

Contributing to the Future

The Spirit of Offerings

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Our Privilege To Contribute to the Future

by **Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader**

I love working for people's happiness and world peace. I can't imagine any better way to spend my life. I try to use my time as best I can, but there's a way to take my efforts one step further: through my financial contributions.

I am filled with appreciation when I think that, while I'm at home preparing dinner, my dollars are helping turn on the lights in the Oklahoma City Community Center. When I'm spending time with my grandchildren, a copy machine in the Louisville Community Center is working overtime. When I'm visiting a member—well, you get the idea. Early in my practice, I learned that Buddhism means service to others. That is, in fact, the posture of Nichiren Buddhism.

The first of the six *paramitas*—the practices required of bodhisattvas to attain enlightenment—is almsgiving, which includes the almsgiving of the Law (as in introducing others to this practice), the almsgiving of fearlessness (as in encouraging others) and material almsgiving. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "What is appropriate for ordinary people is offering in principle [sincerely offering what is important to one's own life]. This is the teaching called the paramita of almsgiving..." (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1126). This is our pledge: We make offerings for both the

spiritual and the physical growth of our movement.

In 13th-century Japan, Nichiren Daishonin wrote these tender words to a cherished believer thanking him for an offering: "You may think you offered gifts to the treasure tower of the Thus Come One Many Treasures, but that is not so. You offered them to yourself. You, yourself, are a Thus Come One who is originally enlightened and endowed with the three bodies. You should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with this conviction. Then the place where you chant daimoku will become the dwelling place of the treasure tower" (WND, 299–300). He is saying that as we practice and work to protect Buddhism, we find our truest, deepest self within our own Buddhahood.



We have been working collectively to spread hope and humanism in our society in a variety of ways. This effort to contribute to others by sharing the Daishonin's spirit helps to assure that all people can know they are worthy and have the power and right to become happy. This is the basis of our movement as an organization. How important it is, therefore, that we safeguard this precious movement by our financial support. These monies ensure that we can gather together, communicate with one another, and build a united and effective organization.

Our contributions provide the financial means to operate more than 90 facilities as centers for activities in every part of the United States, paying for the rent, utilities, supplies, equipment and maintenance of those centers. It also pays for our youth programs, cultural events and community events. Just as the Daishonin says, the virtue of making offerings accrues back to the believer.

I am proud to be part of a global movement of awakened common people, and I am grateful that I can live in a way that is simultaneously self-improving and contributive. These two qualities are never separate in Nichiren Buddhism.

Along with our individual contribution, there's another aspect that is important: Enabling everyone to participate. We should not assume that others know about this contribution activity. If you're too shy to encourage people to participate, then just tell them how good you feel about making a contribution yourself.

Our organization exists only because of our contributions—our time, our effort, our care and, yes, our money. During his 1996 trip to the United States, SGI President Ikeda said, "To do, create or contribute something that benefits others, society and ourselves, and to dedicate ourselves as long as we live up to that challenge—that is a life of true satisfaction, a life of value" (*SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's Addresses in the United States*, p. 78). There is no separate giant entity out there accomplishing all this—it's all of us.

Creating Fortune Through Contribution

By Tariq Hasan, SGI-USA Men's Leader

Not even the wisdom of the Buddha can fathom the blessings that one will obtain by giving alms to Nichiren and by becoming his disciple and lay supporter. (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 384)

Thirty years ago, the United States experienced the most difficult energy crisis in our history. Gasoline was available every other day depending on whether your license plate was odd- or even-numbered. Even then, people had to stand in line for two hours or more to get gas.

I was one of them, except that while others were filling up, I was getting gas by the pennies, sometimes only managing a dollar's worth. The gas attendant would often yell at me for being greedy for "topping off." These were the financial circumstances under which I started my practice of Nichiren Buddhism.

Two years later, my financial situation had not improved much. I was a poor graduate student living semester to semester, not knowing whether I could actually afford to finish my graduate degree. Despite this, I distinctly remember standing on a street corner in Berkeley, Calif., with my SGI-USA chapter leader, who said: "I think it's time



for you to start thinking about making a monthly financial contribution to the organization to create fortune for your life. Please start with the determination to continue no matter how difficult your circumstances.”

