

Boston Translation Group's Work Is a Source of Growth

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Hard work for the benefit of others describes the efforts of the Boston Translation Group, which has been meeting three times a month for the past three years.

Their work is voluntary and, even to the casual observer, the task seems formidable. "The great challenge," according to Bryson Kido, "lies in converting the [Buddhist] concept from Japanese into English, while retaining the original author's style and accuracy. In doing so, we actually study the [Daishonin's] teaching, and because we can examine only a little at a time, truly engrave the concepts in our hearts."

"A little at a time" is right. Sometimes the session will produce only a paragraph, sometimes a whole page. After all, this is no panel of linguistic experts. In fact, most members of this all-youth activity are basically monolingual. Conviction in the value-creating aspect of the work and consistency in challenging the obstacles of it are the keys to the BTG's success.

After gongyo, the BTG meets upstairs in the Boston Community Center. Anyone peering through the window of the closed door will see the participants huddled together, like business strategists. Various reference works, including the *Daibyakurenge* (the Soka Gakkai's study journal), dictionaries and thesauri, are at hand. Exactly what is going on?

"We're translating from Japanese into rudimentary English and then from English into a more correct English," according to L. Jorj Lark. "This causes us to use as many forms of communication as we can think of — using our hands and facial expressions and little electronic gadgets and dictionaries — to get the point across. This can lead to much laughter and bonding as we work together to achieve our common goal."

Boston Joint Territory, acting on a proposal by Jill Cibella, gave the go-ahead for formation of a translation group shortly after SGI President Ikeda visited Boston in 1993. Ms. Cibella, drawing on her experience in the Soka Gakkai's Young Women's International Group in Japan, which did a great deal of multilingual translation, felt that the group's mission would be twofold: The English-speaking members could study more deeply SGI President Ikeda's guidance, and President Ikeda's writings and speeches would reach a wider audience.

Early projects included translations of a series of dialogues from the *Daibyakurenge* clarifying doctrinal issues clouded by the Nikken sect. At the end of 1996, the BTG completed an update of *Fundamentals of Buddhism*, a popular work that explains many concepts critical to a full understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's philosophy.

Work completed in Boston is forwarded to the SGI-USA Study Department. When asked about the work of the Boston Translation Group, Study Department Chief Ted Morino spoke of his deep appreciation for their efforts

"They provided us great reference material that is often used as a basis for our Buddhist concepts series," he said.

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