

The New Human Revolution, Volume 5, Chapter 4
Lion
By HO GOKU – Illustrated by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 4–9 of the ‘Lion’ chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

Correction

The Jan. 24 and Jan. 31 issues listed the wrong chapter numbers for those installments of The New Human Revolution. They should have indicated chapter 3 and chapter 4 respectively. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Shin’ichi continued: “I hope that with this sense of commitment and responsibility, you will take the initiative to creatively plan and carry out your activities. Our yearly and monthly activity guidelines are clear. With these as your basis, I hope you will discuss with your members the best way to proceed. Please pool your wisdom, promoting activities in a way that makes the most of the local flavor of your area.

“Leaders mustn’t have a passive attitude, simply waiting for directions from the Gakkai Headquarters. It’s crucial, of course, to work closely with the Headquarters, and some activities will involve the Gakkai as a whole. Nevertheless, the key to victory is to give full play to the initiative and unique creativity of the members in each local organization.

“Leaders preoccupied with protecting their status and image tend only to do things according to the same old tried and tested formula. They don’t want to take responsibility for any failures, so they try to do everything by the book. Then they effectively snuff out everyone’s eagerness and enthusiasm to achieve great things. Please make every effort to ensure that all members are given a chance to show initiative and participate freely in organizing and running activities.”

Shin’ichi’s remarks at the head temple and the Headquarters New Year’s gongyo were intended to clarify the basic attitude and requirements of Soka Gakkai leaders. The fate of an organization — whether it will flourish or decline — hinges on the quality of its leaders and central figures. Shin’ichi’s greatest fear was that the Gakkai would eventually become bureaucratic, regimented, narrow-minded.

The Soka Gakkai’s impact on society was also growing with each passing day. Consequently, unless its leaders seriously worked to educate themselves and grew to be truly outstanding individuals, they could inadvertently discredit the Gakkai. Shin’ichi was always strict with leaders for this reason and devoted all his energy to their development.

Yet Shin’ichi was harder on no one more than himself.

For instance, on New Year’s Eve, he stayed up late into the night preparing and sending messages to be read at New Year’s Day gongyo meetings for leaders being held at each regional headquarters in addition to the one at the Gakkai Headquarters. Having given careful, detailed thought to the situation of each area, Shin’ichi included in each message important direction that could serve as a basic guideline for activities in that area over the coming year. This sprang from Shin’ichi’s deep commitment and resolve to work for the members’ happiness.

After attending the New Year’s gongyo meeting, Shin’ichi Yamamoto spent the next two days at the head temple for the New Year’s pilgrimage.

Things were back in full swing at the Gakkai Headquarters on Jan. 4. On Jan. 7, the Study Department held Entrance Exams and Promotional Exams for teachers and assistant

teachers at 156 sites in Japan and in Naha City, Okinawa. Shin'ichi made the rounds to a number of sites in Tokyo that day to encourage examinees before the exams began. Everyone was surprised and delighted to see him, welcoming him with shouts of joy.

To ease their anxiety over taking the test, Shin'ichi told them: "The questions on today's exam were prepared so that everyone can answer them. Please relax and enjoy taking it. Even so, there are bound to be questions that even today's religious scholars would not know the answers to. But all of you here have been studying diligently, despite your many work responsibilities and personal commitments. This in itself is truly remarkable. I wish you all good luck on the exam."

At another location, Shin'ichi said: "For those of you who feel you cannot pass today's exam because you didn't study enough, please tackle it with the resolve that you will take it as many times as you have to until you pass. Simply studying the Daishonin's Buddhism is a source of great fortune, so it's important to take pride and joy in this fact."

More than 220,000 people across Japan took the Entrance and Promotional exams that day. Study of Nichiren Daishonin's life philosophy was steadily gaining momentum, becoming a movement that was spreading broadly among ordinary people.

With activities for the year off to a smooth start, Shin'ichi flew to the snowbound northern island of Hokkaido on Jan. 13. That evening, the Hokkaido young women's division was to hold a funeral service for their former young women's division chief, Haruko Arashiyama. A leaders meeting for Hokkaido General Chapter was scheduled for the following day.

Haruko Arashiyama had passed away one month earlier, on Dec. 14. When the news had reached Shin'ichi at the Gakkai Headquarters, he felt a sudden, overwhelming sense of loss. He had wanted to fly to Hokkaido immediately to attend her funeral, but his tight year-end schedule did not permit even a moment to do so.

Instead, after discussing the matter with the Gakkai directors and young women's division leaders, it was decided that Shin'ichi would attend a funeral service for Arashiyama, conducted by the Hokkaido young women's division, on Jan. 13.

Whatever deep karma had caused her to die so young, it tore at Shin'ichi's heart to think of Arashiyama's untimely passing in the midst of her journey for kosen-rufu.

