

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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In New York, President Yamamoto considers incorporating the Soka Gakkai in America. He foresees having 'to acquire legal corporate status in each country where [the Gakkai] was active... This was the only way it could become a movement rooted in the community and society of each country....'

On the way to Koichi Yabe's house, the road was wet, reflecting the glare of headlights. When Yabe informed Shin'ichi Yamamoto that it had been raining until a short time before his arrival, Shin'ichi sensed the rain's clearing was a function of the universe's protective forces. Had it kept raining, the members would have had to make their way in a downpour to the America East General Meeting, at which the New York Chapter would be inaugurated.

When Shin'ichi arrived at the house, about 10 members were waiting to greet him. He left the final planning for the evening's meeting to the leaders accompanying him, while he talked with the members and fielded their questions. All the questions were study related, since here, as in other cities on this guidance tour, a Study Department exam was to be held the following day.

The first time Shin'ichi came to New York and attended a discussion meeting, he found the members dejected, overwhelmed by the harshness of their daily lives. Many had cried out in disbelief when assured that they could become happy; it created quite a stir at the meeting.

Now, many of the same members were happily asking questions about points of study. They were filled with seeking spirit, earnestly desiring to study Buddhism. Shin'ichi could see that the New York members had achieved tremendous personal growth since his last visit.

He answered their questions with great energy, commending each questioner, saying, "That's an important question," or "You've made a very good point," and then answering in a very accessible, easy-to-understand manner.

Much to the members' regret, the time passed all too quickly. Soon Shin'ichi was closing the session to get ready for the General Meeting.

While the New York members and leaders from Japan hastened to the meeting place, Shin'ichi remained with Yabe. He wanted to discuss with him the formation of a religious corporation for the Soka Gakkai in the United States.

In the future, the Soka Gakkai, a registered religious corporation in Japan, would have to acquire legal corporate status in each country where it was active, Shin'ichi felt. This was the only way it could become a movement rooted in the community and society of each country, he thought.

Buddhism is a teaching for all humanity. Similarly, the Soka Gakkai belongs to the entire world, not only Japan. Shin'ichi believed that each country should form its own Soka Gakkai organization: The foundation of faith would be the same but the organization unique to each country.

As they strove to be exemplary citizens, members would undertake activities of their own initiative, taking into account the conditions and circumstances of their countries,

working for the happiness and welfare of their fellow citizens and all humanity.

Because of his job, Yabe was very knowledgeable about setting up affiliated corporations overseas and was acquainted with several U.S. legal experts.

Yabe listened to Shin'ichi's proposal about incorporating the Soka Gakkai in the United States and said: "I see. So you've decided to take that step. That definitely will be vital for the future. I'll look into the procedure, and I'll get back to you as soon as I have the information."

Yabe was happy that Shin'ichi had sought his advice. He had remained a Gakkai member largely because of his admiration for Shin'ichi's character.

In spring 1953, Yabe attended the wedding of his wife's younger brother, future Soka Gakkai Vice General Director Kiyoshi Jujo. Hanae, Yabe's wife, was also a Gakkai member, but Yabe was opposed to her faith.

At the wedding, he met Josei Toda for the first time and had his first real introduction to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. When Toda confronted him with the error of his religious views, Yabe grew angry and refused to listen to him.

Then, about a month later, Yabe suffered a deadlock at work that caused him so much anguish he came close to having a nervous breakdown. This is what finally led him to practice the Daishonin's Buddhism. After that, he came to like and respect Toda and often sought him out for guidance.

With Toda's death, however, Yabe completely lost enthusiasm for his Buddhist practice. "I don't want to stay with a Soka Gakkai that has no President Toda," he would say.

A short time after Shin'ichi's inauguration as president, Yabe was sent by his company to the United States. When his brother-in-law, Jujo, heard this, he urged Yabe to meet with President Yamamoto before leaving for America. Reluctantly, at Jujo's strong insistence, Yabe visited the Gakkai Headquarters.

Shin'ichi welcomed him cordially and with utmost courtesy, congratulating him on his new position in the United States. Yabe, 18 years Shin'ichi's senior, was touched by the young president's sincere concern and good wishes for him.

He was also impressed by the energy and vision of this young man, who so fervently wished for peace and the happiness of all humankind, who sought to realize this by propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism around the world. Yabe was suddenly gripped by the desire to be part of the Gakkai again.

People derive inspiration from other people.

Now, here in New York, Yabe was happy to be reunited with Shin'ichi, and he firmly resolved to do everything in his power to assist the Soka Gakkai president.

Addressing both Yabe and his wife, who were sitting side by side, Shin'ichi said: "By the way, I want to appoint you, Mr. Yabe, general chapter advisor, and you, Mrs. Yabe, Queens District women's division leader, as well as New York Chapter women's division advisor. Would you both agree to taking on these positions?"

Smiling, the couple nodded and replied yes.

To be continued