

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'AT THE HELM'**  
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*Shin'ichi Yamamoto marks the fifth anniversary of his mentor's death. Under Shin'ichi's leadership, the Soka Gakkai has achieved a membership of 3.3 million households, 'a crystallization of the spirit of mentor and disciple.'*

The cherry blossom season was again approaching. Not that Shin'ichi Yamamoto had any spare time these days to enjoy a quiet respite viewing the fragrant blooms. Still, catching but a fleeting glimpse of cherry blossoms from the car window refreshed his spirits and filled him with memories of his mentor, who had embarked on his journey to Eagle Peak when the cherries were in bloom.

On April 2, the sixth memorial service for Josei Toda — marking the fifth anniversary of his death — was held at the Seikyo Shimbun Annex in Tokyo's Shinagawa Ward. In the five years since Toda's passing, the Soka Gakkai had achieved a membership of 3.3 million households. This was a crystallization of the spirit of mentor and disciple — an achievement realized through the dedicated efforts of the members uniting behind Shin'ichi, who single-mindedly strove to actualize the vision of his mentor.

Shin'ichi had taken it as his duty to make a report of victory to his mentor on this day each year. No matter how difficult the struggles he faced might be, he was determined to come to this ceremony showing actual proof of victory of some kind without fail. For therein, he believed, lay the way of a disciple.

Toda never trusted those who made empty determinations. He would severely reprimand them and would not hesitate to call them “frauds,” “con artists” and “impostors.”

True lions, Toda asserted, are those who advance, win and fulfill their vows, enduring all adversity with unflinching determination. And it was out of his compassion as a mentor that he tried to teach his disciples the weighty responsibility that falls on those who work for kosen-rufu.

While reciting the sutra and chanting daimoku during the service, Shin'ichi firmly resolved to expand the flow of kosen-rufu and to return next year for his mentor's seventh memorial with even more proof of great advancement.

Also on this day, it was announced that prefectural assembly elections would be held in Japan's 46 prefectures and city assembly elections held in the five major cities of Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe. These elections marked the first half of a battery of nationwide local elections to be held that spring.

The Komei Political Federation was fielding 57 candidates in the prefectural elections and 38 in the city elections. All of the candidates and the Soka Gakkai members supporting them threw themselves into campaign activities with their sights set on Election Day, April 17.

Shin'ichi visited the Kansai region that month. On April 5, he attended the opening and Gohonzon-enshrinement ceremony of Heian-ji, the newest temple the Soka Gakkai had built and donated to Nichiren Shoshu, in Kyoto's Ukyo Ward. Coming on the heels of the completion of the new Kyoto Headquarters in February, the temple's construction added further to the Kyoto members' joy.

Heian-ji was a large temple — a stately, modern, three-story structure of reinforced

concrete. The chief priest was the same Shinno Abe, who was head of the priesthood's Study Department, and had been dispatched to the United States to carry out the first overseas Gohonzon-conferral ceremonies. [Abe would later become the 67th high priest, Nikken.]

To have a large Nichiren Shoshu temple in Kyoto, a city teeming with famous temples of other Buddhist schools, gave the members a sense of confidence and pride. And they were all the more thrilled when they heard that Abe would be the chief priest of the new temple.

"Mr. Abe is the head of the priesthood's Study Department, and he traveled to the United States to confer Gohonzon on members there for the sake of worldwide kosen-rufu. Also, he is the son of a former high priest," they said admiringly.

"How fortunate we are to get such a wonderful person," others remarked. "Since he is the son of a high priest, I am confident he will initiate a great propagation effort in Kyoto in accord with the Daishonin's commitment to refuting the erroneous and revealing the true and to selflessly spreading the Law.

"There will surely come a day when temples throughout Kyoto, such as Higashi Honganji, Nishi Honganji, Kiyomizudera and Daitokuji, will all convert to the Daishonin's Buddhism. We must also do our best."

At the time, of course, no one knew Abe's true nature. The pure-hearted Soka Gakkai members had only the highest expectations of him.

At the opening and Gohonzon-enshrinement ceremony, High Priest Nittatsu delivered a congratulatory speech, in which he said: "In this city, Buddhist temples are so numerous that they stand rooftop to rooftop, but they all represent schools that adhere to provisional, theoretical and shallow teachings. As a result, it is a place that could be called the foremost abode of devilish functions in Japan. This new temple has been built as a center from which the future leaders of our school can wage a struggle against evil, where they can thoroughly forge and develop themselves in faith."

In his speech, Shin'ichi shared his thoughts on the conduct of Buddhist practitioners: "It is important, I feel, for those of us who uphold the teachings of Buddhism to behave in such a way that others may say of us: 'So-and-so is a really upstanding person. If people who practice the Daishonin's Buddhism are like that, then I would like to try practicing, too.'"

The Daishonin writes: "The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 852). As he indicates, Buddhism elucidates the ultimate way of life for a human being. The most important issue for a Buddhist is how one acts and conducts oneself as a human being. For that reason, Shin'ichi spoke about this in his speech.

Two weeks after the opening, on April 21, a ceremony to introduce the new chief priests who would be taking up posts at Nichiren Shoshu branch temples in the Kansai region was held at Heian-ji. Shin'ichi again traveled to Kyoto and celebrated Abe's fresh start as Heian-ji's chief priest. As the representative of all lay believers, Shin'ichi also had high expectations for Abe and treated him with utmost respect.

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