**Nobuko Kobayashi:** In particular, an excerpt from page 47 reads:

*Saturday, September 9. Cloudy.*

My physical condition is extremely bad. If I ruin my health, I cannot achieve anything. Must be careful.

Slept profoundly, as though I'd slept for a year.

Chanting daimoku is the only way to break through deadlocks, whether of the body or the mind.

I believe in my eventual victory. Daimoku will be its driving force.

I am young. I will advance. Straight ahead, on the road I must follow.

I am young. I will fulfill what the heavens have ordained.

I am young. I will muster my courage, convinced that all struggles under my teacher's guidance will lead to the good.

I am young. I must keep my spirits up, whether I win or lose, even during painful or lonely times.

**Seize:** So, Nobuko, a.k.a. Big Heart, why this passage?

**Nobuko:** At the time I read this, I was struggling with my own weak physical condition. Knowing that President Ikeda was going through extreme physical ailments, I was impressed with his courage. He encouraged me because he was encouraging himself.

**Seize:** Thank you. Yo, Steve, whuzzuuuuup!

**Steve Mortan:** You know, "whuzzuuuuup" is getting kinda old. Anyway, here is what inspires me. From page 485:

*Tuesday, March 8. Cloudy then clear.*

Stayed at the headquarters all day long.

Gave guidance to my juniors throughout the evening. Continually praying for the youth division to produce even one more capable person — my continuing prayer.

People, capable, people, young capable people. This alone determines the Gakkai's future.

Must expand my life and give my all to guide them.

**Seize:** Big Steve, why do you feel this passage is, as you've said, awesome?

**Steve:** You can really feel how President Ikeda is truly depending on the youth. He emphasizes praying to produce even *one more* youth — not even a whole bunch, but just for one capable person. I agree with him that it's the youth, particularly the junior high/high school members who will determine SGI's future.

**Seize:** Shan. Talk to us. You don't have a particular quotation?

**Shan Serafin:** No, not a particular one. The thing about *Youthful Diary* is that you can delve in anyplace anywhere in the book, and read an entry and, wham, you get a slice of youth. That's what I find appealing. It's youth in its raw form. I read these passages in which President Ikeda is so hard on himself — critiquing his own actions and his drive — and I feel like, yup, youth is all about that. I stop feeling disappointed about my own current problem. I realize this is the time for me to grow, to stretch, to fail, to curse, to sweat — you know, to create a life. My suffering now becomes par for the course. Let's say I was forced to pick a new one-word title for this book. It would be *Struggle!* No, no, wait; it would be *Advance!* No, no, *Forge Ahead!*

**Seize:** That's two words. Learn to count.

**Shan:** It's two but not two, my friend. *Forge Ahead!* Yeah, *Youthful Diary* forever inspires me to forge ahead.

**Seize:** Mr. Thorne. How's life?

**Jomo Thorne:** Life is good. I'm inspired by an excerpt from page 52.

*Wednesday, October 4. Rain.*

Self-awakening is most important. Those governed by circumstance, with no self-awakening, will be overwhelmed by life's storms. Can we not say that self-awakening is the basis of ideology?

In society we find those who win and those who lose. Fortune and misfortune cannot be calculated. Even a person of self-awakening, even if temporarily defeated, can go on to build a future vaster, broader, deeper and greater than that of a person who originally won. As long as we are not defeated fundamentally, we should continue to advance step by step, confident in our eventual victory.

Those who have tasted defeat can truly appreciate the joy of victory. Arrogance in victory and sorrow in defeat are both ultimately comic. What are we striving for and how great is our self-awakening? These are what matter.

**Jomo:** It's easy for us to live our lives without questioning the assumptions we hold

Title: Reflections On A Youthful Diary

Subject: World Tribune 11/03/00 n.3318 p.A SD001103pA

Author:

Keywords: Diary Essays Reflections Seize Tribune World Youthful

about our potential to change. Arrogance isn't just about looking down on others. It also means being convinced that one's limited perception of one's self and others is correct. This passage reminds me to continually question the limited perception we have of our ability. I'm encouraged by the tireless seeking spirit President Ikeda displays in this passage; and, by seeking spirit, I mean seeking one's hidden potential.

**Seize:** Thank you all for your comments.