

**SIGNIFICANT DATE: ‘Rissho Ankoku Ron’ — July 16
Give Hope to the Community
By JAMIE CUTLER, Fort Myers, Fla., Correspondent**

If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquillity throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not? (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 38)

People’s lives today, at a fundamental level, are largely out of control. Because of our mistaken views, we have great difficulty taking responsibility for the conditions we find ourselves in. How can we find positive solutions to alter our lives at the root? Nichiren Daishonin’s treatise the “Rissho Ankoku Ron” explains that we can find these solutions primarily in changing the fundamental darkness in our lives. (Nichiren Daishonin submitted this treatise to the most powerful man in Japan, the retired regent, Hojo Tokiyori, on July 16, 1260).

People ask: “What can I do? I’m just one small person.” But Buddhism teaches that a self-reformation in just one person can influence the whole environment. As SGI President Ikeda explains in the “Rissho Ankoku” chapter of *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4: “The goal of Nichiren’s Buddhism is to create peace and prosperity in society by equipping individuals...with the inner requisites to triumph in all endeavors. The ‘Rissho Ankoku Ron’ reveals the underlying principle for achieving this.”

I have an experience about studying the “Rissho Ankoku Ron”: Managing a hotel in Fort Myers for the last 12 years, I have had many opportunities to get involved in my community. When I got a phone call asking me to be on the Chamber of Commerce, I was thrilled. I thought I was totally inexperienced for such a big job, but I’d give it my best shot.

There were several barren plots of land in our city and a lot of unused park sites. These eyesores had been the subject of many a town conference, but no progress had been made in 27 years. Since I was studying the “Rissho Ankoku Ron” at the time, I was wondering what I could do.

And I was surprised again when I got nominated as the president of the beautification project. I thought: “I don’t even have a green thumb, but at least they haven’t given up. I’m not at all political, but I love helping people. I would just love to help them figure out a way to succeed.” That’s how I chanted night and day. I saw my mission: to give my colleagues hope (even if I over watered my own plants). My sense of mission led me to chant before every one of the board meetings to accomplish the goal of getting this city some recreation areas.

In a month we had 40 trucks lined up with donations for our first ever park site, centrally located, right by the river. At the opening the mayor and the county gave us checks to continue our work. And now there are five completed sites — we have concerts and children’s play areas, a river walk, a place for people to stop and watch the sunset and a park for family barbecues and outings. We are the number one parks project in Florida!

It’s a pleasure to know that because of my determination — based on my study of the “Rissho Ankoku Ron” — to make a difference, I had a positive influence on area citizens and politicians. By elevating my life condition first, I inspired them to make their mutual dreams come true with hope.

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