

This month we are studying excerpts from Volume 8 of *The New Human Revolution*, Chapter 2 'Jeweled Sword'

In the summer of 1963, Shin'ichi Yamamoto again put his whole life into developing the youth of the Soka Gakkai. [...] On July 1, he attended a young men's division leaders meeting at the Taito Ward Gymnasium in Tokyo. There, he announced that the seventh memorial (sixth anniversary) of Josei Toda's death (on April 2 the following year) would be the start of the "essential phase" of the Soka Gakkai's development. His declaration resounded like a lion's roar.

"Essential" here is a reference to the latter 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra. In contrast, the first 14 chapters are called the "theoretical" teaching. "Theoretical" in this case indicates a shadow or reflection of the truth, while "essential" means the actual substance of the truth. The core of the Lotus Sutra is revealed not in the first half of the sutra, but in "The Life Span of the Thus Come One" (sixteenth) chapter in the essential teaching. By "essential phase" Shin'ichi therefore meant the time when the actual work of kosen-rufu would begin. [...] Three days later, on July 5, Shin'ichi attended a young women's division leaders meeting, also in Tokyo. [...] At the young women's leaders meeting, Shin'ichi suggested that the young women's and young men's divisions each aim for a new membership goal of one million. [...] To make progress, it is necessary to have a goal. Once a goal is set, it becomes clear what actions and effort must be made over the days and months to achieve it momentum in that direction increases.

Shin'ichi wanted to give the youth fresh hope. [...] On July 6, the day after the meeting, training sessions began for the Suiko-kai and the Kayo-kai, the respective training groups of the young men's and young women's divisions, in Amagi on the Izu Peninsula. Shin'ichi energetically joined in these activities. [...] Shin'ichi said: "The important thing for a Suiko-kai member is to live out your life upholding the Gakkai spirit. Right now our movement to spread Nichiren Daishonin's teachings is advancing smoothly. But this won't always be the case. As the Daishonin writes: 'Do not expect good times, but take the bad times for granted' (WND, 998).

"The Gakkai spirit means resolutely standing up when our organization is faced with great difficulty and under heavy fire. The Daishonin also says: 'Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood. Do not have doubts simply because heaven does not lend you protection. Do not be discouraged because you do not enjoy an easy and secure existence in this life' (WND, 283). This is the lofty spirit of advancing the spread of the Mystic Law exactly as the Daishonin's Buddhism teaches, regardless of how powerfully the storms of adversity may blow. No matter how severe the obstacles we face or how long they endure, we mustn't doubt the protection of the heavenly deities. Genuine Buddhist practice is to carry out faith undauntedly to the very end. [...] What we do, how we act, at the crucial moment is what determines ultimate victory or defeat."

"When Mr. Toda's business fell into crisis, I was suffering from tuberculosis; I had a persistent fever and sometimes coughed up blood. Our salaries were still suspended, and my coworkers were leaving one after another. Though they were indebted to him in many ways, some criticized Mr. Toda harshly behind his back. But I kept working. I had inwardly determined to give my life to Mr. Toda, to fight alongside him, and to die spreading the Daishonin's teachings while he was still alive. I believed that was the only way to leave behind an example of what it is to be a true disciple of Mr. Toda and of Nichiren Daishonin in the present day.

"Mr. Toda understood everything. He knew me completely, inside and out. He said to me: 'You're trying to kill yourself, aren't you? You've decided to give me your life. But I won't have it! You must live - live out your life to the fullest. I will give you my life so that you may do so.' It was a mentor's passionate cry of concern for his disciple and for the future of our movement. At those words, I

strongly resolved to live out my life, dedicated to the advancement of kosen-rufu. To give one's life to kosen-rufu and to live one's life for kosen-rufu are two sides of the same coin." [...]

Shin'ichi had consistently appealed to his precious successors in the youth division: "Above all, I want you to decide that the responsibility for our movement's progress lies with you. I hope you will always deeply consider the many social problems that are sure to arise as we proceed with our great task and think of the wisest possible solutions." [...]

