

FROM OUR READERS

LION'S ROAR

THE illustrations throughout your July issue were wonderful. Blair Thornley and Larry Ashton both did an incredible job to make the articles they were illustrating come to life! While I had hoped to illustrate more for your magazine as I had done in the past, I have found that being home with two small children keeps me so busy that I can no longer sit at my drawing table! Yet, the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is so profound that I have been able to channel the art that I wish to express from my heart into music. While running around the house chasing little Austen, I have so far composed the music and words for twelve songs!

Last week I stood up on a stage at a local art opening and sang two of the songs, despite my nervousness and fear. I kept imagining the image of Blair Thornley's lion with the statement, "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion." Thank you for that image because I sang with my whole heart, and incredibly (after chanting many hours) I'm no longer afraid! Thank you also for your publications that continue to encourage me, even when on the run.

AMY SADANAGA
Langhorne, Pa.

PEACE PROPOSAL CORRECTION

FIRST let me thank all of you for a first-rate magazine. I really enjoy and appreciate the letters, articles (both from SGI and outside scholars), the art, "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" —everything. Please keep up the good work.

Thank you especially for printing President Ikeda's 1997 peace proposal. It is a profound and demanding essay, but if we are to solve the problems facing our planet, we must tackle profound and demanding issues.

Recognizing the depth, scope and complexity of his proposal, I created an outline, with page references, to help members in my area get a handle on it. In the process, I ran across two things which for the life of me I cannot understand.

The first is the word *aporia*, which appears in line 18 of the first column on page 8.

The second is clearly a lacuna: line 22 of the first column on page 20 reads "... back in 1972, and tof policy."

I hope you will pardon my peskiness, but I am determined to grasp President Ikeda's proposal deeply and put it into action.

EDWARD B. RIPPY
Oakland, Ca.

Editor's reply: We had a hard time finding the word aporia as well, but the two thousand-plus-page Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines aporia as "in rhetoric, an affectation of being at a loss where to begin, or what to say."

The following is a corrected version of the paragraph on page 20 of the peace proposal in the April Living Buddhism:

"The United Nations Environmental Programme was established back in 1972, and the founding of the CSD will contribute immensely to the coordination of policy in this field. Already the CSD is involved in follow-up activities for implemented projects by theme.

"However, as symbolized by the complicated debate over finances in the United Nations, there are many hurdles to overcome. In addition, even if the CSD is able to achieve a well-coordinated U.N. environmental policy, it will take considerable executive power to assure that it can be transmitted into action."

DRAGON GIRL

THANK you so much for printing President Ikeda's enlightened dialogue on the Dragon Girl in the July 1997 issue ["Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra"], and thank you also to President Ikeda and the members of the Study Department for initiating and participating in such a necessary discussion. As always, I am incredibly moved by President Ikeda's wisdom and vision and the power of the SGI to be in rhythm with the most important issues emerging in the organization today.

I initially wanted to write to point out certain problems within the dialogue itself that I found troubling—such as the fact that no women actually participated—but instead I wanted to respond to its superior spirit and not dwell on its limitations.

The Dragon Girl represents the true humanity that women bring to Buddhism and to the SGI. Sometimes I feel that within our organization, we don't always speak about the very human feelings that accompany a true human revolution. While we strive to have the courage of the lion, we also experience the sadness and softness and moments of repose that go hand in hand with struggling along toward our victories. Without these moments, we wouldn't be carrying out a "human" revolution but rather a revolution of tin soldiers or machines, relentless and hard, without the power to change and "yield," as President Ikeda describes it in his Harvard speech on soft power.

Women, who are not necessarily the sole repositories of softness or fluidity, nevertheless seem to fight with a strength that also employs their senses, intuition and emotions. For example, in the recent movie "Courage Under Fire," a female captain begins crying in front of her troops in the middle of a battle. A male soldier screams at her in disgust: "Oh great! Now you are crying!" She replies, "It's OK! It's only tension!" and then goes on to make prudent, courageous decisions, earning the Medal of Honor for her service.

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Her fight is a fight like the one carried on by our mothers. Her weapons: strength AND sensitivity.

For myself, I owe a lot to the women in my life. I, along with my younger sister, was raised solely by my mother and grandmother. I am proud of the history of the women in my family, from all the business-savvy grandmothers who worked through wars to my own mother who continues to grow personally in ways I never dreamed possible. These women are Buddhas. I am lucky to come from a family of Buddhas and to practice in a new family of SGI women and young women who are also Buddhas, excelling with each other above all else.

Anyone who doubts that women can exhibit Buddhahood hasn't had a mother, or a girlfriend, or a sister. They haven't practiced side by side with our women's division, and they haven't grasped the sensitive power of the lotus flower that opens with each tender feeler stretching out to embrace the world even amongst the harshest of conditions.

LAURA RECHT
New York