

TRAILBLAZERS
SHARING BUDDHISM WITH OTHERS
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Recently, I had the immeasurable fortune to begin my journey as a student division leader in the Northeastern Zone. I am filled with joy, appreciation and determination as I embark on this road filled with hope and opportunity.

In April of 2000, I returned to New York from studying at Soka University in Japan for one year. As a student there, I lived in a dorm and attended classes with students from all walks of life and many different countries. Every day I witnessed students challenging their university life with various struggles.

When I returned, I began to pray to be able to use what I had learned overseas to help people here in the United States to overcome their sufferings. My first prayer was to be able to propagate this Buddhism to one person. After living overseas for a year, I realized that the number of my friends outside of the SGI were minimal. I thought to myself, “How can I propagate this Buddhism without anyone to propagate it to?”

After about one month of praying in this way, I encountered a young man at the New York Culture Center who came in and basically said that he wanted to know what we did there. He was grappling with so many problems, so I told him to just make a list of long- and short-term goals and that he had nothing to lose in trying this Buddhism. To make a long story short, he became a member of the SGI-USA in August of 2000.

The most amazing part of introducing this young man to Buddhism was watching his life change so dramatically from sheer misery to pure joy in only a few months. I was so focused on praying for this young man that at times I would find myself praying for his happiness rather than my own. But through the law of cause and effect, I, too, was able to see my life change in areas I had not thought possible.

Through this whole experience, I kept reading the following words from SGI President Ikeda: “Nichiren Daishonin writes, ‘If you light a lantern for another, it will also brighten your own way’ (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). Please be confident that the higher your flame of altruistic actions burns, the more its light will suffuse your life with happiness. Those who possess an altruistic spirit are the happiest people of all” (*Faith Into Action*, pp. 93–94).

I began to think about who has the most exposure to people in society and the answer without question is students. Students who attend universities and colleges encounter hundreds of people everyday. Therefore, I feel that students possess an incredible mission to propagate this Buddhism far and wide.

Students suffer with lack of study time, financial comfort and human relation issues all of the time. There is no other faster way to solve the dilemmas of every day life than to joyfully share this Buddhism with others. The foundation of this Buddhism is the concept of practice for oneself and practice for others.

Each time we encounter an obstacle, pray sincerely and then scale that mountain of difficulty, we should naturally share the joy derived from this experience with all of our friends. Through seeing our lives grow, our friends and comrades will want to know what it is that we are doing.

Once we start this wave of propagation, I am confident that we will be able to uplift the atmosphere at our campuses and truly make a difference. The possibilities are endless!