

Florida Impressions

I was born into this practice, but only recently have I been participating in SGI activities. I am ashamed to say it, but it has taken me 22 years — that's how old I am — to realize what I have been practicing all my life.

When I went to Florida, I had no idea what I was in for. I didn't even know what city I was going to. My leader encouraged me to go to Florida for some leadership conference, and after talking to a close SGI friend, I just knew I had to be there.

Of course I had to overcome lots of obstacles to get there, but they were all worth it! If I had to go through more obstacles to experience that conference again, I would embrace them like a warm blanket. It was wonderful.

At the Young Women's Division Leadership Conference, I realized how important study is in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I realized that the practice of Buddhism is not just chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but really studying what we are chanting about and the Law as taught by Nichiren Daishonin. For instance, I didn't know there was a right way to chant and a wrong way. In studying the temple issue in the conference, I felt the need to practice the right way and to protect SGI President Ikeda. I thought to myself: "Wow! We could actually be chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon, but be completely off with the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism." That's why I need to study as much as I can, so I can feel confident in defending President Ikeda and this Buddhism.

Before, I thought (as mentioned by someone at the conference) that if I put all my faith in the Gohonzon I would lose myself somehow, but it came to be completely the opposite. I actually found myself.

— *Lansil Choi, Long Beach, Calif.*