

**The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 1, Parts 5–6**  
**‘The Flower of Culture’**  
**By HO GOKU**

**In Shin’ichi Yamamoto’s speech at the Education Department’s first national convention, he pinpoints the difficulty of providing individual attention and guidance to each member of the Soka Gakkai. ‘I look to you,’ he tells the educators before him, ‘to set an example’ based on ‘sound common sense and logic.’**

What is the fundamental purpose of education? Tsunesaburo Makiguchi declared, “The purpose of education is to enable children to live happy lives.” He felt strongly that the happiness of children takes priority over national profits or agendas. Out of this belief, Mr. Makiguchi placed the focus of his value-creating education on developing in each student the capacity to attain happiness.

He said that happiness is founded on the pursuit of value, and he advocated beauty, benefit and good as the values human beings should seek to create in their lives. According to Mr. Makiguchi, the creation of value constitutes true happiness. The mission of education is to nurture many people capable of creating value in society and working toward their own and others’ happiness.

In the foreword to *The System of Value-Creating Education*, he explained his passionate desire to present his theory of value-creating education to the world:

I am driven by the frantic desire to prevent the present deplorable situation where 10 million of our children and students are forced to endure the agonies of cutthroat competition — perpetrated by the difficulty of getting into good schools, the “examination hell” and the competitive struggle for jobs after graduation — from continuing into the next generation. So I have no time to be concerned with the shifting vagaries of public opinion.

A deep compassion and love for children — for humanity — burns brightly in these words. This heart is the true spirit of education.

The application of value-creating education would require not only reforms in educational theory and teaching methods but a radical change in attitude and approach — in other words, a human revolution — in educators themselves. Since teachers are the single most important influence in a child’s educational environment, it is essential that they continue throughout life to educate themselves.

Asserting that teachers are educational engineers, Mr. Makiguchi stated: “Education is a science and an art of unparalleled difficulty and can never be successful without teachers of the highest quality. The object of its concern is the most precious and irreplaceable treasure in the world — life itself.”

He also described how he thought teachers should be: “Unless you have the courage to be an enemy to evil, you cannot be a friend to good. A person blinded by considerations of self-interest cannot distinguish between good and evil, and is not qualified to be an educator. And one who can make that distinction but does not have the strength to act on it is worthless as an educator.”

It was the youthful Josei Toda who, in a free and dynamic fashion, put the spirit of value-creating education as advocated by Mr. Makiguchi into practice. Many youth of outstanding humanity and diverse talent graduated from his private school, the Jisshu

Gakkan.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto wanted to pass on this legacy of the first and second presidents to the members of the Soka Gakkai Education Department. Observing the growing lack of direction in Japanese society, he couldn't help feeling how important the department's mission was.

A little more than a year after its formation in 1961, the membership of the Education Department was fast approaching 3,000. And 1,000 representatives gathered for the department's first national convention on Aug. 1, 1962. This marked a fresh beginning for the department toward the goal of actualizing value-creating education.

The convention began a little before 1:00 p.m. with a program that included experiences, greetings by Education Department Chief Katsu Kiyohara and guidance from a senior leader. Last was a speech by Soka Gakkai President Yamamoto.

"My sincerest congratulations to you on this significant day!" Shin'ichi began. "While sitting here listening to the other speakers, I thought how happy Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would be if they could be here today to witness this fine gathering of educators. Mr. Makiguchi was a great pioneer in the field of education, and Mr. Toda was also a teacher.

"I, however, am not a teacher. In fact, I was always scolded by my teachers at school for not studying hard enough. I think you can imagine how embarrassing it is for me to be standing up here before so many teachers today!"

The audience roared with laughter.

Shin'ichi then proposed that the Education Department publish an educational journal that would feature its members' experiences as educators, their research on value-creating education and its practical application in the classroom, and other topics. The participants enthusiastically applauded the idea. Shin'ichi next touched on the role of Education Department members within the Soka Gakkai.

"Because the Gakkai is growing so rapidly," he said, "we occasionally see cases where, due to our difficulty in providing thorough guidance to each member, some people make extreme statements when they try to explain the Daishonin's Buddhism and as a result cause misunderstanding in society about our organization as a whole.

"Even in the family, it's often difficult for parents to give thorough guidance to their children. So you can imagine how challenging this is going to be in our organization, which has tens of thousands of new households joining every month.

"Nevertheless, I hope to see every member gain the ability to tell others about Buddhism or give guidance in faith in a way that is clear, reasonable and persuasive. I look to you, the Education Department members, to set an example for others by excelling in this. Buddhism is reason. Your speaking and interacting with others based on sound common sense and logic — and the positive response such an approach is bound to elicit — will encourage many members to follow your example, further contributing to the momentum of our movement to spread the Law."

Shin'ichi concluded his speech by wishing that each Education Department member become a great leader of Buddhism, a champion of communicating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings to others.

**To be continued**