

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'
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On May 3, 1963, the Soka Gakkai members celebrate all the progress they have made in the last year. Overseas growth had been outstanding, with two general chapters created in South America and Europe, and nine new chapters started in Saigon, Rangoon, Peru, Bolivia, Hawaii, West Germany, New York, Paris and Seattle.

The 25th Headquarters General Meeting took place on May 3. The weather that morning in Tokyo was bright and sunny, just as it had been on the day of the Headquarters General Meeting three years before, when Shin'ichi Yamamoto was inaugurated as the third Soka Gakkai president.

Though the participants did not have to assemble at the meeting place, the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku, until 9:00 a.m., many had begun to arrive hours earlier. When overseas members from America General Chapter and Southeast Asia General Chapter entered the auditorium at 7:00 a.m., they were met with applause and cheers from the already full venue.

The overseas members strode happily and proudly into the auditorium carrying banners: Los Angeles Chapter, Hong Kong Chapter, Bangkok Chapter, Saigon Chapter and Jakarta District. This gave the Japanese members a strong sense of the international scope of the kosen-rufu movement. In the two-and-a-half years since President Yamamoto's first overseas trip, the dream of the worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism had become a reality that they could see before their very eyes.

The meeting was declared open at 9:45 a.m., and President Yamamoto entered the auditorium led by the Soka Gakkai Headquarters flag to a grand chorus of "Song of Innovation."

After opening words, Vice General Director and Guidance Division Leader Hisao Seki reported on the Soka Gakkai's activities over the past year. Remarkable growth had been achieved in every area. In May of the previous year, the membership had stood at 2.6 million households; there were now more than 3.3 million, an increase of more than 700,000 in just one year.

On the organizational front, four new headquarters, 21 general chapters and 135 chapters had been established. Overseas growth was particularly outstanding, with two general chapters having been created in South America and Europe and nine new chapters started one after another in Saigon, Rangoon, Peru, Bolivia, Hawaii, West Germany, New York, Paris and Seattle. A new community center had also been opened in Los Angeles.

In addition, the Soka Gakkai had built and donated 15 new temples to Nichiren Shoshu. And the Academic and Arts Department of the Culture Bureau had been dissolved and reformed into two independent departments.

Hearing that all of this had been accomplished in a single year freshly inspired the participants. Each year was like a new dawn, with the movement of kosen-rufu advancing by unprecedented leaps and bounds.

The Soka Gakkai's momentum was building. The joy of one victory led to another, which became the energy and force behind even greater victories.

Next came the appointment of new leaders. Eight new directors were named, bringing the number of members on the Soka Gakkai's board of directors to 127. Kyushu Headquarters was divided into three, and the leaders of each new headquarters were announced. The Soka Gakkai young women's leader, Tokie Tani, moved to the women's division, and Michiyo Watari, previously the young women's planning department leader, was appointed in her place. Overseas, Chou Chi Kong was made the leader of Hong Kong Chapter to replace Ikuyo Oka, who had returned to Japan.

Michiyo Watari, the new young women's leader, was married to Goro Watari, head of the student division. Both of them were young leaders whom Shin'ichi Yamamoto had personally raised.

Michiyo was born in 1932, in Iri, Korea. She was 13 and living in Seoul when World War II ended. Her father worked for the railways and could not leave Korea immediately, but it was decided that the rest of the family — herself, her two grandparents, her pregnant mother and her two siblings — would return to Japan.

It was not an easy journey. When they finally arrived at Shimonoseki, a port city on the southwestern tip of Honshu, Japan's main island, the family boarded a packed train and began making their way toward Chichibu in Saitama Prefecture, central Japan, where they would live with relatives.

At one point, the train stopped in the middle of a burned-out expanse that had once been a city. It was Hiroshima. This horrific image of her home country was etched into young Michiyo's mind forever.

From Hiroshima, they transferred to a coal-carrying freight train. The roofless cars overflowed with passengers. Along the way, rain began to fall. Raindrops mixed with the tears running down Michiyo's cheeks.

Life in Chichibu began. The family of six lived in an old cowshed with flooring installed. To help make ends meet, Michiyo worked while attending school, carrying bundles of firewood down from the mountains to the road. At times, her heavy load cut into her shoulders until they bled. In winter, she continued to labor, dragging along on chilblained feet.

Eventually, her father returned to Japan, and the family moved to neighboring Kumagaya City. Michiyo had decided that she wanted to attend college, but the family couldn't afford to send her.

She had managed to pay for her high school expenses herself by working part time. But when her family moved to Omiya, a city east of Kumagaya, they happened to be close to a middle school. Taking advantage of this, Michiyo borrowed some money from her father and turned the front of their house into a school-supply shop. Through this business, she saved enough money for her university tuition and entered the Law Department of Waseda University.

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