

**MARCH 21—OUR TARGET DATE FOR VICTORY**  
**ONE WOMAN WHO’S MADE A DIFFERENCE: HIROE CLOW**  
**BY MATILDA BUCK**  
**SGI-USA WOMEN’S LEADER**

I recently reread the section in *The New Human Revolution* that describes Mrs. Hiroe Clow’s early years in America—her name being Masako Clarke in the novel. She left Japan in 1959 with her American husband and baby daughter. Whatever city she lived in, she was active in trying to introduce Buddhism here in America. It must have been difficult speaking little English, taking care of her family in a foreign land. She worked hard to help the members living in Seattle.

In December 1962, she gave birth to a baby boy. Her joy was short-lived because within days of her son’s birth, her husband died. Here she was in America, her home for only three years, a widow with a little girl and a brand new baby. But she was so determined not to succumb that she even traveled with her children to attend the second national leaders meeting ever to be held in America just 10 days after the death of her husband. She gave her determination at the meeting with Shin’ichi Yamamoto: “My husband gave me two beautiful children.... It is my responsibility as a mother to raise them to be fine young people who can contribute to kosen-rufu. Above all, I also have a mission to realize the widespread propagation of the Daishonin’s Buddhism in Seattle and throughout America. ...I am determined to live with courage and strength, and to become a model of unsurpassed happiness” (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 7, p. 72).

At that time Shin’ichi inscribed a book leaf for her: “Illuminated by the Mystic Law? / may you soar / like a queen” (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 166). Until I read this account in *The New Human Revolution*, I didn’t know the history behind the strong and spirited Mrs. Clow I had known for 20 years in Los Angeles. Because I knew her firm character, I had always known that all she revealed about Nikken in Seattle was truthful. It is important to note that she spoke out after 29 years only when she clearly saw what Nikken was about. He had excommunicated the Soka Gakkai in an attempt to destroy it and its president, Daisaku Ikeda. She saw the distorted doctrines that were being used to deceive members. Until then she kept silent about this incident with prostitutes to protect the priesthood of Nichiren Shoshu and the Gakkai members. But eventually the only way to protect the future of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism was to expose the truth of the character of Nikken who was asserting his superiority and infallibility. It took courage to take on all that ensued.

Mrs. Clow died on March. 23, 1996. I believe she lived up to all she determined at the meeting in 1962. And she has done something great for me.

I am focusing my daimoku on a victory for Mrs. Clow and the Soka Gakkai in the Tokyo court case that will be decided on March 21. This defamation suit may appear to be just a decision on who is telling the truth: Nikken, the High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu, or Hiroe Clow, a Japanese pioneer who helped establish Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in America. In the final analysis, the core issue for me is the importance of one person’s action. I am reminded of guidance President Ikeda gave in 1990: “Freedom is something you must fight for and gain by and for yourself. It is not something that is handed over on a silver platter... rather by fighting against and pushing through what oppresses one, both internally and externally, one establishes a magnanimous self and a profound and happy state of life. This is the purpose of faith” (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, pp. 28–29).

The moment Mrs. Clow stood up for justice she had won. Through my prayer toward a victorious outcome, I am able to also stand up against those who would distort and eventually destroy Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This is, for me, the real victory. In that sense, whether the case is won or not is somewhat irrelevant. The question for me is, have I won or not.

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I ask myself sometimes 'What am I really doing to insure the safety of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? What am I doing to prevent its corruption?' To chant focused daimoku for the next two months toward Mar. 21 is a powerful way to refute slander—the Daishonin's clear instruction to his disciples—and ensure that Nichiren Buddhism prevails.

Since Mrs. Clow took her stand here in America, and because President Ikeda has said America will be the center of kosen-rufu for the world, we have a stake in this outcome. There will be many challenges in our history, and each one is important. This Seattle Incident took place on American soil at the historic moment of the first Gohonzon conferral ceremony in the U.S. We own it. Mrs. Clow understood this. Her example is helping me understand how the power of one person can make a difference. We are living in a definitive time in the history of Buddhism. Mrs. Clow will remain an important figure in the history of Buddhism, remembered as a woman who took a stand to ensure the future of humanity. We can join in that legacy. I want to join in President Ikeda's wish for her: "Illuminated by the Mystic Law? / may you soar / like a queen."