

## **Tsuyako Feasel, San Diego I Still Have a Lot of People To Help**

**By SHIRLEY WHITE  
West Palm Beach, Fla.**

### **Creating a happy family has been one of Tsuyako Feasel's biggest challenges in her 38 years of practice.**

After more than 31 years as a mother, Tsuyako Feasel says the most important thing she has contributed to her children's success in life is good communication. "We can talk about anything," she says. And the secret to that, she adds, "is being a good listener."

It's the same quality she brings to her role as a district leader. "I still have a lot of people to help," says Mrs. Feasel, 72. "My life hasn't been easy, but I know I chose the right direction."

That is exactly what she chanted for when she began her practice in Japan more than 38 years ago: She wanted answers about her life and the best way to live it. Even the beginning of her practice was not easy. For seven years before she started practicing Buddhism, she resisted. When she finally decided to give it a try, she felt "very happy." It was a happiness that didn't originate from any particular circumstance in her life, but it made her confident enough in the practice to offer prayers for her future.

Seven years later when she was 41, Mrs. Feasel's first son was born. With Ed on her back, she attended many meetings, feeling joyful that she could practice for kosen-rufu. When Ed was 10 months old, her husband, Paul, a Navy hospital corpsman, was transferred back to the United States. Her second son, David, was born in San Diego in 1968.

When she first learned of her second pregnancy, Mrs. Feasel was in shock. Being 44 years old, she worried that her baby might suffer abnormalities. At that time, genetic testing was not available, so she sought guidance and decided that this baby was a gift of life. David was born with Down's Syndrome.

"At first, I felt as if I was being punished; I didn't understand how I could have two sons who were so different," says Mrs. Feasel.

Looking back, she understands how David has enriched her family's life. An example of this is the love that her two sons share. Ed always has been a devoted older brother, protective in nature and helpful. When she and Paul attended meetings, Ed would take care of David.

A turning point came in their family life 10 years ago when she was working full-time, and Ed had won a scholarship to Yale University. "I didn't want him to feel the burden of not being able to help with David, so I suggested to him that we put David in a home," she said. "Ed wouldn't hear of it — he was so upset. He told me he would give up his scholarship and take care of David himself. He felt that we were a family, and families shouldn't give up on one another."

They took this new challenge to the Gohonzon, chanting together for a solution. "We decided not to put David in a home," she said. "My husband's practice became stronger, and we stood up as a family."

Ed did go to Yale for four years, then on to the University of California, Berkeley, for his doctorate. He is now the SGI-USA youth division chief and a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. He's also a husband and the father, in grandma's words, "of a beautiful baby girl."

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David also has a job and can understand the world around him much better than anyone expected. He cannot speak, but he tries to chant. When he laughs, which is often, Mrs. Feasel says, he laughs from his heart.

Mrs. Feasel doesn't have any more questions about why her sons are so different. She understands that although differences may seem apparent from the outside, much similarity exists within their hearts.

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