A young man named Genji Samejima asked Shin'ichi, "What does it mean to have resolute faith?" [...] Shin'ichi wanted to help this young person, who had come to the Gakkai to change his life, realize his full potential at any cost. In answer to Samejima's question, he said: "People of resolute faith are those who stick with the Gakkai throughout their lives and support their seniors who are devoted to spreading the Daishonin's teachings. Those who stay with the Gakkai through thick and thin, no matter how others may criticize, attack or try to make them leave, are people of resolute faith. That's all there is to it!" [...] I am depending on you. Let's work in unity to spread the Daishonin's teachings around the world!" [...]

The young women's division Kayo-kai training session was held on July 7th, the following day. Once again, Shin'ichi answered the members' questions, pouring all of his energy into encouraging them. He sensed that an age in which women would come to play a central role was near at hand, and that the very future of kosen-rufu hinged upon how many capable and wise women leaders the Gakkai could nurture in the meantime. [...] Shin'ichi's mind was constantly occupied with the thought of how to educate and cultivate young people. [...] Shin'ichi Yamamoto went on to identify the source of the impasse facing humankind as a lack of vision on the part of world leaders. New leaders with new guiding principles were needed, he insisted. "Now is the time," he wrote, "for us to embrace as youthful reformers the highest ideals of leadership and show the way to realizing world peace."

He then offered the youth three practical guidelines: first, "establish a strong foundation of faith, practice, and study of the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, the original Buddha"; second, "have lofty ideals while being grounded in reality, always advancing steadily, one step at a time"; and third, "forge unity among members."

Expressing great hopes for his youthful successors, Shin'ichi elaborated on the second point: "Those who aspire to become world leaders should first consistently be winners at their places of work and in other areas of daily life. We build the foundation of our lives during our youth. That foundation must be deep and solid. I hope that you all become dignified, generous and courteous young people."

Concerning the third point, he emphasized that they "should never forget that unity among our youth division members constitutes an eternal bond and a lifeline in the movement to lead people to happiness." Shin'ichi's pen continued to move swiftly across the page: "The growth of the youth division is the progress of the Soka Gakkai. The progress of the Gakkai is the progress of Japan. And we should be confident that our development is directly related to the creation of lasting peace." [...] His passion for the growth of the youth surging within him, Shin'ichi completed his article in one sitting. It would be published as an editorial in the August issue of the *Daibyakurenge* [...].

The sixth student division general meeting was held on July 14. The participants' faces were bright with excitement, and their fighting spirit energized the venue. That was only to be expected. They had just reached their membership goal of 20,000, which had been set at the fifth general meeting the previous year. They had gathered from all over Japan to celebrate their great victory. [...] At the meeting, standing secretaries were appointed for the Kansai, Tohoku, Chubu, Chugoku and Kyushu regions, securing the organization's foundation across the nation. [...]

Goro Watari, the head of the student division, addressed them enthusiastically: "We have surpassed our goal of 20,000 members that was set at our meeting last year, and as of today there are 20,316

student division members. Let us rejoice together at this victorious gathering! “I would like to propose that toward next year’s general meeting we aim for the goal of 40,000 members! What do you think?” [...]

Prior to this meeting, Watari had sought guidance from Shin’ichi regarding the direction of student division activities. Shin’ichi was determined to do all he could to support anything the student division felt necessary for the advancement of kosen-rufu. He wanted to respect the group’s autonomy and independence. Following speeches from some vice general directors and the general director, President Yamamoto took the podium. Offering his warm congratulations on the occasion of the 6th Student Division General Meeting [...]. Shin’ichi Yamamoto continued: “Japanese intellectuals today tend to believe that religion is not compatible with science, or that it is altogether unnecessary. But this is a mistake. The great scientist Albert Einstein himself emphasized the necessity of religion, and Russian writer Leo Tolstoy wrote: ‘One of the worst prejudices known is held by a majority of the so-called scholars of our time, who claim that a person can live without faith.’

