

The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 1, Parts 38–39

'The Flower of Culture'

By Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

In a time of dramatic change, in the midst of Cold War tensions, humanity trembles under the threat of nuclear war. Meanwhile, Shin'ichi Yamamoto goes out of his way to warmly support and encourage individual members at every opportunity, striving to infuse their lives with courage and hope.

In November, the month of chrysanthemum blossoms in Japan, preparations began for the Year of Study, as the Soka Gakkai had designated the coming year, 1963.

On Nov. 3, the preliminary, written portion of the Study Department promotional exams for those currently teachers and assistant teachers were administered simultaneously at 169 locations in 136 cities across Japan. Some 11,132 teachers and 69,133 assistant teachers sat for the exams. On Nov. 11, the oral exams were held for those who had passed the written exams in the Kanto region, including Tokyo, and in Kansai. The oral exams for the other regions were held Nov. 18.

Further, on Nov. 23, the Study Department promotional exam for assistant professors throughout Japan was held in Tokyo, with 1,367 taking the test. On Nov. 25, the test for professors was also given.

Since the Cuban Missile Crisis, Shin'ichi Yamamoto had been gripped with the powerful conviction that he must forge the way for world peace without a moment's delay. Yet, he reined in his impatience. Working with painstaking care and perseverance, he devoted his utmost energy to developing — steadily but surely — a great philosophical movement firmly rooted in the people's lives.

Shin'ichi had no desire to build a peace movement vulnerable to changing times, that would someday crumble away into nothingness, like a castle built on sand. To directly face this goal that had been dear to humanity throughout history — the complete elimination of war — he intended to build a solid foundation for the realization of peace 50 or 100 years in the future.

After the promotional examinations on Nov. 23, a nationwide meeting of Study Department assistant professors was held, and Shin'ichi took that occasion to further explain his ideas:

“Fukuzawa Yukichi was a great educator and leader who helped bring Japan into the modern era [he was a proponent of Western thought during the Meiji Era]. On May 15, 1868, a bloody battle was being fought on Ueno Hill in Tokyo between loyalist forces of the old Tokugawa military government and the new imperial army. All of Tokyo was in a panic, but Fukuzawa continued to lecture calmly on British economic theory to the students at his private school, Keio Gijuku [now Keio University].

“In the chaos of this transitional era, the schools of the defunct military government were no longer open, and the newly restored imperial government seemingly had more pressing concerns than schools. Fukuzawa did not ally himself with either side. He went on with his lectures unfazed by the guns booming in the distance. He was determined, through his own efforts, to usher in a new era.

“He knew that the secret to doing so was fostering students of great capability — nurturing the character and ability of youth who would carry on his ideals and vision. That's why he dedicated himself to teaching young people. And, in fact, many talented leaders of the next age did come forth from among his students' ranks.

“My sights, too, are focused on the next generation. In these times of dramatic change,

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and in the midst of Cold War tensions, humanity trembles under the threat of nuclear war. The only way to solve this dilemma at its root is to foster people of solid understanding and belief in the life philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, for them to serve as teachers or messengers conveying this unsurpassed wisdom to many others.

“At present, we have several Study Department professors who received their training from Mr. Toda. But in the future, it will be essential that we produce many, many more great pioneers — leaders who deeply and thoroughly grasp the teachings of Buddhism for the sake of our members around the world.”

The color of the ocean may change with the weather, and rising winds may stir billowing waves. But through all this, the currents beneath the surface remain unchanged, flowing quietly in the ocean's depths. While events at home and abroad were changing from day to day, Shin'ichi's daily activities remained constant.

In November, when the Study Department exams were held, he visited center after center to encourage the examinees and attended leaders meetings of the student division and women's division, doing his utmost to guide the members. He also went out of his way to warmly support and encourage individual members at every opportunity, striving to infuse their lives with courage and hope. Sometimes he would meet them in person and offer personal guidance, and other times he would send them poems or words of encouragement.

It was very hard work — often behind the scenes, unnoticed by others. It demanded an enormous amount of time and energy, but these continuous sincere efforts he had undertaken since becoming Soka Gakkai president created a fresh momentum that inspired the membership to work toward building a peaceful world.

One evening, just a few days before the November Headquarters Leaders Meeting slated for the 27th, the usually calm and dignified Hiroshi Yamagiwa, chief of organizational statistics, came rushing into a discussion going on among Shin'ichi and some of the directors at the *Seikyo Shimbun* offices. He was out of breath and his voice brimming with excitement.

“Sensei!”

Everyone turned to look at him.

“We've reached our goal at last. We've achieved a membership of 3 million households!” Yamagiwa then elaborated, “Our figures show that 72,327 new households joined in November, bringing the Soka Gakkai's total membership to 3,059,003 households.”

“Is that right?” Shin'ichi responded, his eyes shining with joy.

The directors were all smiling, and they burst into applause.

“Congratulations!”

“We did it, we really did it!”

Elation filled the air. Each of them had worked long and hard with Shin'ichi, completely united in purpose, for this day, this hour, this moment.

A membership of 3 million households was the goal that Shin'ichi had announced on the day he became president of the Soka Gakkai — May 3, 1960. At the headquarters general meeting that day, he had declared that he intended to reach that mark by April 2, 1964, the seventh memorial (sixth anniversary) of Josei Toda's death. Now it had been accomplished — and roughly 16 months ahead of schedule! The goal had been realized with lightning swiftness — a glorious achievement in the history of kosen-rufu.

Shin'ichi looked around at the faces in the room, and he saw that the directors' eyes were moist with tears of joy.

“Thank you all,” he said. “We have opened a new door in our movement for kosen-rufu. I am sure that Mr. Toda would be overjoyed at this marvelous achievement and would tell us, ‘Well done.’”

To be continued

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