

FROM OUR READERS

“THANKS FOR SHARING”

I wept quietly as I read Linda Kaye’s courageously shared experience, “N8JOY,” in the February issue. Though I am a man, I was sexually molested as a child by my grandfather from the time I was three until I turned 15 when I escaped into drugs and anti-social behavior. It was not until I was 39 that the myriad of emotional and mental problems I’d become fed up with came to light. Now, at 52, I have thought about going back to counseling because it has become obvious that I didn’t finish “cleaning out the closet” several years ago.

Thanks to Linda for sharing. I’ve determined not only to go back to counseling, but to seek my mission to help others. Linda is correct in trusting SGI President Ikeda. I have had only positive results. I want her to know that sharing her experience has helped me so much, and others, I’m sure.

Richard Smullen, Hancock, Maine

I just finished reading Linda Kaye’s story in *Living Buddhism*. I just wanted to drop you a note to thank you for sharing your experience. In light of the situations you’ve had to overcome in your life, I feel like a “golden child.” Although there are always problems, my family has been loving and close. I’ve had only a few people close to me die, and I have a few very warm and wonderful friends. Your experience has helped me see the appreciation I need to have for my life and everyone I’m connected to. I have also determined to become happy!

I recently came to the realization that throughout my life I’ve been willing to do much more for other people than I will for myself. It’s been hard to understand that I do deserve to be happy and that my happiness cannot help but affect others in my life. So now, you’ve helped reinforce my obligation to become happy and show actual proof to other members, friends and family.

Peter Marino, Jeffersonville, Pennsylvania

HATS OFF

Hats off to Youth Division members for your superb work on the March 2001 *Living Buddhism* issue! Thank you for every rejuvenating page of bold, courageous conviction and fresh insight.

Especially inspiring to me was Stephanie Araiza’s “Soka Spirit Q&A.” As an SGI-USA chapter leader and Soka Spirit committee leader, I am often called upon to provide meaningful explanations about the Soka Spirit movement. In reading Stephanie’s keen and wise commentary — conveyed in such a refreshingly current style — I gained new perspectives that will enable me to better communicate the essential meaning of “Soka Spirit.”

The article stated, “It was the Soka Gakkai that created the structure of our current gongyo.” This raises a question for me. Until now, I had understood that the current structure of gongyo was originally formulated by various Nichiren school priests and then later officially adopted by the Soka Gakkai. I would appreciate it if *Living Buddhism* could provide

clarification on this point.

Again, I offer sincerest thanks for the SGI-USA youth that have shared their uplifting writings in this issue. We look forward to seeing more of your penetrating words!

Penny Parker, Annandale, Virginia

Editor's Note: *To clarify the issue of gongyo, it was the Soka Gakkai that decided its members should perform gongyo. This was unusual for the time in that only priests recited sutras, often only in conjunction with ceremonies, rather than as a regular part of their individual Buddhist practice. The idea of the laity performing gongyo originated with Presidents Makiguchi and Toda. The current format of gongyo goes back to the days of twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin.*