

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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In Paris, Shin'ichi Yamamoto says that 'Soka Gakkai members are global citizens in the truest sense. The most important qualities for a global citizen are to possess a philosophy that will lead people to happiness, to put that philosophy into practice and to win respect as a human being while never succumbing to self-interest.'

The leaders traveling with Shin'ichi Yamamoto listened to him intently.

"The only way to ensure that the many diverse peoples and nations of Europe will live together in peace and mutual prosperity," he said, "is to set in motion the wheels of progress leading to unification. I also believe that this move toward unification is ripe with fresh potential. This move toward unification will take the form of a gradual improvement in relations among nations, starting as it has with the economic union forged after the war and slowly increasing in scope to a political union as well.

"Moreover, the aim of such unification is not a simple merging of the nations of Europe into one enormous state. Nor is it a case of one dominant state absorbing many different peoples and cultures and melding them into a single whole. What Europe is aiming for is a federation of unique, autonomous nations that function as equal partners. This constitutes a profound change in the concept of national borders, and at the same time, of the very concept of the nation."

Shin'ichi elaborated on this view: "Up until now, international politics meant power politics between nations, of which war was always the last resort. But the move toward European unity since the war seems to me the beginnings of a new approach that will transform the old notion of the nation and transcend national borders.

"Most important, this move toward unification was born from the determination to avoid at all costs the occurrence of the tragedy of another great war like the last one. As long as the people of Europe speak up for peace, the move for European unification can only broaden and gather momentum."

Shin'ichi spoke with even greater emphasis: "I also think that the attempt to unify Europe is an experiment for the eventual unification of the entire human race. Coudenhove-Kalergi wrote, when he first launched the Pan-European Movement: 'Every great historical happening began as a utopia and ended as a reality.' The challenge to realize great ideals leads to historic achievements. This is a perspective that resonates with our own beliefs.

"In the course of the Cold War, nuclear arms have proliferated to the extent that they can now destroy the human race. Will humanity survive, or will we be wiped out in a nuclear holocaust? Faced with this reality, humanity surely can no longer afford to spend its time in strife and war.

"This is why I believe events will move inevitably toward peace and the unification of humankind, whether in the form of a world federation or a world government. Indeed, we must work to make this happen."

After listening to Shin'ichi, Yoshihiko Ohya said: "Having this opportunity to visit Europe and speak with our members here, I feel that the Soka Gakkai is a religious organization

that links people together, transcending national borders. For example, yesterday after the inaugural meeting of Europe General Chapter, one of our French members told me that he wanted to teach a British friend of his about this Buddhism and help him become happy.

“And in Düsseldorf, a member asked if there were not some way she could share the teachings of Buddhism with a friend in East Germany. Many of our members in Europe may not yet have thoroughly studied Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and completely mastered its teachings. But through their Buddhist practice, they have come to have a deep appreciation of the humanity they share with all people, regardless of race or nationality, and to possess a strong desire for the happiness of all people along with their own.”

“That’s right,” responded Shin’ichi. “President Toda cherished the ideal of a global human family. True to this vision, I am confident that the Soka Gakkai will eventually become a model gathering of world citizens — global citizens — transcending all differences of nationality, ethnicity and race.

“For this is what the philosophy of Buddhism teaches us. I believe that Soka Gakkai members are global citizens in the truest sense. The most important qualities for a global citizen are to possess a philosophy that will lead people to happiness, to put that philosophy into practice and to win respect as a human being while never succumbing to self-interest.

“The Soka Gakkai members uphold the teachings of Buddhism, pray and take action each day for world peace and the happiness of their friends while struggling to achieve their personal human revolution. In this respect, they are supremely qualified as global citizens — qualified in a more fundamental way than simply being able to speak a foreign language.

“As our members’ sincere wish for others’ happiness weaves a tapestry of friendship that spreads throughout the world, it will definitely become a grass-roots force for bringing humanity together.”

Seen from the hill of Montmarte, Paris was aglow in the golden light of sunset.

Shin’ichi continued to talk as they walked slowly: “I am reminded of how Victor Hugo continued to call for European unification for the sake of peace and the happiness of the people. He predicted that in the ‘United States of Europe’ he envisioned, national borders, customs barriers, military conflict and armaments, poverty, ignorance and misery would all disappear. No doubt, the unification of Europe is still far off, but the establishment of our Europe General Chapter is a pioneering step in that process. It is a very important event.”

The wind was cold, but Shin’ichi’s heart was ablaze with a powerful resolve for the future.