

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'EARLY SPRING'**  
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*'There is nothing to fear,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells a women's leader who has been questioned by Thai police who don't know anything about the Soka Gakkai. 'Please keep encouraging the members in Thailand, confidently and wholeheartedly. You must not retreat a single step.'*

Smiling warmly, Shin'ichi Yamamoto thanked the Thai members for coming to greet him. They had only 15 minutes to talk in the airport lobby while the plane refueled. During that short time, Shin'ichi poured all his energy into encouraging each member.

Addressing all the members, he said: "Bangkok Chapter has made remarkable growth! You are the hope of Asia. Here in Thailand, though, more important than increasing the size of the organization is all of you uniting in purpose and practicing faith brightly and joyfully, joined together in friendship—even if the organization remains small. Like flowers blooming, the organization will develop when the time is ripe. There is no need to be impatient.

"Rather, what matters is that each of you receives benefit in faith and becomes happy. That is my wish. Let's meet again! Please take care!"

Anne Miyako Raiz, Bangkok Chapter women's division leader, was to travel to Hong Kong with Shin'ichi and his group in order to take the Study Department examination that would be held there and to attend a special Hong Kong Chapter meeting. Shin'ichi noticed that while the other members were all smiling happily, something was troubling Mrs. Raiz.

Shin'ichi and his party, along with Mrs. Raiz, boarded the plane and headed for Hong Kong. As soon as they had settled into their hotel after arriving in the British territory, Shin'ichi invited Mrs. Raiz to have a chat with him.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "Actually, the other day I was summoned by the Thai police and asked about the Soka Gakkai."

"What sort of things did they ask you?"

"They wanted to know what kind of organization we are, whether we have links to the Communist Party and many other things. I told them that the Soka Gakkai is an organization of people who believe in the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, and that at our discussion meetings we do gongyo together and study the Daishonin's writings. But I'm not really sure whether they fully understood my explanation.

"It seems to me that the police regard the Soka Gakkai as a dangerous organization. They told me that we should stop canvassing new members and holding meetings. Only a few people know that this happened yet. I didn't tell all the members for fear of upsetting them. I'm not sure how we should go about practicing faith in Thailand from now on, so I wanted to talk to you and ask your advice."

Shin'ichi smiled warmly as he spoke to Mrs. Raiz: "The police must have gotten some wrong idea about the Gakkai. But please don't worry, I will protect you and all the members. Let's observe the situation for a while, and, if necessary, I'll send some of our executive leaders to Thailand to meet with the police and government authorities to help

them understand the real nature of our organization.

“The Gakkai’s aim is always the prosperity of each country and the happiness of the people who live there. Our goal is for each member to become a good citizen who contributes to the well-being of society. Thinking leaders of any nation will surely have nothing but praise for the Gakkai once they understand its true purpose and nature.

“There is nothing to fear. Please keep encouraging the members in Thailand, confidently and wholeheartedly. You must not retreat a single step.

“However, as far as Gakkai activities are concerned, it is of course important that you abide by the laws of Thailand. It’s also vital that you strictly refrain from irresponsible conduct or behavior, or anything that might invite misunderstanding.

“The central figures of our organization need to have not only energy and passion but such discretion and good judgment. Please advance carefully, keeping in close contact with the Soka Gakkai Headquarters.”

Shin’ichi knew that for historical and other reasons, many nations were wary of the activities of religious groups. And he was determined to avoid, at all costs, the unnecessary friction that could arise from simple misunderstandings. If problems did arise, it was the members who would ultimately suffer. For that reason, he was very aware that extreme care in introducing the Daishonin’s Buddhism outside Japan was necessary.

Now that the kosen-rufu movement was beginning to gain momentum around the globe, the principles of Buddhism made it clear that the Soka Gakkai would have to be prepared, quite naturally, for various trials and obstacles to beset the organizations in each country. In fact, Shin’ichi had heard that some rival religious groups and political parties in Japan, alarmed by the great strides the Gakkai was making, were scheming to prevent the Gakkai from pursuing its activities abroad. They were leaking misleading information to the governments and others in the nations where members were practicing.

For example, at a meeting two years earlier, Shin’ichi had suggested that it was time for the United Nations to recognize the People’s Republic of China. Opponents of the Gakkai had made much of this, claiming it showed that the Soka Gakkai supported Communism.

But Shin’ichi was certain that no matter how the Gakkai was slandered, as long as members exercised common sense in their activities and won the trust of society, the truth about the Gakkai would become apparent in the end.

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1963.