

## EDITORIAL: A Paradise of Benefit and Victory

By TED MORINO

Executive Editor

A poem by SGI President Ikeda and dedicated to all SGI-USA members on June 17 (July 3 *World Tribune*) reads:

*Forge your solidarity  
And advance in triumph,  
Creating in America  
A paradise of benefit and victory.*

I'd like to share my thoughts on how we can create this "paradise of benefit and victory."

**First, it's important to challenge ourselves to truly realize that the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is found in changing our life-condition and even our destiny through practicing it.** This Buddhism is not mere idealism. As President Ikeda says: "When viewed from the deep perspective of Buddhism, the fundamental source of all change lies in our inner determination as we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon. As we continue to chant daimoku consistently, we will strengthen and solidify our basic life-condition directed toward Buddhahood."

Nichiren Daishonin writes that "*benefit* means attaining Buddhahood as we are. It also means the purification of our six senses" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). In other words, by purifying our life-condition through our daily Buddhist practice, we can make a good cause at a fundamental level in our lives. This will be manifested in the form of our positively changed environment. This is what is meant by the saying "Buddhism is concerned with victory."

**Second, in practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism, we need to have a specific goal and strong prayer.** And we have to decide to reach that goal regardless of the obstacles that will inevitably arise in our pursuit of it. This decision, then, must be bolstered by prayer — our strong prayer that affects the environment to function in our favor. In this vein, the Daishonin says, "Whether or not your prayer is answered depends upon your faith; [if it is not,] the fault in no way lies with me, Nichiren" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 305).

**Third, a crucial element to ensure benefit and victory is practicing for others.** In this regard, the Daishonin states, "By making offerings to others, we can help ourselves" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598).

Even though I am convinced that through chanting daimoku there is an internal upsurge of life force, it is actually when a person I've encouraged in faith starts showing renewed vitality in his or her existence that I feel something noble within me functioning. In other words, through the changes I see in others, I can perceive my life as a vast source of great energy. This, I believe, is what Buddhism refers to as Buddhahood.

When people re-ignite a sense of passion in their faith — which allows them to tap something new within their lives — the power of their daimoku changes dramatically. Witnessing this so many times in others' lives has been the catalyst for my making major breakthroughs in heretofore difficult areas. This is mainly how I continue to learn that the Daishonin's Buddhism is a living teaching rather than a dead one — it's an *actual* teaching that enables us to change reality. And it has always been President Ikeda's words that have ensured my revitalizing my life and continuing to be on the right track of faith.

Through the principle that faith equals daily life, we can each live up to the heart of

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President Ikeda; that is, each member's tenacious determination to show actual proof of growth and happiness — a happiness inextricably linked to the happiness and well-being of others — is what makes the SGI-USA a paradise of benefit and victory. And this is what will make all of America a paradise, I believe.

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