

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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In New York, Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages a newly appointed leader that 'life is short. How we use the time we have is extremely important.... Ultimately, the most important thing is working to help people attain absolute happiness and to realize world peace.'

Tomio Haruyama was a young man of great ability and promise. He had followed an elite course, graduating from the department of political science and economics at Japan's prestigious Waseda University. Then he had landed a position with one of Japan's top trading firms.

He joined the Soka Gakkai and started practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in 1954, after seeing his parents, who had taken faith some time earlier, benefit from doing so. While he had come to recognize the power of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo through his own experience, he had held back from making an all-out effort to participate in Gakkai activities and lacked any real commitment to achieving the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

He also had a tendency to be very blunt and stubborn, and was a bit of cynic. But Shin'ichi Yamamoto was confident that if Tomio could truly appreciate the significance of the Gakkai, he would go on to achieve great things.

Tomio was also extremely pragmatic in his thinking, and this too was an important quality when it came to propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism in society. The ability to speak one's mind was also indispensable in the United States. And through continued Buddhist practice, his stubbornness undoubtedly would come to shine in the form of unwavering conviction.

No one is perfect at the outset. The responsibility of a leader is to uncover each person's potential and work wholeheartedly to help him or her become truly capable.

Tomio listened earnestly as Shin'ichi spoke: "If you fail to perceive the real nature of the Gakkai and treat the organization casually, you'll come to regret it deeply later. The Gakkai will develop all the more from this point on. Eventually, we will have members in every nation of the world.

"In the future," Shin'ichi went on, "we will also establish high schools and universities, as well as a non-profit foundation to conduct musical exchange with other countries. Based on the ideals of Buddhism, the Soka Gakkai's aim is to enable politics, education and art — all areas of human endeavor — to flourish and to build a society where people can achieve happiness, thereby creating lasting world peace.

"Life is short," he added. "How we use the time we have is extremely important. If we are consumed with gaining prestige, social status and wealth, then we will be left with only a great sense of emptiness in the end. Ultimately, the most important thing is working to help people attain absolute happiness and to realize world peace. When we dedicate ourselves to kosen-rufu, we lead the most valuable, meaningful of lives — lives of deep fulfillment and joy. That is the purpose of our Buddhist practice."

Shin'ichi spoke with great passion and energy. He was dead serious in his resolve. He knew that unless he could make Tomio understand the true essence of faith and awaken him to his mission right then and there, his wife, Emiko, would be unable to do her job

fully as a leader, and the members would suffer. Also, as the one responsible for recommending Tomio for leadership, Shin'ichi was resolved to make it his personal duty to encourage and inspire him to stand up in faith.

"Mr. Haruyama, I am confident that if I leave things in your hands, you will build a fine organization. Let's work together," Shin'ichi said, gazing steadily at Tomio.

Emiko also looked intently at her husband, sitting beside him.

His eyes shining, Tomio responded to Shin'ichi's words with a silent nod.

Shin'ichi continued: "Your becoming New York Chapter leader and the young men's division North America General Corps leader means that you have taken on the mission of working for the happiness of people throughout New York and throughout the United States. It's perfectly all right for you to start out by driving your wife to meetings in her capacity as North America General Chapter women's division leader, but I hope that you'll quickly learn how to encourage and guide everyone, becoming a great chapter leader yourself.

"Because of the nature of your job," Shin'ichi concluded, "there's no knowing when or where your company will transfer you next. That makes each day particularly critical. The first thing is to make this time in New York the most memorable in your personal history of contributing to kosen-rufu. I entrust New York to you. I entrust America to you."

Looking slightly tense, Haruyama acknowledged the great expectations that Shin'ichi placed in him, saying, "I understand."

Shin'ichi smiled, and a smile also appeared on Haruyama's thin face.

As Emiko watched this exchange, her eyes filled with tears of joy.

From that day on, the Haruyamas worked as a team. With Tomio driving, they traveled to Long Island, Boston and Washington, D.C., to encourage members. It was not uncommon for them to cover a couple hundred miles or more in a single day.

At first, when they met with members, Tomio just left all the talking to Emiko. He would simply contribute a word or two, like "Let's do our best!" But after a while, he began to share his own experience in faith and to give guidance and encouragement with great confidence.

After discussion meetings and other gatherings, while Emiko was encouraging the women, he would speak in English with the American husbands who drove their Japanese wives to and from the meetings. Most of the husbands were not yet members, and he tried to help them deepen their understanding of Buddhism.

Later, Tomio left the trading company to join the staff of the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo and contributed to the development of the SGI.

(To be continued)