I did determine to start contributing monthly to our organization and have not stopped since. Exactly as he said, this act of offering has become the source of great fortune.

About a year later, the SGI-USA announced it would accept contributions to build the World Culture Center. By this time, I was so tired of living in poverty. Because we did not have insurance, my wife had to leave the hospital the same day our first child was born. We determined that we had to do something to break through our financial difficulties.

We decided to take whatever money we had managed to save for the following semester’s tuition, which was not enough anyway, and contribute it with a great deal of pride that even one door in the building would be bought through our effort.

I believe it was this determination that enabled us to break through all obstacles, pay for my tuition for the next several years and create immense fortune for our family. I can therefore wholeheartedly vouch for the conviction that

Nichiren Daishonin shares with us in the above passage.

But the greatest treasures, as the Daishonin teaches us, are those of the heart. On January 26, 2003, I attended the opening of the new SGI-USA Connecticut Activity Center. I had to restrain my emotions as I thought of the Connecticut members, who for years had driven hours to Boston and New York for meetings without complaint, who now had their own center. Some of them had been doing this for more than thirty years. I shared their pride in having a beautiful Gohonzon room, a conference room and their own bookstore.

This great joy of expansion has taken place seven times in the last year alone, as new centers have opened in Florida, North Carolina, California, New Jersey, Arizona and Connecticut. Because the United States is such a large country, we will continue to respond to the needs of the members by opening many more centers, especially as our membership is now growing rapidly. This has been possible only through everyone’s sincere contributions.

Besides the opening of new facilities, it is a reality of life that funds are needed to maintain our more than ninety facilities, pay the staff and continue enjoying the numerous activities we hold there. These castles were built by the efforts of our pioneer members. What can we create for the future?

I remember SGI President Ikeda recounting a story of when he was walking with second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda at a time when the Soka Gakkai’s facilities were few and shabby. President Ikeda vowed that someday he would build many great castles for the sake of kosen-rufu, which he did.

Recalling these early days in the historical novel *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda writes: "The offerings and financial contributions the organization solicited were exclusively to accomplish Nichiren Daishonin's mandate to widely propagate the Mystic Law. Offerings made toward this end were equivalent to offerings made to the original Buddha. There was, then, no greater offering, no greater good. Certainly, nothing could bring greater benefit" (vol. 4).

Please join me in supporting our upcoming annual May Commemorative Contribution. At this crucial juncture in our movement's history, when the expansion of Nichiren Buddhism is imperative to counter the current flow of conflict and permeate the world with humanity, I am even more determined to give my time, my effort and my material contribution for the furthering of our great mission.

Offerings in Buddhism

In Buddhism, there are many different kinds of offerings. Material offerings, such as water, fruit, incense and financial contributions, can be considered "offerings of the body." "Offerings of the heart" include respecting and praising the Buddha, along with sincerity, purity, chanting and propagating the Law. Even our material offerings are expressions of our heart. It is our heart that enables us to attain Buddhahood. By making contributions from the heart, motivated by our desire to see the Buddha in our lives and in the lives of others, there is no doubt that we enrich ourselves and experience great benefit.

The SGI-USA's annual May Commemorative Contribution activity begins on April 28 and ends on June 10. This opportunity is provided to SGI-USA members in commemoration of the founding of Nichiren Buddhism on April 28, Soka Gakkai Day on May 3, the birthday of the first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, on June 6, and Soka Gakkai Women's Day on June 11.

Local organizations will schedule collection times at all SGI-USA centers. Forms of payment accepted for the May Commemorative Contribution are:

- Check
- Cash
- Money Order
- Credit Card
- Via the SGI-USA Web site at www.sgi-usa.org

All contributions to the SGI-USA are significant.

All your contributions to the SGI-USA, such as your time, dedication, sincere prayers and efforts to study, chant and care for one another, are treasures. Financial offerings, too, are tremendous causes. With all of your contributions, you are making great causes for your own happiness.

Financial offerings are more than just charity.