And the 19th century American writer William Adams called faith the extension of reason. “When we take a calm and objective look at life and social phenomena, seriously pondering how to alleviate human suffering, what life is, and the primal force of the universe, we naturally arrive at religion. [...] Let us, who uphold this great religion, strive to create tremendous change in every area of human life, including culture, society, government and business, through our activities to realize religious and human revolution.”

Shin’ichi shared his feelings openly. “But whatever I propose, if it stops with me, nothing will be accomplished. “If all of you become outstanding leaders in both name and reality, taking a stand as pioneers of the age and as true practitioners of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, I can die happily at any moment. [...]“That is my prayer and my hope. I am blazing the trail with all my strength and being in the belief that you are my true successors. Can I count on you?” Without a moment’s pause, every member shouted, “Yes!” Shin’ichi looked out at the room, at the face of each participant. Gazing back at him, their eyes gleamed with a burning vow.

The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China compared the essential teaching to the moon in the sky and the theoretical teaching to a reflection of the moon on the water, thus pointing out that the essential is superior and the theoretical inferior. “Essential” means the actual substance of the truth—reality—while “theoretical” indicates a shadow, or reflection, of the truth. Just as theory derives from reality, the theoretical teaching derives from the essential teaching. In one of his lectures, Shin’ichi Yamamoto introduced these concepts in detail, yet in a way that was easy to grasp: “Theory is a kind of measure. It is a model for explaining reality, but not reality itself. For example, a person’s life is changing every moment. That ever-changing reality is the actual substance of life. Theory, on the other hand, is abstracted from this reality and universalized. It is very important to be able to differentiate clearly between reality and theory, and to remain firmly grounded in reality.

“The basis of all reality is life itself; it is human beings, who live in the midst of reality. There are countless examples in history of absolute trust being placed in theory and ideology, which then degenerate into dogmatism that results in oppression. [...] “This passage tells us that the essential and theoretical are to be found in our own lives, and that we must draw a distinct line between them. “For example, when we are sleeping, we are in a ‘theoretical’ phase of our existence, but when we are awake, we are in the ‘essential’ phase. [...]

“Our real identity is that of Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have come forth to carry out the widespread propagation of the humanistic teachings of Buddhism. For us, the essential way of life is to dedicate ourselves to that endeavor. [...]

“In one sense, it can be said that the difference between the essential and the theoretical is slight, for both boil down to one’s state of mind, one’s determination, and are invisible from the outside. However, when seen with the eyes of Buddhism, everything is clear and the difference between the two becomes abundantly evident. In terms of our inner determination, the essential is our prime motivation, our commitment to spreading the Daishonin’s teaching. It is the spirit to advance, the spirit of challenge. The theoretical, on the other hand, is inertia, compromise and retreat.

“The way that we can distinguish between the essential and the theoretical in our lives is by asking ourselves, ‘Am I living for the sake of kosen-rufu and striving to do my human revolution? Am I thoroughly resolved to realize my goals?’ The person who does this will triumph in life. Living the essential is a moment-to-moment struggle. Therefore, the place we are right now is the training ground for our Buddhist practice.” Shin’ichi’s lecture on the essential and the theoretical made a deep impression on the participants, and became a very important support for them in later years. [...]

Many Soka Gakkai members who saw the headline on the front page of the July 25 *Seikyo Shimbun* were astonished. There, in big letters, were the words: HIGH PRIEST ISSUES DIRECTIVE TO ALL PRIESTS AND MEMBERS OF HOKKEKO. [...] The newspaper’s introduction to the directive began: “High Priest Nittatsu has issued a directive to at all Nichiren Shoshu teachers, general priests and members of the Hokkeko. The high priest has expressed his hopes that at this time of rapid development within Nichiren Shoshu and when the Soka Gakkai has initiated a fresh and brilliant advance toward the future, the priests and laity will further unite in purpose in order to spread the teachings of the school throughout both Japan and the world.” [...]

The directive continued to cite the Soka Gakkai’s accomplishments: “The Soka Gakkai has operated on the noblest of ideals and done away with the evils of the past, taking action in exact accord with the Daishonin’s sacred teaching of the application of Buddhist principles to the betterment of society.

