

**WORDS TO WIN BY
BLUE DEEPER THAN THE BLUE OF THE INDIGO
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From "The Supremacy of the Law," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 612–17.

Strengthen your resolve more than ever. Ice is made of water, but it is colder than water. Blue dye comes from indigo, but when something is repeatedly dyed in it, the color is better than that of the indigo plant. The Lotus Sutra remains the same, but if you repeatedly strengthen your resolve, your color will be better than that of others, and you will receive more blessings than they do. (WND, 615)

Depressed. Besieged with bills. Out of work. Buried in schoolwork. Major and minor health problems. These are just a few of the challenges many of us encounter today. As human beings, we are all struggling with various problems, large and small.

The recipient of this letter, Nichimyo, was a single woman and parent living in the male-dominated, hierarchical, feudal Japanese society — difficult circumstances to say the least. As we empathize with her, we can see the relevance of Nichiren Daishonin's guidance as it applies to us today.

In the above passage, the Daishonin is encouraging Nichimyo and all of us to strengthen our resolve in faith and commitment to accomplishing kosen-rufu as the solution to our problems. The blue dye made from the indigo plant represents this idea. Repeated soakings in the dye result in a rich blue color that is a far deeper blue than the plant itself.

In the same way, if we continually exert ourselves in the two ways of practice and study, we polish our lives more than we ever thought we could. This requires a tremendous struggle on our part, of course. However, by overcoming difficulties one by one, we become stronger and stronger. It empowers us with a greater wisdom from deep within our lives to view our circumstances clearly and forges us into people of genuine courage and compassion. We become people who truly care for and support others. This is how we soak ourselves in the indigo dye and the deeper color that results.

What we should always concentrate on, then, is making our faith deeper and stronger. This is how we can change any problem we face into a benefit. For the very reason that our life situations are challenging, we can develop our lives all the more. This is what Buddhism teaches as the principle of earthly desires are enlightenment. If we did not have strong desires, we would not be motivated. The Daishonin thus tells us, "Burn the firewood of earthly desires and behold the fire of enlightened wisdom before their eyes" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 710).

A strong, resolute spirit of "No matter what, I will not be defeated—I will prove the power of faith for the sake of kosen-rufu" assures us of victory in every aspect of our lives. A practice imbued with this deep "color" of appreciation for the Gohonzon and the SGI expands our fortune exponentially. This is why SGI President Ikeda says: "Strength is happiness. Strength is itself victory. In weakness or cowardice there is no happiness. When you wage a struggle, you might win or lose. But regardless of the short-term outcome, the very fact that you continue to struggle proves your victory as a human being. A strong spirit, strong faith, and strong prayer—developing these is victory and the world of Buddhahood" (*Faith Into Action*, p. 76).

By immersing ourselves repeatedly in the "blue dye" of the Lotus Sutra through resolutely chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon and participating in SGI-USA activities, our lives take on the depth and hue of the Buddha's compassion.