

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 5
Young Eagles
BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 7–11 of the ‘Young Eagles’ 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.

In a clear, vibrant voice, Shin’ichi Yamamoto addressed the throng of members standing outside:

“During the Pacific War, Okinawa was sacrificed by Japan’s military to forestall an Allied invasion of the main islands. And many Okinawans died as a result.

“But in the Soka Gakkai’s struggle for kosen-rufu, not a single person will be sacrificed. Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism guarantees that all human beings will eventually find happiness. Let us work together cheerfully and gladly, enjoying to the fullest the happiness we achieve as we transform Okinawa into a haven of lasting peace and prosperity.

“Let’s sing ‘Heroes of Okinawa’ together now. I’ll conduct.”

This was met with an immediate ovation. As he opened his fan and raised it high over his head, a strong, rhythmic clapping began below. Shin’ichi’s movements were dignified and decisive. The voices of the Okinawa members rose clear and strong into the blue sky, in perfect time with Shin’ichi’s motions.

Now, as dawn breaks
On the spread of the True Law,
The once devastated islands of Okinawa....

The concrete of the roof of the new Headquarters was scorching hot in the Okinawa sun. Rivers of sweat began to pour from Shin’ichi’s body as he led the song, but he continued his dance, graceful as a mighty eagle soaring through endless skies.

Tears shone on the sunburned faces of the members as they sang with all their hearts. They sensed in President Yamamoto’s powerful movements his devotion to them and their cause. They knew he would fight for them with his life.

When the song had finished, Shin’ichi wiped his brow with his fist and addressed the crowd again: “Take care of yourselves, and let’s meet again soon!”

It was impossible to calculate the effect that Shin’ichi’s solemn dance had on the spirits of the Okinawa members, the energy and courage it had stirred in them. The sight of Shin’ichi on the roof was emblazoned forever in each of their hearts. Earnest dedication always strikes a chord in the hearts of others, creating a resonant symphony of human emotion.

That evening, the Soka Gakkai directors who had accompanied Shin’ichi to Okinawa from the Tokyo Headquarters split up to give Goshō lectures or attend meetings with local members in five different areas, including the main cities of Naha and Nago.

The next day, before returning to Tokyo, Shin’ichi visited the sites of some of the bloodiest battles fought in Okinawa during the war. He also revisited the Star Lily Monument, which was dedicated to the Star Lily Corps’ teenage nurses, who committed suicide in the face of Japan’s defeat. Standing before the memorial, he seared the horror of the tragic war deep into his being, determined to launch himself on the vast journey for kosen-rufu, determined to realize Josei Toda’s dream of world peace.

July 22. The westering sun brought a golden hue to the fountain in Tokyo's Hibiya Park as groups of young men and women — student division members — walked toward the Hibiya Civic Hall for the 5th Student Division General Meeting. The young men's crisp white shirts gleamed with a dazzling freshness.

Over the past year, the student division had grown phenomenally, doubling from 6,000 to 12,000 members. Now students who had gathered from all over Japan were waiting eagerly for their general meeting to begin. When President Yamamoto appeared on the stage just before 6:00 p.m., thunderous applause greeted him.

The general meeting opened with everyone joining in a rousing chorus of a Gakkai song, followed by a progress report highlighting the last year's dynamic growth. Experiences were given by a number of members and a research presentation on the relationship between religion and government was made. Next, the new student division song, "Young Reformers," was introduced.

At their May 23 meeting, President Yamamoto and student division representatives had decided to compose a new song, and it was now complete.

*Behold! Like a raging wildfire
Voices of reform fills the heavens
Morning has dawned after the long night of waiting
And we gaze up at our scarlet flag of revolution....*

It was a powerful song, evoking courage and ambition. It was perfectly suited to the student division, the mission of which was to blaze the trail to social reform. Laying the division's reputation on the line, Student Division Chief Goro Watari and other members had worked long and hard to ensure that this song was ready in time for the general meeting.

