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‘The Flower of Culture’
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After tremendous, heart-wrenching efforts, members express unbounded joy at the news that they had reached their goal of 3 million member-households. Shin’ichi Yamamoto arranges to recognize these ‘heroes of the people,’ and, in his prayers, looks ahead to the next goal.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto was determined that if there was to be any sacrifice on the journey of kosen-rufu, it should be restricted only to him. He wished above all that the members could live out their lives in comfort and happiness, valuing their families and enjoying great good fortune. And the members, recognizing Shin’ichi’s selfless dedication, stood up one after another until the entire organization was firmly united, and they went on to achieve the landmark membership goal of 3 million households.

As he chanted daimoku, Shin’ichi’s heart surged with emotion and joy at having fulfilled the vow he had made to his mentor. Yet he did not allow himself to become intoxicated by that joy. He knew that kosen-rufu was an endless struggle, and that in terms of realizing happiness for all people and creating a world where peace prevails, this accomplishment was just one small victory in a long campaign.

The next goal he hoped to achieve came to mind — one that he had personally set to be reached by 1972. That year would mark the end of the sixth of seven seven-year periods (“Seven Bells”) of the organization’s development since its inception in 1930. Shin’ichi’s vision was to realize a membership of 6 million households by that time.

As he chanted, he made a silent declaration: “My next goal is 6 million households. Sensei! Please watch me and see.” A new drive and determination welled up in his heart.

The headquarters leaders meeting, held on Nov. 27 at the Tokyo Gymnasium, was charged with excitement and joy at the achievement of the goal of 3 million member-households. When Director Kin’ichi Taoka announced the propagation results for November and that they had reached their goal, a storm of applause shook the hall. Some rose up in their seats; others wept with joy. The applause seemed unending.

They had all prayed and taken action to make this goal a reality, speaking with countless people about the Daishonin’s Buddhism. Sometimes their heartfelt concern for the happiness of others and their impassioned explanations of faith fell on deaf ears. They were routinely ridiculed and abused. Sometimes people they tried to visit to discuss Buddhism would throw water or toss salt at them to drive them off [a customary way in Japan of expressing loathing or abhorrence for an unwanted visitor].

But the members endured the insults, put their disappointments aside and pursued their bodhisattva practice with courage, patience, devotion and sincerity. The realization of a membership of 3 million households was the fruit of the arduous struggles — the sweat and the tears and also the joy — of these noble members.

When you have given your all to a struggle, you are filled with a deep sense of satisfaction and joy. That is because you have met the challenge, conquered your limitations and experienced the great drama of life and human revolution. The face of a person who has fought on without reserve glows. It is lit by the radiance of a lofty spirit dedicated to working for the welfare of friends, fellow members and all humanity.

The members’ triumphant applause swept the auditorium in a tide of joy. After remarks by Soka Gakkai Vice General Director and Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki, commemorative medals marking the achievement of 3 million member-

households were presented to several members. The medals had been Shin'ichi's idea. He had arranged for their preparation some time ago, so that they would be ready for this occasion. He had wanted to give some small commemorative gift to representatives as an expression of gratitude to the many, many members who had worked so hard to spread the Daishonin's teaching and achieve this most longed-for milestone.

The work of encouraging and extending a helping hand to the suffering is hard and inconspicuous, but it is the most noble and sacred of tasks. The Soka Gakkai members undertaking this mission were contributing to society in an incomparably profound way. The Japanese nation gave awards to scholars and politicians, but it paid no attention to these tremendous achievements by ordinary people.

Even without society's praise, such wonderful efforts would of course be recognized and applauded by the Gohonzon, by Nichiren Daishonin and by all the Buddhas and heavenly deities — all the protective forces in the universe. Moreover, all those efforts would bring their own rewards, adorning with good fortune and benefit the lives and families of those who made them, for all eternity. Still, Shin'ichi, as Soka Gakkai president, wished to commend his hardworking comrades and give them the recognition they deserved as heroes of the people.

When the widowed Nichimyo-ama, traveling with her infant daughter, made the long journey to visit Nichiren Daishonin at his place of exile on Sado Island, the Daishonin praised her for her strong faith by presenting her with the title *Shonin*, meaning "sage." Josei Toda had also recognized the members' efforts, awarding medals to those who propagated Buddhism widely and faced persecutions for the sake of kosen-rufu. It was with the same motivation that Shin'ichi decided to present medals to pay tribute, even if only in some modest way, to the efforts of the members who had been the driving force behind achieving the goal of 3 million member-households.

At the meeting, the establishment of a South America General Chapter, as well as chapters in Peru and Bolivia, was announced. A chapter in Brazil had been formed sometime earlier, so the new general chapter was launched with three chapters. Soka Gakkai Director Hiroshi Yamagiwa was appointed the head of the general chapter, and a young businessman, Yasuhiro Saiki, was made the South America young men's division chief. Saiki worked for a Japanese trading company, and he had been assigned to various branches in Latin America for three years before returning to Japan. In December, his company was sending him back to Latin America, this time to São Paulo, Brazil.

Masayoshi Chína and Kyoko Shiroyama were appointed chapter chief and chapter women's division chief, respectively, for Peru, while Taro Kawaura and his wife, Miki, were appointed to the same positions for Bolivia. All of them were Japanese emigrants who would go on to become pioneers of kosen-rufu in their adopted homelands.

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