That evening, Shin'ichi chanted daimoku for her eternal peace and happiness. Nothing caused him greater suffering than the death of a young comrade in faith.

Since the previous June, when Shin'ichi had advised her to concentrate on recovering from tuberculosis, Haruko Arashiyama had tried to rest and recuperate. As a result, she seemed to regain her health somewhat.

But Arashiyama apparently couldn't stand being confined to bed for long. On Nov. 12, she traveled all the way from Hokkaido, with Hokkaido Young Women's Division Vice Chief Yoshiko Urushibara, to attend the 9th Young Women's Division General Meeting at the Mitsuzawa Sports Arena in Yokohama.

Shin'ichi had sent her a message in advance through Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki, urging her not to overexert herself, to skip the upcoming meeting. But she had obviously found it impossible to stay put.

On her arrival at Ueno Station in Tokyo the day before the general meeting, however, her condition took a turn for the worse. She was so exhausted that she didn't even have the strength to walk, barely making it by taxi to her inn in Yokohama.

Nevertheless, the next day she could walk unaided and attended the lively gathering without incident. As Arashiyama sat quietly observing the meeting, her eyes were more brilliant than the clear autumn sky above.

After the meeting, Arashiyama went to visit the Gakkai Headquarters, having to stop a

number of times to rest along the way. But her desire to meet with President Yamamoto — for even a moment — and report to him her recent progress gave her the strength to go on. Unfortunately, Shin'ichi was out when she finally arrived. After waiting for a while, she had to leave to catch her train back to Hokkaido without seeing him.

When Shin'ichi returned to the Headquarters, the leader who had received Arashiyama told him of her visit and the state of her health. Hearing this, Shin'ichi murmured: “Why did she overexert herself like that? She promised me that she would take it easy and recover....”

Yet Shin'ichi understood all too well what Arashiyama was feeling. Had he been in her shoes and heard about the general meeting, he undoubtedly would have attended. His heart ached when he thought of Arashiyama coming all that way and waiting to see him in spite of her ill health. Had he only known she was coming, he could have met her and given her a word or two of encouragement.

Shin'ichi was extremely concerned about what effect the long, jolting, overnight train ride back to Sapporo might have on Arashiyama's health.

Upon returning to Sapporo, Arashiyama decided to continue her recuperation at home, but her condition worsened. Finally, around the end of November, she was forced to enter a hospital.

When Shin'ichi heard this, he immediately sent her a telegram to encourage her, to let her know that he was praying for her recovery.

As Arashiyama sat in her hospital bed, tightly clasping the telegram, she vowed through her tears that she would become well.

Shin'ichi chanted daimoku every day for Haruko Arashiyama to recover. And encouragingly she was growing healthier and stronger as the days went by. Whenever a young women's division leader came to visit her in the hospital, she asked about activities and encouraged her with her whole heart.

Ten days after being admitted to the hospital, her cough and fever were gone. Though she was painfully thin, a healthy color began to return to her cheeks.

One morning, the doctor informed her of her latest test results. “Miss Arashiyama,” he said, “it's very strange, but your tuberculosis is cured. Your heart seems to be a little weak, but if you keep regaining your strength at this rate you should be out of here in about a month.”

Arashiyama happily shared the good news with the young women's division members who came to visit her that day.

“I made a solemn pledge to President Yamamoto that I would get well,” she said. “Now I can keep my promise. I'm so glad. It's really wonderful!”

But only a few days later, on Dec. 14, Arashiyama died from heart failure.

Her death seemed to verify that she had completed her mission in this lifetime — winning her battle with tuberculosis and thereby eternally overcoming her karma to suffer from illness.

On her last day, she encouraged the young women's division members who visited her, greeting them with a warm, generous smile. Soon after the young women left, Arashiyama closed her eyes and died peacefully, bringing to an end her short life of 26 years.

Shimmering snowflakes danced in the night air outside the window of her hospital room, as if paying tribute to Arashiyama's faith, which had been as pure as fresh snow.

The funeral service for Haruko Arashiyama, conducted by the Hokkaido young women's division, was held at the Nichiren Shoshu temple in Sapporo on Jan. 13 at 5:00 p.m.

From his car on the way to the temple, Shin'ichi looked out at the snow-covered streets of Sapporo. The image of Arashiyama cheerfully making her way through this desolate

landscape would not leave him.

In addition to Shin'ichi, General Director Koichi Harayama, Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki and senior young women's division leaders were present for the solemn service. They joined some 1,000 local young women in wishing Haruko Arashiyama a final farewell.

As Shin'ichi rose to offer incense, he gazed for a long time at the large photograph of Haruko on display at the altar. Her expression was sweet, still showing traces of a childlike innocence.

Through her actions, this one young woman inspired countless others to stand up with faith and contributed incalculably to the development of kosen-rufu in Hokkaido. Like a Joan of Arc of the Mystic Law, she dedicated her life to her friends' happiness and gave her all to the spread of the Law.