Nichiren Daishonin's followers made many offerings of food, shelter, clothing, medicine and money to him, often despite their own severe economic hardships. In his writings, the Daishonin says that without these offerings, he would not have survived. Similarly, without the wide variety of contributions made by members, the SGI-USA would not exist. Offerings to the Daishonin and the organization, however, are not merely charity (though they are legally considered charitable contributions). Rather than giving out of a feeling of pity, guilt, obligation or even kindness, offerings of the heart reflect our deep sense of appreciation and the strength of our desire to attain enlightenment. What's most important is our joy at being able to make such contributions. As SGI President Ikeda writes in *The New Human Revolution*, "Such joy is the true spirit of offering and it is the wellspring of abundant good fortune" (vol. 4, p. 110).

Offerings may result in benefit, but that's not why we make them.

Some members may feel they can improve their financial situation by challenging themselves to contribute more money to the organization. It's true that when you make

offerings, you are making a cause to change your destiny—just as it's true that when you chant, you are changing your karma. How this change in karma will manifest, though, no one can readily predict. When we make offerings, we increase our fortune. That doesn't necessarily mean, however, that we increase our bank balance.

If we think that by donating \$100 we'll get \$200 in return, then we need to re-evaluate the spirit with which we are contributing. Contributions are not like investments. There's a subtle yet profound distinction between having no doubt that contributions result in benefit and expecting a specific benefit because we make contributions. It's a paradox: If we contribute with a purity of heart that expects nothing in return, that's when we reap the most benefit. Our heart is what matters most.

The Buddha praises our sincere offerings.

The Daishonin's writings are filled with detailed expressions of gratitude for believers' offerings. His constant message is that when we make sincere offerings to the Buddha, the Buddha—that is, the entire universe—responds with praise and gratitude. The Daishonin writes: "As for the matter of becoming a Buddha, ordinary people keep in mind the words 'earnest resolve' and thereby become Buddhas" (WND, 1125).

Through home visits, dialogue and sharing our experiences, we can thoroughly explain to people the importance of offerings. Their understanding derived from compassionate explanation can naturally spur them to take joyful action. It is up to each of us to feel it is our personal responsibility and privilege to contribute to the future of our movement.

Types of Financial Contributions.

The SGI-USA provides various opportunities to make contributions, which are always completely voluntary.

Annual Contributions can be made in monthly, quarterly or semi-annual installments, or in one annual payment. The minimum monthly contribution is one unit of \$20.00.

General Contributions can be made at World Peace Prayer Meetings, which are held monthly in each locale.

May Commemorative Contributions are accepted from the last weekend in April through the first weekend in June. Please see p. 9 for more information.

Are Contributions Tax Deductible?

Yes. The Soka Gakkai International-USA is a nonprofit religious corporation, recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible. Our FEIN (Federal Identification Number) is 95-2265667.

Where To Get More Information?

Those wishing to contribute can obtain more information from their local organizational leadership, at SGI-USA facilities or through the SGI-USA's Web site at www.sgi-usa.org.

How Contributions Are Used.

Did you know that in a typical month, we spend between \$400 and \$700 or more for utilities (gas, electricity, water)

for each of our facilities? Multiply that by more than ninety centers, two new activity centers and other facilities like the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif., and you can get a clear idea of the vast expenditures that are necessary to carry out our precious movement.

Here is a general breakdown of how our contributions are used:

- Asset acquisition (the purchase of buildings, properties and equipment, as well as building improvements)
- Operations (community center leases, insurance, maintenance, mailings, utilities, photocopy machines, telephones)
- Bookstore operations (purchasing, distribution costs and warehousing)
- Administrative (salaries, legal, accounting and administrative costs)
- Activities (for example, the annual March 16 youth events)
- Long-term investments (investments to help ensure the future operations of our organization)

Without support from believers, the Buddha could not propagate the Law. He could not help others become enlightened to the Law to which he himself had become enlightened. As Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Even if a person of wisdom who embraces the correct teaching existed, how could he propagate it without lay believers who supported him?" (WND, 752). Since the Buddha's behavior is based

upon his compassion, when we support the Buddha's compassionate behavior, we accumulate good causes within our lives, which will result in benefit and fortune. Making financial contributions to support the activities of the SGI constitutes genuine Buddhist offerings in contemporary times.

