

**The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 2**  
**Long Journey**  
**BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA**

Translation of parts 25–27 of the ‘Long Journey’ 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 next day, Feb. 8, Shin’ichi Yamamoto and the others visited the Egyptian Museum. Many of the most precious artifacts of ancient Egypt were on display there, including the treasures of Tutankhamen, an 18th-dynasty pharaoh of the New Kingdom Period, who is thought to have died at about age 18 in 1352 B.C.E.

Wrought of solid gold, Tutankhamen’s funerary mask and innermost coffin — both adorned with his likeness — shone with an undying splendor that belied their 3,300 years.

At the museum, Shin’ichi made the acquaintance of a young German academic who was lecturing on economics at Cairo University. With Akira Kuroki interpreting, they carried on an interesting conversation.

When the German youth heard that Shin’ichi had been visiting all the sites in which ancient civilizations flourished, including India, Rome, Baghdad and Athens, he said excitedly: “You are making a tour of the roots of civilization, aren’t you? Let me ask you one question: Do you think there is any single, common reason that all of these highly developed ancient civilizations eventually declined?”

“What a wonderful question!” Shin’ichi responded. “Of course, there were many complex, interrelated factors unique to the decline of each civilization — from such things as internal economic and political problems to invasion by other states, epidemics and natural disasters. But in my opinion the essential reason for their decline, simply put, was the leaders and the people’s spiritual degeneration, the collapse of their will.

“This is true of authoritarian and democratic regimes alike. When people think only of themselves and their pleasure, the state, no matter how culturally advanced, loses its vitality and becomes split, disordered.

“This provides the opportunity for invasion by other states and encourages internal revolt. Should the country suffer natural disasters at such a time, it will never recover.

“I believe that the causes of a state’s decline can be found within that state. Or to take it even further, invariably within the hearts of its people.

“When we view history from this perspective, it is no longer only the story of past events — it is a road sign showing the direction we should take in the present and future.”

The young scholar was very impressed. “That is a profound insight, a very fresh perspective,” he said.

“No,” Shin’ichi demurred, “it is not at all new. It is the viewpoint of a Japanese man by the name of Nichiren, who lived some 700 years ago.”

“Nichiren?” asked the young man. “Was he a historian like Herodotus?”

**Shin’ichi** smiled and answered: “No, Nichiren was a Buddhist leader who rose up to save the Japanese people when they were suffering from natural disasters and were threatened by internal uprisings and a foreign power’s attack.

“He taught that people are the basis of society and the nation, that eternal peace can be achieved if people’s hearts are redirected from destruction to construction, self-interest to altruism, passivity to action. And if people themselves become key players in society.

“We are members of a group called the Soka Gakkai, which studies Nichiren’s teachings and puts them into practice. I am its president.”

Title: Volume 6: Chapter 2 Long Journey (28-30)

Subject: World Tribune 07/04/97 n.3146 p.5 WF970704p05

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Chapter History Human Journey Kosen-rufu Long Revolution Tribune Volume World

“How many people belong to your group?”

“At present, we have 2.3 million households, but our membership is increasing every month,” Shin’ichi replied.

The young man looked surprised. He seemed interested in learning more about the Gakkai, asking several questions about its activities and the Buddhist view of the human condition.

When they parted, he shook Shin’ichi’s hand firmly and said: “This has been a very interesting conversation. I definitely hope to go to Japan some day myself.”

“Is that so?” Shin’ichi asked. “By all means, let’s meet again when you do. Please take care of yourself.”

When the young man had left, Yusuke Yoshikawa said to Shin’ichi: “Wherever you are and whomever you speak to, the subject of Buddhism seems to come up so naturally. When I try to talk about the Soka Gakkai or Buddhism, I tend to get defensive and sound forced, unnatural. How can I learn to speak about Buddhism and my faith the way you do?”

“Basically,” replied Shin’ichi, “all of society, all phenomena and events are Buddhism, so that whether discussing history, politics or life in general, I can’t help expressing the Buddhist point of view.

If you really make Buddhism and faith the bases of your life and have pride and confidence in that, your discussions will just naturally become dialogues on Buddhism. If you find yourself unable to do so, it is because you have somehow built a fence around Buddhism in your mind. It hasn’t permeated every aspect of your life and thought.

“If every time you talk about Buddhism you become defensive, tense up and look severe, people won’t be receptive to what you say. For us, Buddhist dialogue is the most natural, effortless expression of our humanity.”

Shin’ichi wanted his companions to understand what a life based on Buddhism was really like.

After visiting the museum, Shin’ichi and his group took a car to Saqqara, some 18 miles south of Cairo, where they saw the Step Pyramid, the oldest of the ancient pyramids.

Built by 3rd-dynasty king Djoser in about 2650 B.C.E., a century before the Great Pyramid of Khufu, it resembled a giant staircase to the heavens set in the middle of the desert. Next, they visited the nearby ruins of the ancient city of Memphis, the capital of the Old Kingdom.

When they returned to the hotel that night, a telegram from Japan awaited Shin’ichi at the front desk. He carried it up to his room and opened it. The words NO APPEAL in Japanese leapt at him.

Shin’ichi had been pronounced not guilty at the trial over the Osaka election incident, but it had been feared that the prosecution would appeal that judgment. Now, the 14-day limit for filing an appeal had passed without the prosecution taking any action.

It certainly seemed odd, given the aggressive manner in which the prosecutors had sought Shin’ichi’s conviction. Apparently they had concluded that it would be difficult to overturn the not-guilty verdict and had been forced to abandon the idea of an appeal. The decision of the Osaka District Court was now final.

Shin’ichi felt the leaden weight of pressure and anguish that had burdened him so long lift like a vanishing mist. A smile lit his face.

Standing at the window, he watched the burning red sunset dye the waters of the Nile a flaming scarlet. The face of his beloved mentor, Josei Toda, seemed to superimpose itself over the sun.

In his heart, Shin’ichi addressed his mentor: “Sensei, my innocence has been conclusively proven. The Soka Gakkai, which was your life, is unharmed.

“I can now fully play my role, without the slightest worry or reservation, as your successor on the stage of world peace.

“I promise to realize every aspect of your vision for kosen-rufu, to rid the world of all misery. Watch me as I fight with all my might in your place, as your disciple.”

That night, the others joined Shin’ichi in his room to do gongyo and chant earnestly.

It was both a prayer of gratitude and a vow to begin a new leg of their journey for kosen-rufu. Their chanting also included a prayer for the eternal peace and happiness not only of the Egyptian people but the entire African continent, latent with such brilliant promise and potential.

**(To be continued)**

Title: Volume 6: Chapter 2 Long Journey (28-30)

Subject: World Tribune 07/04/97 n.3146 p.5 WT970704p05

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Chapter History Human Journey Kosen-rufu Long Revolution Tribune Volume World