After several eulogies by young women's division leaders, Eisuke Akizuki and some of the other top leaders attending spoke.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto pondered the meaning of Haruko Arashiyama's death. Her life, ending at age 26, had been all too short. Yet he felt certain that she had completed her mission in this lifetime. She had left behind for future generations a brilliant example of selfless, pristine faith.

Her passionate spirit to seek Buddhism, her warm compassion and her concern for her friends would never fade. Indeed, they would come to shine even more brilliantly as time went by, serving to inspire the countless Haruko Arashiyamas certain to appear in the future to carry on in her footsteps. The bonds that exist between comrades in faith, comrades who dedicate their lives to the mission they were born to fulfill, are eternal.

Shin'ichi recalled a passage from Nichiren Daishonin's writing "The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas Throughout the Three Existences":

To conceive of life and death as separate realities is to be caught in the illusion of birth and death. It is deluded and inverted thinking. When we examine the nature of life with perfect enlightenment, we find that there is no beginning marking birth, and therefore, no end signifying death. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563)

Right now, Shin'ichi felt unbearable grief and sadness over Arashiyama's death. Viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, however, her life itself had not ended — it would continue eternally, at one with the universe. Mulling deeply over this passage, Shin'ichi became strongly convinced that the day would come when Arashiyama would be reborn somewhere close by and again work energetically in the vast arena of kosen-rufu.

After greetings by the leaders, the Hokkaido Fife and Drum Corps, which was established under Arashiyama's leadership, performed the Hokkaido young women's division song. Local young women's division members had composed the music and lyrics and, at their request, Shin'ichi had reviewed and made a few revisions to the lyrics before the song's completion. As such, it was a song that held fond memories for Shin'ichi as well.

*Striving onward through the tempest
Hands joined in the selfless pursuit
Of spreading the Mystic Law,
We, young women, champions of faith,
Advance with the purest of hearts,
Cherishing boundless hope for tomorrow!*

Many times, the melody was almost lost as the fife players were overcome by tears of

sadness, unable to continue. Tears also streamed down the faces of the young women who sat quietly listening to the performance. These tears, like so many sparkling gems, reflected the Hokkaido young women's division members' beautiful pledge to carry on Arashiyama's spirit.

On returning to the Hokkaido Headquarters Building after the funeral service conducted by the young women's division, Shin'ichi addressed some of the young women's division members: "When the snow thaws and spring arrives, let's plant a cherry tree here at the Hokkaido Headquarters in memory of Miss Arashiyama. And when you look at that tree, I'd like you to remember her spirit. I'd like you to strive together to become people who can stand proudly beside her in the sphere of faith. I'll definitely come to attend the tree-planting ceremony."

Shin'ichi, of course, had made this proposal to honor Arashiyama, but he had also wanted to give these young women, now overwhelmed with sadness, a fresh spark of hope for the future.

A blizzard hit Sapporo the next day. Nevertheless, members came from all parts of Japan's vast northern island, braving the bitter cold and driving snow, filled with pride and joy, to attend the Hokkaido General Chapter Leaders Meeting. Some 12,000 participants packed Sapporo's Nakajima Sports Center where the meeting was to be held.

The schedule began a little after 10:00 a.m. The spirit and enthusiasm of those inside seemed strong enough to repel the blizzard outside and melt the deep snow.

Hokkaido General Chapter Chief Masaharu Miyagi expressed a rousing determination to make great strides in propagation in the months ahead. His words reverberated with Hokkaido's valiant spirit to take the lead this year, the Year of Victory:

"I believe this year, designated the Year of Victory, marks a crucial juncture in our journey for kosen-rufu. Now is the time to win. This year, this month, this moment is everything. If we do not win in the present moment, we cannot achieve victory in the future.

"So right now, let's decide that this year's victory is crucial on all fronts — in our personal human revolution, in positively transforming our daily lives and in accumulating good fortune — and then work for great success in all our activities in the coming year."

Thunderous applause rocked the hall.

Miyagi, who was in his late 40s, had taken on the responsibility of general chapter chief the previous August. He had started out as a member of Tokyo's Bunkyo Chapter and had been serving as the Yokosuka Chapter chief when Shin'ichi recommended him for the position of Hokkaido General Chapter chief in a move to strengthen the Hokkaido organization.

Miyagi's wife, Hatsuko, meanwhile, had been appointed Hokkaido General Chapter women's division chief. In a sense, the entire future of the Hokkaido Soka Gakkai rested on the Miyagis' shoulders.

Shin'ichi had worried whether they could gain the confidence and support of the members on this vast northern island. But when he saw the enthusiastic way the members responded to Miyagi's speech, his mind was put at ease. He was confident that Hokkaido would definitely be victorious.

(To be continued)