From the SGI-USA Contribution Committee

From 'The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin'

"Stop and ponder! How rare is the faith that moves one to give alms to the priest who knows the heart of the Lotus Sutra! One will not stray into the evil paths if one does so even once. Still greater are the benefits arising from ten or twenty contributions, or from five years, ten years, or a lifetime of contributions. They are beyond even the measure of the Buddha's wisdom. The Buddha taught that the blessings of a single offering to the votary of this sutra are a hundred, thousand, ten thousand, million times greater than those of offering countless treasures to Shakyamuni Buddha for eight million kalpas. When one encounters this sutra, one will overflow with happiness and shed tears of joy. It seems impossible to repay one's debt to Shakyamuni Buddha. But by your frequent offerings to me deep in this mountain you will repay the merciful kindness of both the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha" — "Letter to Niike" (WND, 1026–27)

"As you well know, a sutra says that the boy Virtue Victorious, who offered a mud pie to the Buddha, was later reborn as King Ashoka, who ruled over most of the southern continent of Jambudvīpa. Since the Buddha is worthy of respect, the boy was able to receive this great reward even though the pie was only mud. Shakyamuni

Buddha teaches, however, that one who makes offerings to the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the latter age for even a single day will gain benefit a hundred, thousand, ten thousand, million times greater than one would by offering countless treasures to the Buddha for one million kalpas. How wonderful then is your having wholeheartedly supported the votary of the Lotus Sutra over the years! According to the Buddha's golden words, in the next life you are certain to be reborn in the pure land of Eagle Peak. What remarkable rewards you will gain!"—"The Person and the Law" (WND, 1097)

"The Buddha is of course respectable, but when compared with the Lotus Sutra he is like a firefly beside the sun or moon. The superiority of the Lotus Sutra to Shakyamuni Buddha is as great as the distance from heaven to earth. Presenting offerings to the Buddha produces benefits like that. How much more so is this true of the Lotus Sutra? If such a marvelous reward was brought about by the mere offering of a mud pie, how much more will come about as a result of all your various gifts!"—"The Two Kinds of Faith" (WND, 899)

"Whether you chant the Buddha's name, recite the sutra, or merely offer flowers and incense, all your virtuous acts will implant benefits and roots of goodness in your life. With this conviction you should strive in faith.—"On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime" (WND, 4)

Lessons on Offerings

from *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4, "Triumph"
Chapter (pp. 113–16)

Shin'ichi Yamamoto discusses the spirit of making financial contributions within the Soka Gakkai organization. He clarifies that the offerings made are for the purpose of carrying out Nichiren Daishonin's will to propagate the Mystic Law and are equivalent to making offerings to the original Buddha.

Shin'ichi opened the Goshō. He wanted to thoroughly study again the true meaning of Buddhist offerings in light of the Daishonin's teachings. He first read "The Gift of Rice," a letter Nichiren Daishonin had written in response to an offering of rice and other items sent to him at Mount Minobu.

Praising the person's sincerity, the Daishonin says, "As for the matter of becoming a Buddha, ordinary people keep in mind the words 'earnest resolve' and thereby become Buddhas" (WND, 1125). He thus indicates that earnest faith, a sincere seeking spirit toward Buddhism, is the key to attaining Buddhahood.

In "The Gift of Rice," Nichiren Daishonin praises the sincerity of someone who offered him food, which is needed to sustain life. He writes that the benefit of this offering is comparable to benefit received by such saints and sages of the past as the boy Snow Mountains, Bodhisattva Medicine King or Prince Shotoku, who offered their lives for Buddhism.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto then opened to another page in the

Gosho—this time to “The Wealthy Man Sudatta” (WND, 1086), a letter sent to Nanjo Tokimitsu on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar in the year 1280 (December 27).

At the time, Tokimitsu was in dire financial straits. Because he supported the Daishonin’s followers during the Atsuhara Persecution, the authorities forced him to pay heavy taxes and supply workers for unpaid labor to the government. Though he could no longer maintain a horse for himself and lacked adequate food and clothing for his wife and children, he offered the Daishonin one *kan* of coins out of his sincere concern for the Daishonin’s well-being in the winter cold of Mount Minobu. This was the letter the Daishonin had written in response.

