

The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 1, Parts 40–41
‘The Flower of Culture’
By Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

Shin’ichi Yamamoto finally fulfills his vow to President Toda to raise the Soka Gakkai membership to 3 million households. ‘A vow only has meaning if it is fulfilled. Disciples fulfill their promises and achieve actual victory.’

Shin’ichi Yamamoto made his way to the Gohonzon room. He wanted to report to his beloved mentor, Josei Toda, that they had reached the membership goal of 3 million households.

The resonant sound of Shin’ichi’s voice chanting daimoku filled the room. Facing the Gohonzon and visualizing his mentor’s face, he spoke to him in his heart: “Sensei! I have finally, finally fulfilled my promise to you of realizing a membership of 3 million households. This achievement attests to the united purpose of the disciples whom you trained and nurtured. It is the fruit of their united efforts.”

Mr. Toda had entrusted Shin’ichi with the mission of accomplishing a membership of 3 million households on Feb. 10, 1958 — the day before Toda’s 58th birthday, just two months before he died. Shin’ichi had returned to Tokyo that morning on an overnight train from the Kansai region, where he had gone to encourage the members. From the station, he immediately made his way to his mentor’s home. Mr. Toda had been stricken with liver disease in November 1957, and though he had finally recovered, he was still terribly weak.

After Shin’ichi reported on the situation in Kansai, Mr. Toda said: “Yes, the organization in Kansai is now secure. I think we can say now that we have established the firm foundation for the spread of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism for all Japan. But the real challenge is where we go from here — how much we accomplish in the next seven years.” In December 1957, the Soka Gakkai realized Mr. Toda’s cherished life goal of 750,000 member households.

Mr. Toda looked intently at Shin’ichi as he continued: “We must hurry. Shin’ichi, do you think you can achieve 3 million households within the next seven years?” This was clearly Toda’s grand vision for kosen-rufu, arrived at after long and deep consideration. But Toda knew that Shin’ichi must accomplish it. Though he had conquered the demon of illness, Toda knew that his time was short.

Shin’ichi replied without a moment’s hesitation: “Yes, I will do it. I feel even more determined. I am your disciple. I will realize your dream without fail. You can count on it.”

“I knew I could,” said Toda with a contented smile.

Mr. Toda’s wish became Shin’ichi’s pledge. The great aspiration of achieving kosen-rufu had been passed from mentor to disciple. Shin’ichi never forgot for a moment Mr. Toda’s words that day. And now, after devoting every last ounce of his energy to this arduous struggle, he had fulfilled his vow to his mentor.

A vow only has meaning if it is fulfilled. Disciples fulfill their promises and achieve actual victory.

The achievement of 3 million member-households did not take place without enormous effort. The fierce determination and all-out struggle of Mr. Toda’s true disciple and successor, Shin’ichi, touched and inspired his fellow members, creating a powerful surge of action to spread the Daishonin’s teachings.

Shin’ichi had taken a passage from the Daishonin’s writings as his inspiration and guide: “This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will

give my life for the sake of the Law” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 174). Never looking back, he gave everything to propagating the Daishonin’s teachings. He also engraved in his heart the passage “[In the face of direst persecution for the sake of the Law, sever all worldly attachments and] do not think of your wife and children or your close kinsfolk. Never fear authority” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 177). Shin’ichi had inherited this determination, this total commitment as a disciple, from his mentor Josei Toda.

During his wartime incarceration, Toda thought only of his own mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who was also in prison. His constant prayer was: “Mr. Makiguchi is old. Please allow me to take all the blame for both of us, and let Mr. Makiguchi go home as soon as possible.” He also cried out in his heart: “Dai-Gohonzon — please accept my life and the lives of my wife and son [should we die]. My wife and son — you may be killed by the guns and swords of foreign troops. But if that should happen, present yourselves at the assembly on Eagle Peak and introduce yourselves to Nichiren Daishonin as the wife and son, the family, of Josei Toda, a believer of the Mystic Law. You will assuredly be greeted with warm hospitality.” Such was the selfless, all-giving resolve of Mr. Toda, who read the Lotus Sutra with his life and awakened to the truth of the eternal nature of life.

Shin’ichi made this spirit of his mentor his own. His wife Mineko, too, shared the same resolve. Consequently, on the day that Shin’ichi became Soka Gakkai president, she said to him: “As of this day, I no longer consider this house to have a husband. Today is a funeral for the Yamamoto family...” Had they not had the same adamant commitment, then the goal of reaching a membership of 3 million households and laying a solid foundation for kosen-rufu in the defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law could not have been achieved.

If Shin’ichi had felt even the tiniest bit concerned for his own safety or a hint of fear of being called upon to give his life for his beliefs, it would have been impossible for him to illuminate the hearts of his fellow members like the sun, radiating the bright light of courage, hope and energy as he had done over the years.

The sun burns its own mass as fuel in order to illuminate the cosmic darkness, bringing its light to the moon and the planets. Similarly, the courage of one individual who possesses a spirit that burns like the sun will touch and inspire countless others. This is the unchanging formula for achieving the spread of the Law, that most difficult of all undertakings.

To be continued