

**MIDDLEWAY BOOKS GAIN IN POPULARITY
BY DAVE MCNEILL
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.**

Book-signings, summer festivals and use in districts are all helping fuel demand; 'Mirror' in third printing.

The books are selling fast. So fast, in fact, they're sometimes hard to find.

Thanks to an enthusiastic response from SGI-USA members, *The Buddha in Your Mirror*—an easy-to-read, practical introduction to Ni-chiren Buddhism—sold out of its second printing in two weeks last month. But the third printing has just been completed, and copies will be available again very soon.

Sales of *The Way of Youth* and *For the Sake of Peace* have also increased thanks to several types of events.

A book-signing tour, summer festivals and people using the book at discussion meetings are three of the major reasons for the brisk sales. Greg Martin, one of the *Mirror* co-authors, recently visited Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia bookstores to sign this new book and also promote other Middleway Press books, especially *For the Sake of Peace* by SGI President Ikeda.

In the Philadelphia area, he visited four bookstores and gave an introductory lecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Hundreds turned out. "The members were so proud to see our books in the major bookstores," said Carmela Menchaca, the Mid-Atlantic Zone women's leader. "They brought friends to all the events, and the bookstore people were happy, too.

"I think this was one of the most successful events in encouraging the members, sharing Buddhism with others and informing America about Nichiren Buddhism and Daisaku Ikeda," she said.

The book-signings are helpful in other ways, too. "They create an environment for us to make friends and relationships that we can build on in the future," says Ms. Menchaca. In fact, some members have already begun following up with these booksellers, hosting book discussions and other events. A district in Washington, D.C., for example, holds monthly discussions on President Ikeda's *The Way of Youth* at a local bookstore. These bookstore relationships will prove to be an asset in making future Middleway books broad successes.

Inviting booksellers to promote Middleway books at SGI-USA's family youth festivals this summer has also been popular. Several areas have already made connections with neighborhood stores by having them set up a booth at their festival, and more areas plan to do so. "It's a great opportunity," says Karen Yossef of Cleveland, who's invited Barnes and Noble to attend their festival at the Cleveland Community Center. "Not only will the members have easy access to the books, but we'll be able to let the stores know what we're all about. We'll be opening the lines of communication."

Many people report that *Mirror* is good not only for sharing Buddhism with friends and family, but also for refreshing their own practice. "The up-to-date explanations of Buddhism in this book have all kinds of ramifications," says Mike Levine of Philadelphia. "We've used the book as a focus of our discussion meetings, and it has refreshed how we explain our Buddhist practice. It's infusing the meetings with excitement."

The book-signing tour will continue during the fall in the Midwest and on the West Coast. For more information on promoting Middleway Press books in your area, please contact Middleway Press at middlewaypress@sgi-usa.org or 310-260-8934.