

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
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At the May 3 Headquarters General Meeting, Shin'ichi Yamamoto tackles the question 'Is the Soka Gakkai conservative or progressive?' 'The need to pigeonhole things in this way itself represents an extremely conservative way of thinking,' he tells the members.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto wanted to take the opportunity of the May 3 Headquarters General Meeting to clearly answer a question that some political analysts and journalists had focused on during the nationwide local elections that April: Is the Soka Gakkai conservative or progressive?

Shin'ichi was looking for a way to separate the activities of the Soka Gakkai and the Komei Political Federation into distinct realms—religious and political. Although both shared the same fundamental ideals, each would have its own administration and would function independently of the other.

Despite this, many analysts seemed to think that the Soka Gakkai was aiming for a union of government and religion, and that the two groups were really one and the same. That is why they had questioned whether the Soka Gakkai, and not the Komei Political Federation, was conservative or progressive.

Shin'ichi had addressed this topic at smaller gatherings, but he decided at the general meeting to officially articulate the Soka Gakkai's stance: "Regardless of how much the Soka Gakkai has contributed to society, rather than being praised, we have been exposed to constant criticism.

"If we look for a basis for such criticism, however, we find only the vaguest suspicions. For example, simply because our youth division uses such titles as corps leader and company leader, and because we are united and well organized, some irresponsibly assert that we are militaristic.

"This same kind of thinking has led to heated speculation and rumor over the Soka Gakkai's political leanings. Some contend that, because the Komei Political Federation backed the rightist Liberal Democratic Party's candidate in the Tokyo gubernatorial race, the Soka Gakkai is an arm of that conservative party—and therefore must be conservative. There are those who, on the other hand, claim that, because we have spoken of a new form of socialism based on humanistic ideals, we are allied with the socialist party and so must be seeking reform.

"Another argument has it that, since the Soka Gakkai is based on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which date back to Japan's Medieval Period, it must be a conservative body. Others say that we are progressive because we have many youthful members who aim to improve society. And yet still others say that within the organization, the older members are conservative and the younger ones are progressive.

"So people are eager to label the Soka Gakkai as either conservative or progressive, but the truth is that they can't decide which it should be. In my opinion, the need to pigeonhole things in this way itself represents an extremely conservative way of thinking. It means stagnation even for those who claim to be progressive, and it will lead nowhere."

Shin'ichi expanded on the basic stance of the Soka Gakkai: "A sutra states, 'Immeasurable

meanings are born from a single Law.' The Soka Gakkai aims to bring happiness to all humanity and build lasting peace based on the single Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the Gohonzon, and the Daishonin's philosophy of life. Therefore, from the standpoint of life's eternity, it is our mission to show all people, regardless of their political position, the way to genuine happiness.

"Without fundamental guidelines on which people can base their lives, even a free-market society will deteriorate into corruption and chaos. The law of the jungle, the survival of the fittest, will rule. And without an internal revolution in the lives of individuals, socialism will only produce a coldhearted, oppressive system. We of the Soka Gakkai live by a profound, powerful philosophy that is capable of giving direction to liberalism and socialism alike, positively guiding both conservatives and progressives.

"In that sense, if the Soka Gakkai must be called progressive, I think it can be said to be so in the truest sense of the word. This is on a different level from being a progressive political force, as some now view us.

"The Daishonin's Buddhism is a great teaching of enduring, eternal happiness that enables all people to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. The power of the Gohonzon is as limitless and vast as the universe.

"We have spread this philosophy to more than 3 million households nationwide, showing them the way to real happiness. With the conviction that our movement is giving people a means to revitalize their lives based on human revolution, let us boldly push forward along the path of our mission, never getting caught up in such narrow-minded political labeling as whether something is conservative or progressive."

Enthusiastic applause filled the hall.

Shin'ichi worried that some members might be led astray by the attempts of outside critics to tag the Soka Gakkai as a political force and thus lose sight of the all-important path of faith.

"With your support," Shin'ichi continued, "the Komei Political Federation has made tremendous progress. I am worried, however, that we will now see the emergence of people who wish to use the Soka Gakkai as a stepping-stone into the political arena, people who will try to take advantage of the Soka Gakkai toward elections. We must be on the lookout for any such tendencies and continue to advance while always putting faith first."

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