

EDITORIAL: Half Done, Half To Go

Quick. Do you remember the SGI-USA focal point for 1997? The three guidelines for the year? How about General Director Zaitso's six challenges? Your own New Year's resolutions?

So often we come up with mottoes, guidelines or resolutions only to forget about them a week or a month later. Especially in the SGI, we seem to love having three points for this, five for that and 10 for something else. It's somehow comforting to boil down everything we want to do into bite-size chunks this way.

Even Nichiren Daishonin had three points: faith, practice and study. Everything we do in the SGI and in our personal practice we measure against those three essentials. They form such a core of this Buddhism that we all know them by heart.

But what about all those other slogans and lists? Do they have less value because we can't remember them as easily? Any guideline, precept or resolution is as effective as people make it. If we're serious about losing weight, quitting smoking, getting out of debt or chanting more daimoku, we don't necessarily need a motto to remind us. We will, to quote another slogan, "just do it." But guidelines and "steps to success" can help us if we take them for what they're worth and refer to them once in awhile.

What's most important is what we *do*, not what slogans we come up with. This week, General Director Zaitso and the Central Executive Committee will review the first half of 1997 and see how far the organization has come in terms of the six challenges he presented last December (expansion; making districts priority No. 1; entrusting the youth; reorganizing by neighborhood; diversity; and study). With the year half over, it's a good time for all of us to review the goals we set for ourselves and decide what we are going to do in the next six months. Without this commitment to live up to our resolutions, our words become meaningless.

Fortunately, Buddhism is concerned with the present and the future and not the past. Goethe writes that "the moment alone is decisive; Fixes the life of man, and his future destiny settles." The power of the present moment is incalculable. As SGI President Ikeda says: "'That time' [from the sutra phrase 'At that time the World-Honored One arose...'] is the moment you resolve from the depths of your heart: 'Now I will stand up and fight!' From that instant your destiny changes. Your life develops. History begins."

Oh, in case you don't remember, the focal point for the SGI-USA in 1997 is: "With strong prayer, we will develop ourselves and contribute to society through compassionate dialogue on Buddhist philosophy." A point well worth living up to.

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