

The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 2, Parts 1–2
‘FRESH GROWTH’
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As 1963 — the Year of Study — begins, Shin’ichi Yamamoto launches himself on what will be a year of ceaseless, intense effort. He looks at the significance of one of the year’s first events, 500,000 members taking the Study Department Entrance Exam.

*Today, again,
I spur myself on
As the Buddha’s emissary
Striving until my final breath
To fulfill my vow to my mentor*

Shin’ichi Yamamoto had composed this poem to express his resolve as a disciple in the year of the death of his mentor, Josei Toda, whom he had loved like a father.

On New Year’s Day of 1963 — the start of the Soka Gakkai’s Year of Study — Shin’ichi recalled this poem and launched energetically into a busy round of activities. Thinking of his mentor’s spirit always filled Shin’ichi with boundless strength. Indeed, the vow he had made as Toda’s disciple was the source of his courage.

He began what would be a year of ceaseless, intense struggle by attending a New Year’s gongyo meeting at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters on Jan. 1. The next day, Jan. 2, was Shin’ichi’s 35th birthday. That morning, he set out for the head temple to attend a leaders meeting at the Grand Lecture Hall.

At the meeting, a number of leadership appointments were announced. Three new vice general directors were named, including Katsu Kiyohara and Itetsu Okada, and eight new directors appointed. Also at the meeting, Shin’ichi marked the start of the Year of Study by delivering a lecture on the Gosho “How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6).

Shin’ichi arrived back in Tokyo from the head temple on the evening of the third. The following day, he met with directors and other top leaders to discuss plans for future activities. And on the fifth, he concentrated on preparing for his overseas trip scheduled to begin on the eighth.

The Study Department Entrance Exam was held on the sixth, with approximately 500,000 people taking the test nationwide. This exam marked the full-fledged start of the Gakkai’s activities for the new year.

For 500,000 people to take on the challenge of the examination was in itself remarkable. While it was one thing for students to sit for an exam, the examinees in this case were men and women of all ages and backgrounds — a good many of them middle-aged and older. All were earnestly studying the life philosophy of Buddhism, striving to deepen their understanding of how to lead the best possible life, and seeking the way to create happiness for themselves and for others. Moreover, while the rest of society had been swept up in the festive atmosphere of the New Year’s holiday, the examinees and those coaching them had been studying the Gosho wholeheartedly in preparation for this test.

No other organization can compare to the Soka Gakkai in terms of its efforts to awaken and educate people. In its great movement to disseminate Buddhism exists a most fundamental impetus for bringing about a genuine age of the people on a wide scale.

On the morning of the sixth, Shin’ichi went around to a number of the exam sites in

Tokyo to encourage the examinees. In the evening, he attended a young women's division leaders meeting at the Waseda University Memorial Auditorium in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward. On the evening of the seventh, he attended a young men's division leaders meeting at the same venue.

At 10:30 on the morning of Jan. 8, Shin'ichi's flight left Tokyo International Airport in Haneda, carrying him on the first leg of a trip around the world to encourage and give guidance to members living outside of Japan.

On Shin'ichi's itinerary for this overseas trip was the formation of a number of chapters and the administration of study exams in various countries. He was determined that on this visit he would secure the foundations for the development of worldwide kosen-rufu 10, 30 or even 100 years down the road.

Every single day is of vital importance. Each second is decisive. Only when we strive to the limit of our ability to open the way ahead, seizing each moment and using it valuably, can we ensure that a brilliant future awaits us.

The main stops on Shin'ichi's itinerary were Honolulu, Los Angeles and New York in the United States; Paris, Geneva and Rome in Europe; Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, in the Middle East; India's New Delhi in South Asia; and Hong Kong in Southeast Asia.

Only Vice General Director Kiyoshi Jujo would be accompanying Shin'ichi on this trip from start to finish, but there would be three other parties traveling at the same time. These groups were informally identified as the Northern U.S., Southern U.S. and Europe delegations.

The Northern U.S. group consisted of Vice General Director and Women's Division Chief Katsu Kiyohara, Director and Student Division Chief Goro Watari, and Young Women's Division Chief Tokie Tani. These leaders would accompany Shin'ichi only as far as New York. After Shin'ichi went on to Europe, they would visit Washington, D.C., Louisville, Kansas City, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco, returning to Japan on January 24.

The Southern U.S. delegation consisted of just one person — Vice General Director Seiichiro Haruki — who would accompany the Northern U.S. group as far as Washington, D.C., and then set off on his own to visit Miami, El Paso, Colorado Springs and other cities, before rejoining the Northern delegation in Seattle.

The members of the Europe delegation were Vice General Director and Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki, and directors Shoichi Tanida and Yoshihiko Oya. Oya was a research assistant in the Faculty of Dentistry of Osaka University. This group would leave Japan on the evening of Jan. 9. After visiting Stockholm in Sweden, Dusseldorf in West Germany, and London in the United Kingdom, they would join Shin'ichi in the French capital of Paris. A multifaceted effort to provide guidance and encouragement to members living around the world now was under way.

Shin'ichi and Jujo left Japan on the eighth with Kiyohara, Watari and Tani of the Northern U.S. delegation and Haruki of the Southern U.S. delegation. During the flight, Shin'ichi envisioned in his mind a grand plan for the future development of kosen-rufu, his gaze focused on the distant future.

Their plane landed in Honolulu on schedule, just after 9:00 on the evening of the seventh, local time.

To be continued