Shin'ichi sat on the stage, nodding his approval and clapping his hands in time with the music along with the rest of the audience.

Next, new leadership appointments were announced. First, four young men and women were announced as standing secretaries of the student division. Then, the formation of 14 corps and the appointment of corps chiefs were announced.

The student division was led by a chief and vice chiefs, with the standing secretaries forming the core staff. It was further divided vertically into corps, groups and units.

But there were still many parts of the country in which a corps had not yet been organized. At this meeting, corps were at last established in those areas.

Thus, there were now 22 corps for the young men's students and 13 for the young women's students, bringing the total number to 35. A secretariat was also established, as were five new committees dealing with organization, sports, public relations, publishing and the arts.

Behind the podium were the student division flags that Shin'ichi and the representatives decided on May 23 to have designed — one scarlet flag for the division overall and 35 navy flags for each of its corps.

Shin'ichi then formally presented these flags, handing the scarlet divisional flag to Goro and a navy flag to each of the 35 corps chiefs.

The scarlet flag and the navy flags bore the same design. In the center of each was a valiant young eagle holding a globe in its talons, its wings spread as if just about to take flight.

Across the top of the flag were the words *Soka Gakkai* and across the bottom, *Student Division*, all in white. The flag poles were painted black and capped by shining lance-

shaped ornaments.

Division member and art student Akiyoshi Takashima had designed the flags at the request of Goro, who had asked him to come up with something fresh and stylish. Takashima had pondered the matter for some time. After chanting a great deal of daimoku about it, he settled on an idea. Since President Toda had stressed the importance of global citizenship and President Yamamoto placed great hopes in the student division propagating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings throughout the world, he would make the theme of the flag "Soaring Boldly Into the World."

Takashima decided to incorporate planet Earth into his design, but wondered what he could use to symbolize this intrepid launching. He continued to chant daimoku about it, and as he did so recalled the Gosho passage "This sutra [the Lotus Sutra] is superior to all other sutras. It is like the lion king, the monarch of all creatures that run on the ground, and like the eagle, the king of all creatures that fly in the sky" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 249). He also remembered the lyrics of "Song of the New Century": "In the vast unfolding sky / young eagles soar...."

"That's it!" he thought. "An eagle! A young eagle!" He drew a globe and an eagle, which would stand out in white against the flag's background. But what color should the background be? After much experimentation, he narrowed his choices down to scarlet, symbol of passion and enthusiasm, and navy, symbol of intelligence and wisdom.

Student division representatives met to consider the design that he had produced in two separate colors. Everyone liked the concept of the young eagle and the globe, but they differed on which color was best for the background. Those who liked scarlet noted that this was the color of the flag in the Nagarjuna story and the best way to symbolize their passion for world peace. Those who preferred navy said that it was the most fitting symbol for the student division, since being a student meant pursuing knowledge and wisdom; they thought it more refined for a flag and would not concede.

The debate continued for some time, without any sign of resolution. Eventually, they decided to solicit the opinion of a top youth division leader. After examining the design in its two different versions, he said: "This reddish one looks like a labor union flag. I think the blue one is better." But the members who preferred scarlet were not convinced. Finally, they all decided to let President Yamamoto be the judge.

Goro brought the two flag designs to Shin'ichi for his opinion. When he heard Goro's explanation, Shin'ichi smiled and said: "I see. It's great that everyone was enthusiastic enough to have such a heated discussion, but now you've reached a point where you can't come to a decision. That sounds just like our opinionated student division, I must say."

Shin'ichi compared the two versions carefully, looking at each again and again. "I can see your problem," he said finally. "Each definitely has its strengths. It's hard to abandon either one entirely..."

"So, how about this: Let's have two flags — the scarlet one for the student division as a whole, and the navy flag will be for each of the corps across Japan. Combined, the student division will have flags that represent both the passionate commitment of scarlet and the intellect and wisdom of navy."

It was a good solution. Goro's troubled expression gave way to a bright smile. "Yes, that's a great idea!" he exclaimed. "We'll do just that."

