

True Stories of the Young Women's Division
By JEFF FARR, Associate Editor
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The just-published young women's division's book, *Unshakable Conviction in Faith*, is the result of two-and-a-half years of hard work. In early 1995, the YWDRenaissance Council was discussing how best to encourage young women when someone mentioned the magic word *experiences*. Light bulbs went on.

The idea for this experience book was born and a committee to edit and produce it formed. The Renaissance Council ran a call for submissions in the *World Tribune*, and from the 60 they received the committee picked 18.

The four young women on the committee wanted to make sure that the experiences showed the diversity found among SGI-USA young women. One of the messages of the book is that this Buddhism can work for any young woman.

The book committee also wanted the experiences to address the most pressing problems and issues young women face today. Included are stories of overcoming serious illnesses like cancer, defeating depression, improving family relationships, getting dream jobs, curing drug addictions and even finding true love. An underlying theme is that young women can, by using faith to solve their problems, develop their sense of identity.

Patty Graham of Philadelphia, for instance, shares a moving experience of healing the scars of the sexual abuse she experienced growing up. As a young woman on her own, she had problems with drugs and was once raped. During the early years of her practice, she dipped in and out of depression as she struggled to chant consistently and find herself. And she made it, becoming the first college graduate in her family, with a degree in dance from Temple University. *Unshakable Conviction* is full of victories like this.

Ultimately, the book is meant to encourage anyone, young woman or not, SGI member or not, says former Young Women's Division Chief Melanie Merians, who oversaw the book's editing and production. The principles these young women use to win in their lives will be inspiring to many readers. *Unshakable Conviction* will soon be available at all SGI-USA bookstores, and can be mail-ordered (M.O. #0750; price: \$4.50).

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