

**NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER  
MATILDA BUCK  
ADVANCE WITH FRESH RESOLVE**

The sincerity of making offerings to the Lotus Sutra at the beginning of the New Year is like cherry blossoms blooming from trees, a lotus unfolding in a pond, sandalwood leaves unfurling on the Snow Mountains, or the moon beginning to rise” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1137).

How I love to read the “New Year’s Goshō” at this time of year. Its hopeful, natural images inspire me to begin again, to think big, to make a clear determination.

Our SGI theme for this year is the “Year of Total Victory for the New Century.” This is such a confident and encompassing resolution! The question is whether it will be just a slogan for us, or, starting today, will we make it our personal theme—the thing we return to throughout the year to remind us we have made a pledge for victory.

It is so easy to falter when we are disappointed, to fall into passivity or even bitterness. So I plan to make the “New Year’s Goshō” the place I return to for encouragement toward my goals, remembering the fresh resolve I feel today.

In it, Nichiren Daishonin tells us that we have the power in our lives to achieve any victory. “We ordinary people can see neither our own eyelashes, which are so close, nor the heavens in the distance,” he writes. “Likewise, we do not see that the Buddha exists in our own hearts” (WND, 1137).

This is why SGI President Ikeda tells us that “we can instantly access the life-state of Buddhahood by chanting to the Gohonzon. We can move in an orbit in rhythm with the law of the universe. And through the power of faith and the power of practice, we can freely tap our inner potential—we can draw out our ability to obtain financial security, our wisdom and intellect, our character and humanity, and the ability to direct our lives toward happiness. It depends on our determination, on our actions and on the strength of our faith” (Dec.15 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

This last sentence is so important. Today, on New Year’s Day, we can make our determination one full of daring and earnestness. Then we can chant and take action—even if it’s just a small act—toward our goals.

Doing this repeatedly through the year is how we can actively build the strength of our faith. The willingness to stay open, to try again, to keep our hope up even if we find disappointment and setbacks—this willingness in practice builds faith.

In this quote, President Ikeda has given us a formula to achieve victory with three points: determination, action and continuing faith. Further, our individual and personal victories that we share with one another this year will prove the beauty and joy of our organization.

As the women’s leader of SGI-USA, I have certain goals—a responsive, inclusive and thriving organization; that the injustice of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood becomes clear; the success of Soka University of America; and, most importantly, that each member become profoundly happy, especially our young people. I also have personal and family goals.

The greatest way that we can welcome President and Mrs. Ikeda here in 2001 is with an atmosphere of joy and conviction in being victorious in our personal lives. I hope you will join me in sticking to our resolution to win that we have made this New Year’s Day.

Each one of us knows best what total victory means in our own life. Let’s be daring! Let’s do it!