

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
‘FRESH GROWTH’, VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 39–40

After the America East General Meeting in New York, a member asks Shin’ichi Yamamoto if overseas members should go into politics like members in Japan had. Shin’ichi explains why unique circumstances in Japan led to the establishment of the Clean Government movement there — unique circumstances that didn’t exist elsewhere.

After the America East General Meeting, several newly appointed leaders and other members gathered around Shin’ichi Yamamoto. Some shared their determinations; some, not wanting to miss this opportunity, asked Shin’ichi further questions.

One pink-cheeked gentleman asked: “Sensei, will we also eventually see Gakkai members going into politics not only in Japan but in other parts of the world to actualize the spirit of *rissho ankoku* [realization of a peaceful, prosperous society based on Buddhist ideals] taught by Nichiren Daishonin?”

Shin’ichi unequivocally replied, “No, there’s no need for that.”

The questioner looked surprised.

Shin’ichi elaborated: “Being a good citizen, wanting to contribute to your country and working actively to assist and improve your community, thus gaining society’s trust, will lead to the realization of *rissho ankoku*. Just because the Gakkai in Japan has sent members into the political arena and now founded the Komei [Clean Government] Political Federation, there is no need for our members in other countries to follow suit.

“Circumstances unique to Japan have compelled us to take this course,” he explained. “For example, one political party in Japan protects only the interests of big business. Another gives sole priority to the interests of large labor unions. Both the ruling party and the opposition parties collude with one another on political matters, and politics itself is full of graft and corruption. In addition, for far too long, the government has done nothing to ease the burden of the many people employed in small private factories or workshops — workers who have no organized representation. There has also been an absence of politicians who work earnestly for the happiness of ordinary citizens.

“That is why President Toda sent a number of his disciples into the political arena,” he went on. “Deeply concerned about the disastrous path Japanese politics was taking — and insistent that the long-suffering Japanese people deserved better — he hoped that these members might keep a close eye on how the country was governed and restore government to the hands of the people, where it belonged. The subsequent establishment of the Komei Political Federation and the Komei parliamentary group last year was also prompted by the nature of the Japanese political system. Without an organized political alliance, it would be extremely difficult for individual Soka Gakkai-backed representatives to make their voices heard in the legislature.

“But just because our members have been actively engaged in politics in Japan,” he concluded, “it does not mean that this should automatically be copied in other countries. The circumstances in each country are completely different. The true spirit of securing a peaceful society based on Buddhism lies in individuals making Buddhist principles such as compassion and respect for life their basis for living and then working to realize a society where all people can exist together happily, in peace. This spirit is not limited to the

Title: The New Human Revolution

Subject: World Tribune 04/09/99 n.3237 p.6 WT990409p06 New York, New York

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Chapter Daisaku Fresh Growth Human Ikeda Parts Revolution Tribune World York

sphere of politics — it is about contributing to society as a Buddhist in all fields of human endeavor, including culture and education. While the Gakkai as an organization will at times pursue projects in these areas, essentially efforts to achieve the ideal of *rissho ankoku* will center on the inner-motivated actions of each individual.”

Though kosen-rufu was always the goal, how to promote it would differ from country to country, in accord with each country’s uniqueness. Irreparable damage could result in the future if members overseas decided simply to implement what had been done in Japan, without thinking whether it would be appropriate to their country. Shin’ichi had been worried about this for quite some time.

The following day, Jan. 14, a Study Department exam was held at the hotel where Shin’ichi and his party were staying. This time Shin’ichi joined the other leaders from Japan as an examiner for the Oral Exam, quizzing several members on study points.

In the afternoon, Shin’ichi and his companions went to have a look around New York City and even went to the top of the Empire State Building. Shin’ichi had wanted to give those who were visiting the United States for the first time a chance to do some sightseeing.

That evening, Shin’ichi met with Tomio and Emiko Haruyama. He particularly wanted to talk with Tomio, the newly appointed New York Chapter leader, wanting to help him secure a firm foundation for deep, lasting faith.

After inquiring at length about Tomio’s work and other matters, Shin’ichi seriously told him: “I’m sure you are highly regarded and have an extremely promising career at the trading company that you are working at now. But there is one important thing I’d like to point out: It is a mistake to evaluate the Gakkai based on the criteria you might use to appraise the size and assets of a business. A business enterprise’s greatest objective is making a profit. The Gakkai’s goal, on the other hand, is to help people around the world become happy and to lay the groundwork for lasting world peace.

“In attempting to achieve that goal, our founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, suffered persecution at the hands of Japan’s wartime military government,” he shared. “He was thrown into prison, where he died. Our second president, Josei Toda, was imprisoned along with him. But he survived the ordeal and upon his release rose to the task of realizing the vision of kosen-rufu he inherited from his mentor. Today, the Gakkai has reached out and brought happiness and hope to a membership in excess of 3 million households.

“We of the Soka Gakkai have been going out among the suffering and sharing their pain and problems as if they were our own,” Shin’ichi emphasized. “We have offered support and encouragement, showing people how to transform their destiny, helping one person after another become a winner in life. And all of our efforts are completely voluntary.

“Yet our organization has had to put up with being derided as ‘a gathering of the poor and sick,’” he said, “or being called ‘fascists’ or ‘a violent religious group.’ But our members have not let this deter them and have continued to work for people’s happiness. There is absolutely no other organization like ours! You should give deep thought to what really makes a person great and what is the most valuable way to live.”

(To be continued)