

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
'AT THE HELM'
VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 4, PARTS 17-18

Shin'ichi Yamamoto cancels his meeting with John F. Kennedy, explaining that 'I have never for a moment cherished the base idea of boosting my prestige by meeting with the U.S. president.... I wanted to meet with President Kennedy out of a desire to generate a tide toward peace for all humanity....'

When the politician finished, Shin'ichi Yamamoto smiled, but said firmly: "I understand what you are saying, and I respect the views of you and your colleagues. Let's just forget about my meeting with President Kennedy. I will cancel it entirely. I'll wait until another opportunity presents itself."

The politician was taken aback. He had obviously never expected such a reply.

"Cancel the meeting?" he exclaimed. "But...if you do that, you'll lose such a wonderful opportunity..."

Shin'ichi broke in: "I haven't the slightest intention of calling on the help of you and your colleagues to meet President Kennedy. It would change the whole meaning of why I was going to see him in the first place.

"Furthermore, I have never for a moment cherished the base idea of boosting my prestige by meeting with the U.S. president. That may be the way politicians think, but you are grossly mistaken in assuming the same about me.

"I wanted to meet with President Kennedy out of a desire to generate a tide toward peace for all humanity and to open a path of dialogue between the Eastern and Western blocs. I believe this is also in the interests of Japan.

"We founded the Komei-kai parliamentary group because we want to help realize a government that serves the people. The present administration ignores the interests of the people so blatantly that we decided to throw down a challenge. It has never been my ambition to use the Komei-kai to personally gain political power or control over the nation.

"The Soka Gakkai has always acted wholeheartedly, with the purest motives for the happiness of the people, the prosperity of society and the peace of the world. It does not tolerate self-serving political bartering.

"To sincerity, I respond with even greater sincerity. To arrogance, I respond with strength. Against evil and injustice, I fight armed with truth. This is my creed and my conviction."

Sweat trickled down the Diet member's face. As he mopped it up with a handkerchief, he tried to mask his confusion with feigned generosity: "You have made an admirable decision. I always thought that you were a promising young man, Mr. Yamamoto, and now I'm even more convinced. I expect great things of you. I hope that we can meet again and talk further." The meeting was over.

Shin'ichi's plan to meet with President Kennedy was now wiped from the slate.

Shin'ichi felt the shadow of the political authorities looming ominously over the Soka Gakkai. He was forced, after his meeting with the Diet member, to contemplate what might be behind this attempt to interfere with his activities.

He could see that many politicians in Japan, while on the one hand feeling threatened by the Soka Gakkai, which boasted a membership of more than 3 million households, on

the other hand wished to pull it into their camps and manipulate it to their advantage. It must have rankled them no end, Shin'ichi thought, that he, as Soka Gakkai president, had been offered a meeting with President Kennedy without the Japanese government being consulted. It was clear that they were motivated by nothing other than jealousy.

Shin'ichi couldn't help but feel deeply disappointed at the small-mindedness of these political leaders running Japan. At the same time, he also had to prepare himself for the possibility that the Soka Gakkai would continue to be a target of the Japanese political establishment.

The Soka Gakkai had organized ordinary people into a unified force and aimed, through the power of these ordinary people, to achieve world peace and happiness for all. It was therefore only to be expected that the authorities, who sought to keep the people under their thumb, would bring various kinds of pressure to bear on the organization.

The evening of Feb. 1, Shin'ichi attended the February young men's division leaders meeting at the Memorial Auditorium of Waseda University in Tokyo.

In his speech, he talked about the current world situation: "On my most recent trip overseas, my fifth thus far, I became profoundly aware of how small the world is becoming. It is important, therefore, that leaders not be tied to past views of the world—they will have to embrace new guiding principles based on a fresh worldview.

"We have entered the age of space exploration and, despite various hurdles to be overcome, the world is inevitably moving toward a global federation. However, looking at the present state of the world, we see that in Europe, Great Britain's attempt to join the Common Market ended in failure. And in the United States, racial discrimination has become an ever-increasing social problem.

"Further, when we look at the socialist nations, there is a deepening rift between the Soviet Union and China that is casting a dark shadow over the world. Meanwhile, the blueprint of the East–West standoff has been brought to the nations of Africa and Asia. As a result, not a few of them are on the brink of new conflict. And what will happen if nuclear war breaks out? These truly strife-ridden times in which we live are just as the Lotus Sutra describes in the 'Simile and Parable' chapter: 'There is no safety in the threefold world; / it is like a burning house, / replete with a multitude of sufferings...' (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 69).

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