“Basing its endeavors on the correct Buddhist teaching, the Soka Gakkai has spoken out for truth, profoundly influencing not only practitioners and nonpractitioners alike, but also moving widely into the realms of academia and culture while advancing steadily toward kosen-rufu. [...] Through everything, the Soka Gakkai has maintained a solid seeking spirit, never wavering or compromising its ideals. It deserves our deepest respect”. It is time for the priests of Nichiren Shoshu to devote themselves to their Buddhist practice and to fulfill their duties”. [...] It is to serve as a model for others through our actions, behavior, study and understanding of Buddhism. [...]

“I hope that all Nichiren Shoshu priests will understand my intent and will implement the instructions of our predecessor to unite with the laity and realize the principle of ‘many in body, one in mind,’ striving to the fullest extent to accomplish our great desire.” The end of the document read: “The above directive was made by Hosoi Nittatsu, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shoshu, on July 15, 1963.” Such an official reprimand of the priests’ behavior was an extraordinary event. [...]

The document further stated: “The selfless dedication of Soka Gakkai members to propagating the Law is an absolutely unprecedented occurrence in the history of our school. “Under the leadership of the Soka Gakkai president, the Gakkai’s more than 3.4 million member households have worked in complete unison and initiated a variety of indispensable activities aimed at spreading the Daishonin’s teachings across the globe.[...] “The Daishonin is surely applauding their actions, which should also be shown the utmost respect from both priests and laity alike.[...] The directive concluded: “Let the genuine seeking spirit of the Soka Gakkai members be appreciated, looked to and revered as a true model of Buddhist practice.[...] At any rate, High Priest Nittatsu’s directives reassured the Soka Gakkai members that he correctly understood the organization, and inspired them to work even harder. [...]

According to the Gosho, those who devote themselves to spreading this teaching in this defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law are certain to face persecution. That is why kosen-rufu is a sacred undertaking that can only be achieved by those who are determined to work selflessly. Nikko Shonin therefore says: “Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life” (Gosho Zenshu, p. 1618). However, many of the priests of Nichiren Shoshu have demonstrated not the faintest shadow of that spirit. [...]

A close look at the history of Nichiren Shoshu reveals that, aside from Nichikan Shonin and a small number of priests who remained faithful to the Daishonin’s teachings, over the centuries the heritage and lifeblood of faith had been lost time and again, and the Daishonin’s spirit had long been missing from within the priesthood. In sharp contrast, even in prison, both Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda continued to uphold their belief in the Daishonin’s teaching, and Makiguchi gave his life for it. In this way, the true light of Buddhism, the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin, had been protected by the Soka Gakkai, which carried on the heritage of faith.

The Gakkai had prevented the Daishonin’s Buddhism from being extinguished. When Makiguchi stood up to take the lead in realizing kosen-rufu, priests who were not inclined to work for that noble endeavor attacked him viciously.[...] Tsunesaburo Makiguchi once said: “The Tendai school of Buddhism at the time of Nichiren Daishonin corresponds most with Nichiren Shoshu of all the Nichiren Buddhism schools today.”[...] Toda fought against this evil trend among the priests because he wanted to protect Nichiren Shoshu.[...] He did all of this because he wanted the priesthood, as guardian of the Dai-Gohonzon and inheritor of the noble spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, to awaken to their original mission. He hoped that they would strive to create harmonious relations with the Soka Gakkai in order to carry out the sacred task of kosen-rufu. Toda’s main objective in working for the revival of the priesthood was a revival of its faith. [...] He acted in complete accord with the Gosho passage, “If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, he is in fact his enemy” (WND, 286 [MW-2, 186]). [...]

In the car on his way to the Fuji Community Center, Shin’ichi decided that if he were going to act in accord with the spirit of his mentor, Josei Toda, he absolutely could not ignore the corruption of the priests and their abuse of the Soka Gakkai.[...] To prevent the priesthood from becoming the “one evil” (WND, 15 [MW-2, 20]) that destroys Buddhism, Shin’ichi had picked up the jeweled sword of faith and begun to battle the demonic nature of authority that had clothed itself in priest’s robes.