

**WOMEN'S CONFERENCE  
AT THE FLORIDA NATURE AND CULTURE CENTER  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD  
BY JERI LOVE, PASADENA, CALIF.**

Close to 200 women from across the United States attended the first women's conference of this year at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Feb. 10–13, where they participated in seminars and small group discussions about how to use their Buddhist practice to make a difference in the world. It was also the first women's conference since the SGI-USA began its new departure under the leadership of General Director Danny Nagashima and Women's Leader Matilda Buck. Mr. Nagashima sent long-stemmed, pink roses to all of the conferees as an early Valentine's Day tribute.

"This conference is an opportunity for you to be recharged, rejuvenated and inspired," said Mrs. Buck during her opening remarks. "When the conference is over, I sincerely hope you will feel empowered to take on the challenges that await you at home."

President Ikeda said in a special message read at the opening session:

"So long as you are steadfast and live resolutely in accord with the Mystic Law, you need fear nothing. No matter what may happen, you need not despair. Please be convinced that you are walking a solid path toward happiness." He also encouraged the women to become "stout-hearted queens of the Mystic Law."

Citing the life of Eleanor Roosevelt as a historical example of the conference's theme, "The Power of One Woman To Make a Difference," Yoshiko Kadin, SGI-USA women's Secretariat leader, said that the key to activating one's power is determination, prayer and action. "Everything starts with a single step," she added.

Conferees attended four sessions: The Power of Prayer, Creating a Winning Environment, The Most Compassionate Action—Shakubuku, and Soka Spirit—The Ultimate Human Revolution, after which they participated in small group dialogue sessions or an open question-and-answer sessions.

There were also open guidance sessions with Mrs. Buck; Linda Johnson, SGI-USA vice women's leader, and Sheilah Edwards, vice general director and vice senior women's advisor. The recurring message throughout each session was that daimoku is the key to activating one's limitless and inherent power.

In closing the conference, Mrs. Buck read an excerpt from the novel *The Human Revolution*: "Anyone would think that victory is impossible and that's probably how you feel right now. But don't forget this marvelous Gohonzon we have. It has the power to transform what you'd normally think impossible into something possible. Those who give up before they try, thinking it's impossible, don't really know the power of the Mystic Law. Only people who can bring forth the Mystic Law's power can succeed at anything they try. Therefore, when we sincerely pray to the Gohonzon, we can tap power that we never imagined available to us, transforming the impossible into the possible."

SGI-USA member and Latin jazz artist Nestor Torres provided a closing session surprise, with a performance of several numbers from his Treasures of the Heart CD.

**A SHARING OF LIVES**

(Left to right) "Hi, I'm Sidney Swann, and I received the Gohonzon on Oct. 12, 1975. I live in Englewood, N.J., and I introduced Debbie Brown to the practice."

“Hi, I’m Debbie Brown of Montclair, N.J. I received the Gohonzon Feb. 29, 1976, and I introduced Sheila Taylor to the practice.”

“Hi, I’m Sheila Taylor and I received the Gohonzon on June 17, 1978, and I introduced Isabel Angelica to the practice.”

“Hi, I’m Isabel Angelica of Samsota, Fla., and I received the Gohonzon on Feb. 29, 1984.”

To get here to the conference, each of us overcame multiple obstacles. We each had to apply tremendous determination to unite at this conference. We knew the conference would be something special, but we didn’t know that it would inject new life into the way we were practicing. It gave us beautiful realizations, a different perspective of things and tools to challenge and win over obstacles in every area of our lives. The leaders were fantastic. They shared their lives and souls with us and showed us how to have a deeper understanding of how to view obstacles, challenging them and creating through them. For us, our plane won’t land fast enough. We can’t wait to share this wonderful “power of one woman” conference with all of our members.