Looking at the many letters addressed to Tokimitsu, we find that his offerings to the Daishonin normally consisted of food and other provisions. That on this occasion Tokimitsu had instead sent money suggests that he no longer had anything in the way of practical items to offer the Daishonin. It may well be that the string of coins he sent was money he had set aside for an emergency.

The Daishonin expressed his deep respect and praised Tokimitsu’s sincerity. Although Tokimitsu was almost destitute, his spirit was lofty and heroic. Offerings must always derive from a sincere spirit of faith.

In a letter addressed to Lord Matsuno (*Gosho Zenshu*, 1380), Nichiren Daishonin describes how the boy Virtue Victorious was reborn as King Ashoka and eventually attained Buddhahood because he offered a mudpie to Shakyamuni. For the boy Virtue Victorious, the mudpie had

been the greatest offering he could make. Despite its humble nature, he had presented it to the Buddha with the utmost reverence. This was the cause that led to his being reborn as a great monarch in a future lifetime.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto next turned to the Gosho “The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings.” He stopped at a passage near the end of the letter. He read it over and over, sensing its profound meaning: “Though one may perform meritorious deeds, if they are directed toward what is untrue, then those deeds may bring great evil, but they will never result in good. On the other hand, though one may be ignorant and make meager offerings, if one presents those offerings to a person who upholds the truth, one’s merit will be great. How much more so in the case of people who in all sincerity make offerings to the correct teaching!” (WND, 1134).

In short, the Daishonin’s statement in “The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings” indicates that offerings can bring about either good or evil, depending on to whom or for what cause they are made.

In light of this Gosho passage, Shin’ichi thought about the offerings made within the Soka Gakkai. The offerings and financial contributions the organization solicited were exclusively to accomplish the Daishonin’s mandate to widely propagate the Mystic Law. Offerings made toward this end were equivalent to offerings made to the original Buddha. There was, then, no greater offering, no greater good. Certainly, nothing could bring greater benefit. This thought filled Shin’ichi with a sense of immeasurable good fortune and joy at having had the chance to make such offerings as a Soka Gakkai member.

The Daishonin concludes this writing by praising the spirit of this follower who had sent offerings to him at Mount Minobu: “Surely you are sowing good seeds in a field of fortune. My tears never cease to flow when I think of it” (WND, 1134).

Dedicating oneself to kosen-rufu means “sowing good seeds in a field of for-tune”—Shin’ichi had been strongly convinced of this since his youth. He recalled his days of earnestly striving to protect and support Josei Toda, who took leadership to widely propagate the Daishonin’s teachings. Back then, Toda’s business was experiencing severe difficulties, and for a long time payment of Shin’ichi’s salary was in arrears.

Shin’ichi realized that to support this great lion of a man, who had arisen alone to spread the Law, was the way to protect the Soka Gakkai and to accomplish the goal of kosen-rufu.

He drastically cut his living expenses and made it his creed to use even a little of the money remaining from his pay to support Gakkai activities, to contribute to spreading the Daishonin’s Buddhism. To do so was his joy and secret pride. Because of this, he even spent an entire winter without an overcoat. Whenever he received some of his back salary, he would use a sizable portion of it to support Toda’s activities to promote kosen-rufu. Shin’ichi was absolutely convinced that the benefit and good fortune he had acquired as a result had enabled him to overcome his illness and today take on the Gakkai’s leadership with confidence and composure.

He had not acted to support his mentor or the organization at someone else’s behest. He had done so spontaneously, with a spirit of cheerfulness. It was an expression of his sincere faith, a reflection of his profound resolve to dedicate his life to spreading the Daishonin’s Buddhism throughout the world.

Experience—Pursuing My Dream

Earnestine Harris, Norfolk, Va.

When I began my practice of Nichiren Buddhism in 1984, my life was so different than it is today. I was a single mother on welfare with two daughters ages 11 and 2 and living with my boyfriend. I hated my life and felt worthless and inadequate.

