

**Fighting the Mind Battle**  
**By SHARON REDMAN**  
**New York #1 JT. Territory YWD Chief**

**Society is a struggle, your life is a struggle, Buddhism is a struggle. The Daishonin also lived a life of struggle. So did Shakyamuni.**

**The Buddhist scripture [says]: “So rise up! Go outside. Give yourself to the Buddha’s noble teaching. Drive out the legions of the King of Death (the Devil King).” — SGI President Ikeda, *A Conversation With Youth*, p. 15.**

Every time I make a determination, I’m full of excitement, energy and boundless hope. However, all that usually comes crashing down when the opposing forces say, “Oh no, we won’t let Sharon break through.” I guess it’s that Devil King that SGI President Ikeda is talking about — the manifestation of the fundamental darkness inherent in our lives — that attacks me. So I find myself constantly fighting a mind battle as I try to keep my life set on accomplishing each goal.

During 1996, I made a series of determinations regarding my career path. I am interested in a position coordinating special events in a creative environment. As usual, I started off with lots of enthusiasm and daimoku — and even took a course designed to better prepare me for this field. But again, after a few months that old devil got the better of me.

One Gosho I’ve been studying constantly to encourage myself is “Letter to Misawa,” in which Nichiren Daishonin discusses beating the Devil King:

When a common mortal of the Latter Day of the Law is ready to attain Buddhahood...this devil is greatly surprised. He says to himself, “This is most vexing. If I allow this person to remain in my domain, he will not only free himself from the sufferings of birth and death but lead others to enlightenment as well. Moreover, he will take over my realm and change it into a pure land. What shall I do?” “The devil then summons all his underlings from the threefold world of desire, form and formlessness and tells them, “Each of you now go and harass that votary, according to your respective skills. If you should fail to make him abandon his Buddhist practice, then enter into the minds of his disciples, patrons and the people of his land and thus try to persuade or threaten him.” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 252)

Based on this Gosho, I pledged to make 1997 the “Year of Sharon” — a year of total victory regarding every goal that I had set for myself. In the dictionary I looked up the word *pledge* and found that it means “a solemn promise.” This was just what I needed to get me set for the “Year of Sharon” — solemn promises. Three months after writing these pledges down, the Devil King attacked once again, trying to make me feel that I couldn’t fulfill my dreams. Those “underlings” always seemed to be following me, saying, “You can’t leave this job; it’s not possible; no way...no way.”

In the past, I tended to listen to these negative voices. But this year, I was in full battle armor! I continued to chant strong daimoku with my pledges firmly in mind. The company I want to work for called me for an interview for the position that I have been waiting for. This interview was rescheduled several times. In the past, this might have made me assume that I didn’t get the position. But in the “Year of Sharon,” I am not swayed. I will rise up and drive out the Devil King. I am waiting! I am ready! I have won!!!

**WT**