

SGI President Ikeda's Essay
Our Publications Are Letters for Kosen-rufu
By HO GOKU

Recently, much snow has fallen on the Tokyo area. The first thing I check when I wake up is the weather report across Japan. If it's a nice day, I breathe a sigh of relief. But if it's raining or snowing, I worry about how the *Seikyo Shimbun* deliverers are doing. I hope that none of them have had an accident or fallen ill....

And on mornings when a heavy snow has fallen, a warm feeling glows in my heart when I pick up the newspaper. I know that they have delivered this paper I hold in my hands — they have picked their way carefully through slippery streets and made every effort to keep the paper from getting wet or soiled. On snowy days, they cannot use their bicycles, and it often takes them more than twice the usual time to finish. As I read the paper, in my heart I thank them deeply for their sincere efforts.



I was a newspaper deliverer myself — for three years, starting as a sixth grader. I wanted to have some spare money to buy something for my father, who was often ill, and my mother, who was working constantly. I raced through the cold, windy streets with the heavy newspaper bag digging deeply into my shoulder.

I will never forget one snowy day when I slipped, and my newspapers spilled onto the street. With tears stinging my eyes, I bent down and gathered them all up again.

At the same time, I remember being proud that I worked harder than other kids my age.

One day, a couple to whose home I delivered the paper invited me in for dinner. The husband was a university professor. "It's wonderful that you are learning to work hard at such a young age," he encouraged me. "You will accomplish great things." How fondly I look back on that.

When you watch the sun rising in the glorious dawn — in that fresh, vibrant moment when morning first arrives — you feel a tremendous sense of triumph, as if you and you alone are embraced in an infinite, sparkling, jeweled realm.

Delivering newspapers also strengthened my weak constitution.



The valiant, exceptional efforts of many people are required to deliver the *Seikyo Shimbun* to our doors. When a large snowfall is forecast, the printing time is moved up to allow more time for delivery on city streets congested with snow. Not only the journalists but the proofreaders and copy editors have to rush to meet the earlier deadline. There are also added pressures placed on those who drive the trucks that deliver the papers to the local distributors.

And the local distributors, too, go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the papers get to the deliverers as early as possible. To make up for delays caused by bad weather, they often enlist their entire families. The delivery hour approaches. Fighting the clock, they navigate the dark, hazardous streets, driving as carefully and cautiously as they can.

When the papers arrive, the deliverers then set out — the distributors' sincere expressions of encouragement and appreciation no doubt serving as the beacon that safely guides them.

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The anchor position in the relay race to deliver the newspapers is held by the deliverers. They are the uncrowned heroes. Their ranks are varied, including members old and young — from the women’s division, men’s division, young women’s division and young men’s division.

A journalist once said to me: “There are times, when I have to work through the night to finish an article, that I think my job is hard. But when I think of our deliverers, the uncrowned heroes, I feel the courage to go on. I know their job is much harder than writing articles.”

Whenever journalists find themselves feeling a little too high and mighty, they should think of the newspaper deliverers. Their efforts are silent reminders of true dedication.



During the snowy winter of 1276, Nichiren Daishonin rejoiced at a letter from Konichima. “In these circumstances, your letter was particularly welcome,” he wrote. “It seemed almost like a message from Shakyamuni Buddha or from my departed parents, and I cannot tell you how grateful I was” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 202).

Likewise, the Daishonin unmistakably would award the highest praise to the noble messengers who deliver the kosen-rufu letters that are the publications of our organization.

Today again, from the snowy north to the sunny southern islands, our uncrowned heroes work with tireless dedication as vital mainstays of our movement. They are the true messengers of the Buddha, the true treasures of the Soka Gakkai. Theirs is the road of human revolution. Theirs is the road of Buddhist practice leading to the accumulation of good fortune and benefit that will fragrantly adorn their existence for all eternity.

Without a doubt, a great rainbow signaling the joy and approbation of the Buddhist gods will always, always, shine above them.

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