

## OPENING THE DOOR TO YOUR LIFE

THIS issue of *Living Buddhism* focuses on the theme of creativity. And though the articles and experiences explore its subject within a context of poetry, painting and the performing arts, I can imagine so many other expressions of creativity. Even though I am not an artist, nor can I hold a tune, creativity plays a decisive role in my life. As I face the challenge of living purposefully and with fulfillment, like so many others I start each day with a great determination.

Driving to the office, I carefully go over the details of my day. I know exactly what needs to be done and I have every confidence that it will all be accomplished. But soon after I arrive at my desk, something that wasn't on my agenda will invariably throw me off track: an unexpected telephone call; an impromptu meeting that wasn't on my schedule; a conversation that took longer than I had realized. Before I know it, the day is drawing to a close. Naturally I carry what I hadn't completed over to the next day; but my experience is an indication that the next day will be as unpredictable. And before I know it, a week has gone by with things getting pushed back.

My hope of course is that someday things will calm down enough for me to catch up once and for all and stay ahead. But as one management guru wrote, managing in today's world of unexpected twists and turns is like white water rafting. Management under such chaotic conditions is the norm rather than the exception. It is a reality we face regardless of our occupation.

I decided that I must become even more disciplined if I'm to make headway. I started by examining how I approached the day. The first thing I had to overcome was my tendency to let "just five more minutes" after the alarm goes off in the morning turn into twenty minutes. The next thing I saw was that after I had showered, shaved and selected what tie to wear, I hadn't much time left for gongyo.

It didn't take long for me to realize that my morning struggle was reflected in my daily struggle. That led to my making an important adjustment. Now I arise immediately, and begin gongyo earlier. What a difference! Because I am only human, I still fall behind. But I have found so many creative ways to still reach my goals—just like an airplane that leaves the gate late. Somehow, the pilot manages to make up the time and on occasion reach his destination ahead of schedule, all without troubling the passengers.

At the Central Executive Conference that convened at the Florida Nature and Culture Center last month, I went over the goals we had set at the beginning of the year. As I spoke I was mindful that the year is already more than half over. I reiterated the determination we made last January to promote the publications; to strengthen the trust in our communities with our geographic reorganization as a foundation in order to earn the support of our neighbors and respect in society; and to share this Buddhism with our friends through dialogue.

I believe that by living the remainder of this year and the years to come with creativity and vision, we will all reach our goals.

CREATIVITY is going to be vital to solving the problems facing the world as we approach the next century. SGI President Ikeda began this year's peace proposal by observing that "The dawn of a new millennium and the beginning of the twenty-first century is now less than 1,500 days away." He then recalls a conversation he had in

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January 1987 with the late Michel Baroin, president of the Commission for Commemoration of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution and Declaration of the Rights of Man, in which they shared their thoughts about the future of humankind from the perspective of “the thirtieth century,” one millennium from now. Reflecting on the monumental changes that have occurred since 1987, President Ikeda writes:

It is precisely because of this deadlock, I believe, that a thorough reappraisal of the history of humankind, viewed from a very broad perspective, is indispensable. We need to review the whole history of modern civilization as it has unfolded over the past few centuries, and take a bold new look, one millennium at a time, through a macroscopic, bird’s-eye view of human history.<sup>1</sup>

Our tendency is to think we have lots of time to do what we need to do in life. Our challenge is to use that time as creatively as possible.

In an address on the creative life made to Soka University students, President Ikeda said:

The creative life, in short, is achieved by a constant effort to improve one’s thoughts and actions. Creativeness means to push open the heavy, groaning doorway to life. This is not an easy struggle. Indeed, it may be the most difficult task in the world. For opening the door to your own life is in the end more difficult than opening the door to the mysteries of the universe....

As you challenge evil and polish that jewel that is life, you will learn to walk that supreme pathway of true humanity. Of this, I am confident, and I am confident, too, that those who lead creative lives from the present into the future will stand in the vanguard of history. I myself think of this flowering of the creative life as a human revolution. This human revolution is your mission now as it will be throughout your lives.<sup>2</sup>

Through the power of our faith and practice, let’s develop our creativity to achieve a victory today, tomorrow and for the rest of the year.

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1. “New Horizons of a Global Civilization,” April 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 7.
2. *The Tide Toward the 21st Century*, Soka University Addresses by founder Daisaku Ikeda, “The Flowering of Creative Life Force,” pp. 71–72.