

## MESSAGE FROM MATILDA BUCK, SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER A TIME OF REUNION AND RENEWAL

My warmest greetings to all of you who have gathered today to celebrate our 10th Women's Day meeting. For most of us, this is our favorite meeting of the year. For me, it is a time of reunion and renewal. I am with friends that I have not seen for a while and during our time together, I feel a revitalization of my own spirit. I am reminded of the humanity that links all of us and I feel grateful for the SGI-USA organization because of the opportunities it has given me to develop my life and share deep friendships.

This is a landmark meeting—our first women's meeting of the new century—a century that our Soka Gakkai International president, Daisaku Ikeda, has named the Century of Women.

In the opening pages of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda states, "A great revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a society and further, will enable a change in the destiny of humankind." He's talking about the power of one person to make a difference. But does this mean we have to become an extraordinary woman in order to effect change? The answer is a resounding "No."

During a trip to Japan last month, I asked President Ikeda for further clarification about the concept of human revolution. This is what he told me:

"Human revolution isn't a great, momentous life-changing moment. It is something quite simple. It is as simple as a change of direction in your life. For example, if you don't like to read and you make an effort to read just a little bit every day, for the sake of developing yourself or to be able to communicate better with other people, that effort in and of itself is human revolution. It's the small efforts that you make every day to change that positively alters the direction of your life."

Please be confident that it is these small steps that we take every day that lead to the accomplishment of our dreams. We advance one step at a time amid the realities of our lives, with faith as our foundation. Everything we need to face our challenges already exists within us. We possess an inexhaustible supply of wisdom, courage and power, and these strengths can always be tapped through our prayer. Every small step forward is a breakthrough. It is through these successes that we demonstrate with our very being the validity of this Buddhism and serve as an inspiration to others.

We also possess the power to make a difference in another way. When we make an effort to really listen to someone or encourage that person with our whole heart, we are touching him or her in that moment. Like the ripples created when a rock is tossed into a pond, our expressions of kindness and compassion reverberate. The person's life that we touched will, in turn, touch another.

Imagine the collective waves of change that we will create during this Century of Women as each of us embraces and activates our own power to make a difference. Together, with you, I look forward to celebrating our accomplishments.