This feeling stemmed from the sense of sadness I always had about my father not being around. Though he promised many times that he would come to spend time with us, he never showed up. I would see other kids with their fathers and wonder what that must be like. Our family was so poor, though my mother, grandmother and aunt tried their best to provide for us. When I went to school, the other kids teased me about my clothes and played cruel games to embarrass me, which all made me feel I just wasn’t good enough. Though I had dreams of being a model or a dancer, I didn’t even feel good enough to try to achieve these dreams because of my very low self-esteem and lack of confidence. When I talked to my mother about my feelings, she encouraged me to pray and accept my life as God’s will. I became a very depressed person.

By 1984, I had been on welfare for five years and had little hope of changing my circumstances. Nevertheless, my sister encouraged me to go to beauty school, which I did



and then got my license. While I had a desire to own my own business, I just didn't think something like that could happen for me. Seven months passed, and I still didn't have a job.

Around this time, my neighbor introduced me to Nichiren Buddhism. She told me to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for my own happiness. I was very skeptical of this Japanese woman but frankly felt I had nothing to lose. As I chanted

and attended meetings, I became determined to show actual proof to my family. I started feeling relieved of my depression and more confident.

The time came for me to renew my eligibility for welfare. In the middle of completing the forms, I stopped and told my social worker that I didn't want welfare anymore. She asked me if I had a job already. I told her no, I had Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Of course, she looked at me like I was crazy, but I was already feeling that I could overcome the financial poverty in my life. I chanted with the conviction that "I will get a job."

Right away, things started to get worse instead of better, but with the encouragement from the members that "winter never fails to turn to spring," I kept on chanting. My family was totally against my practice and said "this mess"—as they called my Buddhist practice—was doing nothing for me. I determined I would try even harder to find out for myself.

Just three days after I received the Gohonzon, I rented a booth at a hair salon. I had no customers and only the money required to pay the first month's rent. Days would go by with no customers coming into the shop, but I remained confident and spent the time chanting as I paced back and forth. Slowly, customers started to come. I had to get money from each customer in advance so that I could purchase the supplies needed to even start the hairstyle. I was only able to collect enough each month to meet the booth rental.

It was at this time that my leader strongly encouraged me to participate in the monthly contribution. This would mean pledging to contribute a set amount each month to support the SGI organization. I thought she must be crazy. I was already squeezing out just enough to pay for my SGI publications and did not know where this additional money would come from. Still, I agreed to participate and challenged myself to stretch every dollar. Instead of buying a cup of coffee two or three times a day, I saved my money and it added up. Every month I was able to participate without fail. More customers came, and I found that I could move out on my own into an apartment with my two children. It felt so good to pay my bills and take care of my family all by myself!

After suffering through so much financial difficulty, I was finally beginning to see a change. So when I heard about the May Commemorative Contribution, I was excited to contribute more. I still have the little yellow container that my district leader gave me for my first May contribution so that I could save all of my change, tips and any other money. It was such a joy to present this money in support of this organization that had helped me find the guts to

pursue my dreams. I did this without expecting anything in return. Since then, I look forward to contributing every year, always giving more money than the year before.

Over the past 15 years, my business has grown to the point that I have my own salon and many loyal customers who have stuck with me through two changes in location. Now, I'm even able to reduce my work schedule to four days and still meet my financial obligations. I am also a proud homeowner and have investments that will allow me to retire someday. I never thought I would have this kind of financial security, and I know it is all through my hard work, consistent Buddhist practice and faithful support of this great organization. I am now working toward my next dream, which is to be a fashion designer. I want to make it possible for any woman to afford the total transformation—for a woman to feel good about herself.

A few years ago, I attended the women's conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. I had an opportunity to hear SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck's experience. She explained how she had discovered the source of unhappiness in her family and how she found the guts to change it. Listening to her, I realized that I still had anger toward my father and had not forgiven him even at his death. For the first time, I began to appreciate him for giving me life.

Through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and taking bold action, I feel that I have totally changed my life and can provide hope for my daughters that they can do the same. SGI President Ikeda encourages us that "Buddhism is win or lose." I am winning!