

The New Human Revolution, Volume 7, Chapter 2, Parts 5–6

'Fresh growth'

By DAISAKU IKEDA, SGI President

The majority of members in America in 1963 were Japanese women. Most of them had met and married American servicemen in Japan, then moved to the United States. They tried to adjust to a new life: a new country, a new language, a new culture.

When Nagayasu Masaki translated Shin'ichi Yamamoto's words into English, those members who didn't speak Japanese also greeted the news of the new chapter with cheers and shouts of joy.

Shin'ichi next said: "Because people around the world are watching the Soka Gakkai, it is important that each of you receive benefit from your Buddhist practice, become happy and contribute to society. Each of you is a representative of the Soka Gakkai.

"The course of history is determined by the people," he said. "When we each challenge our limitations and give full play to our unique potential, becoming the protagonist in the drama of our life and sphere of endeavor, the door to the new era for humanity definitely opens. And as you each act out your grand drama of kosen-rufu, please work together to build an ever more peaceful, prosperous Hawaii."

Shin'ichi then pulled from his luggage a paper bag full of chestnuts.

"I've brought these chestnuts with me as a small gift for all of you," he explained. "They're a tasty reminder of Japan. It looks like I have enough to give five to each person."

As Shin'ichi distributed the chestnuts, the members began to share recent news and developments in their lives. One Japanese woman introduced her American husband. Everyone had been eagerly looking forward to meeting and talking with Shin'ichi.

Afterward, Shin'ichi's party withdrew to another room with some of the key Hawaiian leaders to discuss particulars regarding the new chapter to be formed. Shin'ichi asked Nagayasu Masaki and Emiko Haruyama to stay with him. He wanted to talk to them about leadership appointments for the America General Chapter.

It was Haruyama's first meeting with Shin'ichi in about six months, having seen him last just before her departure for the United States. She had many things she wanted to discuss and receive guidance about.

She had come to America in high spirits and a positive frame of mind, firmly resolved to pioneer the way for kosen-rufu in the United States. But the challenges of actually living in an unfamiliar land frequently left her at a loss. She felt constantly overwhelmed.

Although the membership was increasing gradually, the organization was still very small. Visiting members at their homes to offer encouragement or guidance often meant having to get on a plane or bus and traveling many hours. Moreover, the majority of members were Japanese women, who had met and married American servicemen in Japan, then moved to the United States with their husbands. The hardships of trying to adjust to life in a new country with a different language and culture were often compounded by marital discord, leaving many of the women deeply distressed.

Some had married and come to America only to have their new in-laws adamantly oppose their son's marriage — to someone from a country they looked upon as the enemy — and pressure them to divorce. There were also women who had come to America only to learn that the man whom they thought they had married already had a wife and children. Wracked by inexpressible suffering, some even contemplated suicide.

Emiko Haruyama had graduated from Rikkyo University in Tokyo with a degree in English and American literature. Still, she had worried whether her English would be adequate to

Title: Volume 7: Chapter 2 Fresh Growth (5-6)

Subject: World Tribune 11/13/98 n.3217 p.4 WT981113p04

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Chapter Fresh Growth History Human Kosen-rufu Revolution Tribune Volume World

encourage American members. As it turned out, there had been almost no need for her to use English to give personal guidance; virtually all the members she met were Japanese women who spoke only Japanese.

Now, more than language deficiency, Haruyama was acutely aware of her lack of general ability to guide and encourage the members. The women she now encountered were facing problems of a completely different kind than the young women's division members she had given guidance and encouragement to in Japan. Most were in such desperate straits that they were asking themselves if it was worth living.

This was totally different from standing at a microphone and offering guidance to many people at a meeting. And while she urged her fellow members to study the Daishonin's writings, there were some who had never read even one of his writings.

Imparting courage and hope to friends in such circumstances is the true meaning of guidance in faith and dialogue in the Soka Gakkai.

Rallying her optimism and determination, she put all her energy into encouraging others. Yet, while she succeeded in supporting a few members scattered here and there around the country and helping them stand up in faith, it was a far cry from the picture of kosen-rufu she had painted in her mind. She felt deeply frustrated and impatient, the task ahead seeming almost as daunting as scooping out all the water in the Pacific Ocean with a spoon.

Fretting over how slow things were moving, despite all her hopes and expectations, she began to blame herself and gradually lose confidence. Even if she wished to receive guidance, there was no one nearby she could talk to. She felt isolated, alone. When she thought of those happy days doing activities in Japan with the warm support of many seniors, she grew sad and nostalgic.

Just when she wished with all her heart that she could meet and receive guidance from President Yamamoto, she learned that he would be visiting the United States. Although she was several months pregnant, she did not hesitate to fly to Hawaii to meet him.

Haruyama's mind had been filled with things she wanted to report and discuss with him, but when she actually sat face-to-face with him, she found herself at a loss for words. Seeing the difficulty that she was having, Shin'ichi asked, "So, how are things in America?"

Haruyama had no idea how to respond, but a moment later she found herself blurting out, "Sensei, America is a very big country...."

These words articulated Haruyama's feeling that, no matter how much she had exerted herself or traveled around the country, none of her actions or efforts had produced any visible results.

To be continued