Shin'ichi continued: "You can see how hard it is to get people to agree on even such a simple thing as the color of a flag. Reaching a consensus among all the people of a big organization is no easy thing. I want the members of the student division to acquire that ability, because your mission is to be leaders of leaders — at the very forefront of our

movement — who will shoulder the entire responsibility for kosen-rufu. I'll do everything I can to help foster the student division members.”

Shin'ichi's words impressed upon Goro his great expectations for the student division.

And now on the Hibiya Civic Hall stage, Goro and the head of each student division corps received a flag from President Yamamoto. The flags were solid and heavy; in accepting them, the members sensed the weight of responsibility that the student division bore.

After the flag presentation, representatives from among the newly appointed leaders gave resolutions.

Then Goro rose to the podium, speaking of the high expectations that people both within and outside the Soka Gakkai had for the student division and announcing the doubling of the membership that year. Finally, he urged the student division members that “the time has come for us to take on a serious challenge. I propose that our goal for the next year be to reach a membership of 20,000, with all members firm and strong in faith and absolutely dedicated to their studies. Let us advance toward our goal of kosen-rufu with the youthful passion represented by our scarlet flag and the intellect represented by our navy one!”

His words met an immediate burst of supportive applause.

After greetings by the youth division chief, the general director and other leaders, President Yamamoto rose to the podium for his lecture amid thunderous applause.

“Thank you all for coming today and sitting so patiently in this hot weather,” Shin'ichi began. “I am the last speaker, so I hope you'll bear with me just a little longer.”

Shin'ichi delivered his speech in an informal, intimate manner as if he were addressing a small gathering, honestly sharing his hopes for the development of the student division.

“The growth of the student division is the growth of the Soka Gakkai. The progress of the student division is the progress of kosen-rufu and directly linked to the progress of peace in Japan and throughout the world,” he declared. “I hope all of you will be aware of your great mission and move forward with profound confidence.”

Shin'ichi went on to say that leaders in various sectors of Japanese society had come to look upon the Soka Gakkai in a negative light, influenced by slanderous attacks or biased, uninformed reporting by some elements of the mass media. He called on the student division members to correct these misconceptions and create an understanding of the Soka Gakkai's real nature and the rectitude of the causes it champions.

As an example of such misconceptions, he said that some had claimed the Soka Gakkai was determined to make Nichiren Shoshu Japan's national religion. “At the young men's division general meeting four years ago [1958],” he said, “I clearly stated that the Soka Gakkai has no intention of making Nichiren Shoshu the national religion. To do so would be a violation of the most basic tenets of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

“The Daishonin's Buddhism is a teaching for the entire world. Nichiren Daishonin writes of establishing ‘the supreme object of worship on earth’ (MW-1, 81). The Daishonin never stated in any of his writings that his teaching should be made a national religion, nor have we in the Gakkai ever advocated such a thing. This is a completely baseless criticism.

“True religion is rooted in, directly linked to, the lives of the people. It spreads and develops among the people. If the government were to decree the Daishonin's Buddhism the national religion, it would be forcing people to accept a religion by means of state authority. The Daishonin's teachings would only be demeaned by such an action.

“His Buddhism is meant for all the world, for all humanity. If it were to be made the national religion of one country, the path of its worldwide spread would be blocked. In addition, any religion so designated would lapse into empty ritual and formalism, and no

longer have the power to nurture true religious faith.”

Shin’ichi then added lightly: “Besides, if the Daishonin’s Buddhism became the national religion, we’d have no one left to introduce it to. It would then be hard to change our karma and accomplish our human revolution. We’d all be in big trouble!”

(To be continued)

Title: Volume 6: Chapter 5 Young Eagles (7-11)
Subject: World Tribune 11/21/97 n.3166 p.5 WT971121p05
Author: Daisaku Ikeda
Keywords: Chapter Eagles History Human Kosen-rufu Revolution Tribune Volume World Young