

The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 1, Parts 1–2
The Flower of Culture
By HO GOKU

As volume 7 begins, Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages members of the Soka Gakkai's newly formed Education Department — teachers he hopes will enlighten the darkness of Japan's educational system.

Great religion always gives birth to great culture. This is an unfailing law of history.

When the spring sun melts the winter snows and stirs awake the sleeping earth, young shoots push forth and grow, eventually bursting into brilliant flower. In the same way, when the compassionate light of Buddhism thaws the frozen ground of the human heart, bringing it back to life, an exquisite flower blossoms as a truly humane culture.

The wide propagation of the Daishonin's teaching is a noble undertaking toward transforming the world into a beautiful realm of peace and culture. An undertaking based on human revolution, on profound transformation in the lives of human beings, who are ultimately responsible for all social development.

In 1962, Shin'ichi Yamamoto planted many seeds for cultural growth in the broad earth of the people — the earth that had been cultivated through the Soka Gakkai's dynamic drive to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Through his diligent efforts, those seeds quickly sprouted. In the field of politics, the Clean Government (Komei) Political Federation was officially launched in January, while July saw the formation of the parliamentary Clean Government Group (Komei-kai). In the sphere of scholarship, the Oriental Science Institute (later the Institute of Oriental Philosophy) was established in January as an independent but related organization. And in November, the institute's journal, *Oriental Science*, began publication.

On Aug. 1, some 1,000 educators gathered at the Sugunami Civic Hall in Tokyo for the Soka Gakkai's historic 1st Education Department National Convention. Shin'ichi met this day with great excitement. He gazed upon the sea of faces in the audience from his vantage point on the hall's stage. The teachers' faces each conveyed their determination and commitment to fulfill an important mission.

The Education Department had been officially formed at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters General Meeting on May 3, 1961, which marked the first anniversary of Shin'ichi's inauguration as president. Katsu Kiyohara was then named the department chief, and, on June 10, some 300 teachers assembled at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters for the Education Department's inaugural meeting.

In his editorial for the July 1961 issue of the Soka Gakkai's monthly study journal, *Daiyakureng*, which he titled "The Mission of the Culture Bureau," Shin'ichi shared his high expectations for the activities of the bureau's Education Department.

"The true spirit of *rissho ankoku* [securing the peace of the land through propagation of true Buddhism]" he wrote, "is to strive, based on Buddhist ideals, for the realization of a peaceful land that combines individual happiness with social prosperity."

Sounding a note of warning, he said: "From ancient times to the present, in every nation and civilization around the world, history has clearly shown us that education determines the prosperity or decline of a people and a nation. The effects of education reveal themselves only 20 or 30 years after. Thus, education determines the success or failure of the next generation and as such is an extremely important issue.

"But what is the present state of education in our country? More than a decade after World War II, our educational system still lacks a clearly defined ideal or goal and

continues to stumble in the dark. This is extremely lamentable.”

Shin’ichi declared that the Education Department members had united at this time in a shared awareness of the undesirable direction in which Japanese education was heading.

He continued: “I now proudly declare that a long-awaited beacon of hope has at last begun to send a brilliant light into the darkness of Japan’s educational system. We possess the noble principles formulated by that great educational pioneer, our first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. And we have many fine educators who have transformed their lives through faith in the Mystic Law, through the ongoing process of human revolution.

“The effectiveness of education is determined by the substance of its ideals, the character of its teachers. I am convinced that our Education Department members are true educators, who possess both the superb educational principles entrusted to us by Mr. Makiguchi and outstanding human qualities honed through their Buddhist practice.

“I hope that, as practitioners of the Mystic Law, they will be firmly committed to actualizing the unsurpassed teachings of Nichiren Daishonin based on the principle that immeasurable meanings derive from the one Law [from the Sutra of Immeasurable Meanings] and will advance boldly, confident that they are pioneering great new frontiers as educators. I also hope they will never forget their role, not only as superlative teachers in the classroom but as educators of profound humanism, who are dedicated to working among the people and guiding them toward true happiness.”

The Education Department’s establishment also fulfilled the wishes of Shin’ichi’s late mentor, Josei Toda. When he rebuilt the Soka Gakkai after the war, Mr. Toda deleted the word *education* from the organization’s name — no longer calling it Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society) but simply Soka Gakkai (Value-Creating Society) — because he believed that the Gakkai’s main purpose was to carry out a religious revolution.

This did not mean, however, that Mr. Toda had turned his back on or forgotten about education. He knew that genuine religious revolution meant human revolution; when people were revitalized through faith, they would become like the rich soil from which an ideal society would be cultivated. They would become active in all areas of society, including education, business and government, and bring forth the abundant fruits of humanism.

While devoting his full energies to achieving his membership goal of 750,000 households, thus securing a solid foundation for the Soka Gakkai’s continued development, Mr. Toda confided to Shin’ichi in great detail his hopes and visions for the future. “As Mr. Makiguchi’s disciple,” he said, “I want to earn world recognition for my mentor’s wonderful educational philosophy. Someday, we must form an Education Department in our organization to contribute to society through the humanistic educational methods set forth by Mr. Makiguchi.”

On Nov. 18, 1953, the 10th memorial [ninth anniversary] of Mr. Makiguchi’s death, Mr. Toda published his mentor’s *Theory of Value*, also having it translated into English and distributed to universities and research centers overseas — a manifestation of his resolve to make Makiguchi’s educational theories and methods known as widely as possible in the world.

Shin’ichi had taken Mr. Toda’s words about founding an Education Department to heart. He waited many years until at last the time was right to carry out his mentor’s wish. After founding the department, he sought opportunities to meet with its members and encourage them.

(To be continued)

Translation of parts 1–2 of ‘The Flower of Culture’ chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962. Illustration by Kenichiro Uchida.

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