

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'AT THE HELM'**  
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*The priest Shinno Abe, who will later become the 67th high priest, Nikken, speaks on his departure for the first Gohonzon-conferral ceremonies in America. 'Even as he spoke of worldwide kosen-rufu as if he meant every word, Abe may well have been smirking inwardly, thinking of the hedonistic pleasures that he could indulge himself in the United States.'*

Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama's remarks at the VIP waiting room, applauding the first overseas trip for the conferral of Gohonzon, articulated the feeling of the members at that time. [Members had gathered at the Tokyo International Airport in Haneda to see off two priests who would be traveling to the United States to conduct the first Gohonzon-conferral ceremonies abroad.]

The thought that Nichiren Shoshu priests would travel abroad to confer Gohonzon and advance kosen-rufu filled the members with a sense of appreciation and joy. As it turned out, however, Shinno Abe's sojourn overseas would ultimately leave an unprecedented, eternal blemish on the history of Nichiren Shoshu. [Abe would later become the 67th high priest, Nikken.]

Abe spoke next. Quietly clearing his throat, he surveyed the gathering with a regal air and began speaking in a slow, deliberate manner: "Based on a request from President Yamamoto and at the wise, gracious behest of the high priest, we are embarking on this overseas journey as the high priest's emissaries. With clear awareness of the significance of this trip as a first step toward the worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and of our responsibility as Nichiren Shoshu priests, we will carry out our duty in conferring Gohonzon with the spirit to make a truly lasting contribution to the future realization of kosen-rufu in the United States. We will talk with local members and do our utmost to fulfill our mission."

The airport waiting room erupted with applause. Tears of emotion moistened the eyes of many of the members.

However, even as he spoke of worldwide kosen-rufu as if he meant every word, Abe may well have been smirking inwardly, thinking of the hedonistic pleasures that he could indulge himself in the United States. [Abe on this trip became involved in the Seattle Incident, his dispute with prostitutes that led to a run-in with Seattle police.]

Years later, when he became high priest, Abe wrung huge financial contributions from the unsuspecting Soka Gakkai members—the noble children of the Buddha—and from the Soka Gakkai organization. Reveling in luxury and extravagance, he squandered the members' sincere donations, lost in blind pursuit of amusement. Finally, because it wanted to have direct control over the members, the priesthood excommunicated the Soka Gakkai and expelled Shin'ichi Yamamoto, who had done more than anyone to bring about the school's prosperity.

To the crafty, evil-hearted Abe, deceiving the sincere members who had come to see him off that day in 1963 must have been child's play.

A youth division speech contest was held that same evening, March 16, at the Hibiya Civic Hall in Tokyo, with President Yamamoto attending. On this very day five years earlier, Josei Toda, despite his frail condition, had gone ahead and presided over the

milestone ceremony passing on the mission of kosen-rufu. Summoning every last ounce of strength, he entrusted the future of the Soka Gakkai's movement in its entirety to Shin'ichi and the other youth present.

Toda's spirit lay in achieving peace and happiness for all Japan's—no, all the world's—people. Making their mentor's spirit their own, the youth had been working tirelessly to realize the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The auditorium where the speech contest was held brimmed with the Soka Gakkai youth's passionate commitment to champion and defend the people. The entrants delivered impassioned speeches with such titles as "A Case for Reforming the Mass Media," "Critiquing Today's Social Critics" and "A Look at the Real Tokyo Metropolitan Government." All demonstrated great powers of critical analysis. Their indignation and outrage at utterly irresponsible members of the media, feckless social commentators and corrupt politicians fueled their speeches.

With the increasing prosperity that accompanied Japan's entry into a period of high economic growth, many young people were succumbing to the "money is everything" mentality. Material wealth and outward appearances were beginning to replace traditional standards of good and bad, and right and wrong, as the criteria for value judgments. This tendency was creating a climate that sustained social injustice and gave rise to high-handed dealing and corruption in government.

Any evil that causes human suffering must absolutely not be allowed to persist—this was Toda's conviction and his teaching. Who will fight against injustice if not the youth? Who will speak out? Who will lead the way and take action?

If youth see people suffering as a result of blatant injustice and abuses, and feel not the slightest bit angered, then they are not genuine youth. They are miserable, unfeeling people whose spirits are old and withered.

On the other hand, the spirit of those who, regardless of their advancing years, continue to resolutely challenge wrongdoing, without retreating a single step, is eternally youthful.

The network of the Soka Gakkai is formed from the life-to-life bonds of people who embody this noble spirit of eternal youth. It is an alliance of people committed to championing the cause of truth and justice.

In the fervent speeches of these young people, who sought to eradicate all evil and injustice, Shin'ichi felt he could hear a clarion bell of hope signaling a new dawn that would dispel the darkness of society.

In his address, Shin'ichi concluded his remarks to these youthful successors of the Soka Gakkai by stressing: "Kosen-rufu must be achieved through the efforts of the youth. Therefore, I hope that you, my young friends of the youth division, will seek to gain a thorough understanding of the philosophy of Buddhism by diligently studying the Daishonin's writings, which elucidate the guiding principles for all human endeavors and set forth the fundamental standards for humankind.

"I also hope that you will chant abundant daimoku, regarding the Gohonzon as your greatest treasure, thus experiencing the wonderful benefit of the Mystic Law with your own life. I want you to gain unshakable conviction that the Daishonin's Buddhism is absolute."

Conviction is the heart of faith. Shin'ichi wished to instill the significance of this truth in the young people present.

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