

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'AT THE HELM'**  
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*Shin'ichi Yamamoto remembers President Toda's teaching that 'whether we can achieve a life of eternal victory, whether we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime, is determined by how we respond when the Soka Gakkai is faced with persecution.'*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto recalled his mentor's words at the Kansai Headquarters in Osaka in July 1957. Shin'ichi had just been released from jail, following his arrest on false charges of violating the election laws. Mr. Toda said to him: "This all happened because I encouraged some of my disciples to run for the House of Councilors, and a number of them succeeded. The ruling establishment feared the rise of a new popular force. They're afraid of the solidarity of the Soka Gakkai, which has managed to organize ordinary citizens.

"They know what a strong force the people can be when they unite, and so they set out to destroy the Soka Gakkai. That is why they wanted to arrest me. That was their real aim.

"So they dug up minor violations of the election law by our members and tried, by fair means or foul, to connect me to the crimes. If they could arrest me and make me out as a criminal, they could create an image of the Soka Gakkai as an anti-social, criminal organization.

"Targeting the leader of an organization or movement is a standard means of oppression. It was also in order to get at me that they arrested and harassed you.

"Shin'ichi, you saw right through their tricks. And you tried to take all the blame yourself..."

Toda's eyes grew moist with tears. It was a sight forever burned in Shin'ichi's mind.

Toda continued with great intensity: "Shin'ichi, this series of events has been a rehearsal for you. You can be certain that before long the authorities will reveal their devilish nature and attack the Soka Gakkai in earnest.

"Government oppression is not a thing of the past, something that happened only during the war. True, Japan has become a democratic country after the war, and lese majesty and the Peace Preservation Law, which were used to arrest Mr. Makiguchi and myself, no longer exist. The freedom of religion is now also guaranteed.

"But the inherent insidious nature of the political authorities has not changed in the least. All it means is that they will just find cleverer, more devious ways to repress us.

"There is no telling when it will happen. But watch out when the Soka Gakkai attains greater social influence and achieves phenomenal growth. The authorities, desperate to secure their survival at all costs, will frantically move to attack the Soka Gakkai, using whatever unscrupulous means they can get their hands on, in an attempt to prevent our organization from developing further.

"At that time, you will become a target, Shin'ichi. You should be prepared."

It was a cry from the inner depths of Josei Toda, an indomitable champion of the Mystic Law who fought fiercely to prove to all the truth and integrity of his mentor Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who died in prison for his beliefs.

Toda continued with an even more impassioned tone: "I encouraged some of our members

to run for political office because I felt that in Japan it would be difficult to secure happy, stable lives for the people unless government was put back into the people's hands. I was well aware that if we tried to change society for the better, we would be persecuted. The fact is, when you throw a stone into a pond, it makes ripples.

“But we would be betraying Nichiren Daishonin's spirit to ‘secure the peace of the land through establishing the correct teaching,’ if we ignored the suffering in society and closed ourselves off in the religious world, content just to sit in peace and quiet, chanting daimoku. The practice of Buddhism lies in the struggle to eliminate misery and suffering from the world, to defend human rights and human dignity, and to build a peaceful society.

“In our bold efforts to do so, it is only natural that we will be subject to persecution and attack. But if we let that intimidate us, we will not fulfill our true mission as Buddhists. Furthermore, the only way for us to change our karma and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime is by triumphing over the persecution and obstacles we encounter in the course of working for the Law.

“That is why I have steered us toward creating a more humane society. I have been calling forth obstacles and the three powerful enemies. The Daishonin states, ‘In this age as well, it is not one's allies but one's powerful enemies who assist one's progress’ (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 770).

“If we win in the struggle against malicious people and evil authorities bent on destroying kosen-rufu, we attain Buddhahood. That is why the Daishonin says that our great enemies actually do more for us than our friends.

“Those who fight with courage against harsh persecution become strong. They become lions.

“During this latest incident in Osaka, the Kansai members fought bravely. Not a single one stood by indifferently when they learned of your arrest. It was a wonderful display of unity.

“They prayed desperately, their hearts filled with righteous anger, determined to crush the malevolent forces at work. They went out tirelessly, striving with all their might to communicate a true picture of the Soka Gakkai.

“Many of them wished that they could take your place in prison. If you hadn't been released today, I think that there would have been big trouble in Kansai.

“Whether we can achieve a life of eternal victory, whether we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime, is determined by how we respond when the Soka Gakkai is faced with persecution. Do we simply stand by, telling ourselves it doesn't concern us directly? Or do we jump into the fray and fight courageously for what's right?

“The Kansai members stood up and confronted persecution alongside you, Shin'ichi. They fought fearlessly against great injustice.

“As a result, our Kansai organization will grow even stronger. The Kansai members have made a giant leap toward attaining a boundless state of life that overflows with good fortune.”

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1963.