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‘The Flower of Culture’
By Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

As 1962 begins to wind down, it’s announced that President Shin’ichi Yamamoto will travel to the United States and Europe in the new year. ‘Let us prepare again to march toward our goal of kosen-rufu — for the happiness of the people, for the sake of the Law, for the benefit of society,’ Shin’ichi says.

After a short address by Study Department Leader Chuhei Yamadaira, Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama announced the goals for the coming year, which included achieving an additional 400,000 member-households and strengthening Buddhist study in the organization. He also announced that at the beginning of the year, President Shin’ichi Yamamoto would travel to the United States and Europe, providing guidance to members around the world.

Many U.S. members were attending the Headquarters Leaders Meeting and, when they heard this news, they cheered and applauded loudly.

In his speech that day, Shin’ichi expressed his deep gratitude to all who worked to achieve the goal of 3 million member-households. He said: “You all know the famous words of the Daishonin’s writings, ‘Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, which never fails to turn into spring’ (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 150). The first part of the sentence, ‘Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter,’ refers to this being the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law, and that, as a consequence of this time, we who uphold the Mystic Law encounter persecution and oppression. It also refers to the sufferings we undergo as a result of various kinds of karma.

“The second part of the sentence, ‘which never fails to turn into spring,’” he went on, “represents Nichiren Daishonin’s absolute assurance, his promise, that through the wonderful power of the Gohonzon and our own power of faith and practice, we will never fail to achieve happiness and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

“The history of the Soka Gakkai, too, is a history of advancing undauntedly through fierce storms of persecution and obstacles,” he said. “There is no other organization in our times that has been as maligned and defamed as ours. Undeterred, we have made the exceptional progress that we celebrate today and have become a supporting pillar of the Japanese nation. This is evidence that winter is at last giving way to the sunshine of spring. I am also certain that the time has arrived for us to let the entire world see just what a wonderful organization the Soka Gakkai really is.

“Next year we will have a fine new Headquarters Building,” he continued, “and the year after, a beautiful new Grand Reception Hall, which is to be one of the world’s foremost architectural works, at the head temple. These are all proof that the Soka Gakkai’s spring has come. I am certain that our progress means that a new morning, illuminated by the gentle light of spring, will dawn at last over the nation of Japan, which has suffered greatly.”

This momentous declaration of victory in the struggle for kosen-rufu was met with huge applause. Every face in the auditorium was shining with joy.

Shin’ichi stated, “Let us prepare again to march toward our goal of kosen-rufu — for the happiness of the people, for the sake of the Law, for the benefit of society.”

Shin’ichi commended the members again on their tremendous efforts, and then concluded: “Please give my best regards to all the members in your chapters who were unable to attend

today's meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone in high spirits once again at next month's Headquarters Leaders Meeting."

He deliberately kept his greetings brief. Having worked together, united in a single purpose to propagate the Daishonin's teachings — and thus having together scored this magnificent accomplishment — few words were needed to communicate the joy he shared with them. Their spirit of oneness and seamless teamwork had been the secret to achieving a membership of 3 million households.

On Nov. 28, the following day, Shin'ichi traveled to the head temple and there visited his mentor Josei Toda's tomb to report on the Gakkai's milestone achievement.

The 10th Young Women's Division General Meeting was held Dec. 2, while the 11th Young Men's Division General Meeting was convened on Dec. 9 — both at the Nihon University Auditorium.

At the YMD meeting, new leadership appointments were announced, with Kenshiro Ishikawa replacing Shoichi Tanida as division chief. With energy, enthusiasm and resounding cheers, the young men's division made a fresh start toward the new year.

In mid-December, with the general meetings of the young women's division and young men's division concluded, Shin'ichi left Tokyo for a guidance tour of the Chubu and Kansai regions. Intent on further strengthening and expanding the Soka Gakkai's great cultural movement, he attended the inaugurations of the 1st class of Kansai's Academic Department and Arts Department, respectively.

The last major Headquarters activity for 1962, the Year of Victory, was the Headquarters Leaders Meeting on Dec. 22. This gathering was to serve as a dynamic kickoff toward the coming Year of Study, 1963. Unlike previous Headquarters Leaders Meetings, which had been held at such venues as the Taito Gymnasium and the Tokyo Gymnasium, this final meeting of the year was convened at the much larger Nihon University Auditorium where the Gakkai usually held only general meetings and special conventions.

The results of the Nov. 23 Study Department Promotional Exam for assistant professors seeking to become full professors were announced, with 43 candidates being promoted to the rank of professor. A new rank, associate professor, was also established, and 122 assistant professors were promoted to that position.

With the new rank, the Study Department was now organized in ascending order into these positions: assistant teacher, teacher, assistant professor, associate professor and professor. It was also announced that more than half a million members had applied to take the Study Department Entrance Exam scheduled for Jan. 6.

Now, 700 years after the Daishonin's time, an unprecedented movement based on the profound life-philosophy of the Daishonin's Buddhism was spreading deeply, quietly and steadily throughout society. Promoted by ordinary men and women, it was gradually stirring a new renaissance of the human spirit.

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