

The New Human Revolution, Volume 5, Chapter 4
Lion
BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 36–38 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.

The prosecutor’s comment startled the Gakkai leaders. What a fine about-face, they thought, given the suffering and hardship this man had inflicted on the Gakkai. But Shin’ichi Yamamoto quietly acknowledged him with a nod. In all likelihood, even this prosecutor felt that his arrest and interrogation had been unjust.

Shin’ichi rode in a car back to the Kansai Headquarters. The leaders who welcomed him there were all smiles.

“Thank you, everyone — we won!” he told them.

After chanting three daimoku to the Gohonzon, he gazed up at President Toda’s picture on the wall.

“Sensei, I have been exonerated,” he told his mentor silently.

Toda had worried over the outcome of Shin’ichi’s trial until the last moment of his life, his thoughts constantly on the future of his disciple and successor.

Shin’ichi wished he could have reported his victory to Toda in person. He recalled how, on the day of his arrest, Toda had come to see him off at Tokyo’s Haneda Airport. Toda had tightly embraced him, saying, “Shin’ichi, should death overtake you, I will rush to your side and throw myself upon you and accompany you in death...”

He also remembered how, despite being so weak he could hardly walk on his own, Toda had gone personally to the Osaka District Prosecutor’s Office to demand Shin’ichi’s release. How overjoyed he would have been at today’s verdict! Shin’ichi felt deeply sorry that his mentor was not present to hear the news.

A short time later, the other members who were defendants in the trial arrived at the Kansai Headquarters. Itetsu Okada and Kunizo Toriyama were among them. While in police custody, these two had suffered long, cruel interrogation while handcuffed throughout. Shin’ichi’s greatest concern now was for these members who, though penalized with only a fine, had nevertheless been found guilty of breaking the law.

Shin’ichi took some time to talk with them. In a gentle tone, he said: “Having been a fellow defendant in this case, I couldn’t encourage you as much as I wanted to. But today I want to commend you on how admirably you have endured this ordeal for the past four-and-a-half years. I know how difficult it must have been for you and deeply appreciate your struggle. If I could have spared you all this by going to prison, I gladly would have.”

Tears glistened in the members’ eyes. It had actually been their overzealousness that led them to break the law and subsequently caused Shin’ichi to be arrested and jailed on false charges. But Shin’ichi did not mention any of that. That he should care more for their welfare than his own and take time to warmly encourage them in this way moved them to tears.

Shin’ichi continued quietly: “It’s only right and natural to make good any wrongs one has committed. And if you sincerely persevere in faith to the very end, you will definitely attain happiness. Let’s continue to work together for kosen-rufu throughout our lives, come what may.”

He gazed at each of them. Their eyes shone with fresh determination.

Shin’ichi then delved into the real nature and meaning of the Osaka Incident, his voice

now reverberating with anger: “What was the Osaka Incident really all about? The Gakkai, an organization of ordinary citizens, supported candidates for political office based on the wish to secure a peaceful and prosperous society through the humanistic ideals of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and by creating a government that exists for the people, working for their welfare. Seeing our dramatic development, those in power were afraid that the Gakkai would grow into a mass movement that, if left to gain further popular support, would eventually imperil their positions. So the Osaka Incident was really about cutting the Gakkai down to size before it got any bigger.

“To achieve this, they decided to use intimidation — threatening and harassing you upon your arrest for door-to-door vote solicitation, a relatively minor offense. They threatened and coerced you into falsely stating that such illegal acts had been conducted under my instructions and that the Gakkai was involved in illegal activities on an organizational level. Their ultimate goal was to paint the Gakkai as a dangerous, criminal organization.

“The authorities’ job should be to protect and safeguard people’s rights and welfare, definitely not to harass and torment honest, upright citizens. People are the protagonists in our society and nation. We must resolutely fight against the insidious aspect of power that would enslave, torment and oppress people, trampling on their rights. This, I declare, is the Gakkai’s mission.

“Also, as long as we continue to fight on the side of the people, the Gakkai is destined to meet with oppression from those in power and from interests that seek the support and patronage of the authorities. The Osaka Incident is not the last persecution that we will encounter. It is only the beginning.

“In the future, the authorities may try to twist the meaning of laws so as to rule the Gakkai an illegal organization. Or they may create a law similar to the notorious Peace Preservation Act, introduced during the period of Japanese militarism earlier this century, and then use it to persecute us. Or they may spread false rumors that crimes and events totally unconnected to us are actually the Gakkai’s doing, or fabricate various scandals to implicate the organization and its members. Or again, as has happened in the past, they may secretly employ people to harass those who are critical of the Gakkai and then deliberately create the impression that such attacks are being made by our members.

“In any case, it is inevitable that corrupt authority will join hands with forces hostile to the Gakkai and employ any means they can to try to alienate the public from us and drive a wedge between me and the members in an attempt to destroy our movement.”

The atmosphere in the room was solemn. The leaders, who had been euphoric over Shin’ichi’s acquittal, suddenly sobered.

Shin’ichi continued even more emphatically: “Such oppression, when it arises, comes from all sides, with relentless, concentrated force. But I fear nothing. Just as the Daishonin proclaimed in the midst of great persecution, ‘My present exile is not because of any crime’ (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38), I have done nothing wrong. That is why the authorities have schemed to frame me with a crime I did not commit.

I will fight an uncompromising battle against the insidious workings of power. I share the Daishonin’s conviction when he said, ‘Still I am not discouraged’ (MW-1, 166). We are waging a struggle for human rights — for the victory of the people and the triumph of humanity.”

Shin’ichi’s words were like the roar of a lion king, now broken free of the shackles of oppression. His eyes gleamed with unbending resolve.

The Soka Gakkai’s history was one of ceaseless struggle against the devious forces of authoritarianism. This spirit had remained unchanged from the days of its first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

Unlike the vast majority of religions in Japan — which, afraid of incurring the displeasure of the authorities, had a record of bowing to the state’s demands — the Gakkai stood resolutely on the side of justice, for the happiness and victory of the people. Because of this, President Makiguchi died in prison while nobly upholding his beliefs. He fought for religious freedom, the most fundamental human right. This is also why the Gakkai has been relentlessly dogged by persecution.

However, this was the Soka Gakkai’s destiny, the path upon which it was ordained to advance as a religious organization genuinely committed to human dignity.

The Daishonin writes, “The lion fears no other beast, nor do its cubs” (MW-1, 241). To spread the Mystic Law is to follow the lion’s path. Only those of dauntless courage, conviction and integrity can undertake the rigorous challenge of propagating the Daishonin’s Buddhism. The path of the lion is also that of mentor and disciple, a path that can only be actualized by disciples who make their mentor’s spirit their own.

In closing, Shin’ichi declared: “We are lions. Let us make our way through the storm toward the sunlight.”

After taking his leave from his beloved friends in Kansai, Shin’ichi headed by car to the airport.

Having broken free of the net cast by the vicious workings of power, Shin’ichi stood poised to launch himself into the tasks ahead with renewed energy.

He gazed out the car window at the passing scenery. Dazzling rays of sunlight shone down from between the clouds, illuminating the road ahead.

(This concludes the “Lion” chapter and also volume 5 of The New Human Revolution.)

(To be continued)