

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 5
Young Eagles
By HO GOKU – Illustrated by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 15–16 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.

Outside, cicadas trilled a lingering farewell to summer. The afternoon of Aug. 31, in a Japanese-style room in the Seikyo Shimbun Building, Shin’ichi Yamamoto began his first lecture to student division representatives on the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.” The 40-or-so participants sat around the lecture table, happy and excited that their much-anticipated lecture series with President Yamamoto was about to get under way.

Shin’ichi took his seat behind the table and said, “Let’s begin!” His voice was firm and confident.

At this first session, Student Division Chief Goro Watari read out the names of all the participants and briefly introduced them one by one, each student rising in response. Shin’ichi’s intent gaze seemed to penetrate their beings, yet at the same time it warmed them with its compassion.

To Shin’ichi, these leaders of the student division — the last division Josei Toda formed before his death — were diamonds in the rough left to him by his mentor. He vowed to take these rough gems that possessed a potential for limitless brilliance and polish each of them with care and effort until they shone and sparkled as beautiful jewels of talent and ability.

After the students had all been introduced, Shin’ichi shared his thoughts:

“In the past, President Toda gave a series of lectures on the Lotus Sutra based on the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ to a group of members who were students at Tokyo University. Of those members, Mr. Watari and Mr. Fujiwara have gone on to become the student division chief and vice chief and as such are now taking central responsibility for the student division. They are also playing a very important role in the Soka Gakkai as a whole.

“As for each of you who have come here today to study the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ with me, from here on, I ask that you, too, without a single exception, develop yourselves to become exemplary leaders of the Gakkai and society as a whole. That is my earnest wish. For that reason, I am determined to put everything I have into these lectures, no matter how busy I may be with other matters.

“I also want you to know that I will be looking out for you as long as I live. I will be there to see how many of you go on to become outstanding leaders — great eagles and lions of faith — and who falls to the wayside or ends up turning against the Soka Gakkai.

“Buddhism is strict. Half measures won’t work. Either you persevere in upholding faith throughout your life and attain Buddhahood, or you abandon your faith and suffer as a result. You may be active as top leaders of the Soka Gakkai for as long as 20 or 30 years, but unless you steadfastly maintain your faith to the very end, your life will be a failure, a defeat. And I don’t want to see this happen to any of you.”

Shin’ichi’s voice rang with resolute conviction. Everyone listened intently, their expressions serious. No one so much as stirred or made a sound.

Shin’ichi then opened the Goshō and began to talk about the overall significance and background of the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings”:

“The ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ is a record of Nichiren Daishonin’s

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lectures on the most important passages of the Lotus Sutra. The lectures, given at the request of his disciples and conducted at Mount Minobu, were written down by Nikko Shonin. And that record was approved by the Daishonin himself. Together with 'On the True Cause' and 'The 106 Comparisons' — two significant documents written by Nichiren Daishonin and entrusted directly to his legitimate heir and successor, Nikko Shonin — it is a work of momentous consequence, presenting as it does the quintessence of the Daishonin's teaching.

"The writing comprises two volumes. The first begins with a detailed explanation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and then moves on to a discussion of the first 15 chapters of the Lotus Sutra — from the 'Introduction' through the 'Emerging From the Earth' chapters. The second volume examines pivotal passages from the remaining 13 chapters — from 'The Life Span of the Thus Come One' through the 'Encouragements of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy' chapters.

"It also delves into the meaning of key passages from the Sutra of Immeasurable Meanings and the Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, which are regarded respectively as the opening and closing sutras to the Lotus Sutra. [Together, the Lotus Sutra and these two bracketing sutras are commonly referred to as the Threefold Lotus Sutra.] There is also an appendix at the end of the second volume containing sections entitled 'One Important Passage From Each of the 28 Chapters' and 'All 28 Chapters Are Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.'

"Each section of the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' is basically structured as follows: After excerpting a key passage from the Lotus Sutra or the opening and closing sutras, commentaries on that passage by such great Buddhist teachers as T'ien-t'ai and Miao-lo are cited, and then — preceded by the phrase 'The orally transmitted teachings state' — the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism of Sowing implicit beneath the textual surface of the Lotus Sutra are clarified.

"These teachings represent the pinnacle of human philosophy and thought, covering a broad spectrum of principles concerning religion, life, human happiness, the universe and society, in terms of both faith and daily living."

When Shin'ichi had given the students a basic overview of the writing's structure, he said: "Now let's begin our study of the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,' exploring it together both in principle and in practice!"

He then asked for a volunteer to read its opening lines aloud.

For a moment, no one raised a hand. Then, slowly, a few hands went up. Shin'ichi picked one student, who stood and began to read, his voice weak and hesitant:

Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo

The Orally Transmitted Teachings state, "Namu derives from Sanskrit and here [in Japan] it means devotion...." (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)

When the reader finished, Shin'ichi said with some severity: "What lackluster reading! When we read the Gosho, we should do so with the profound conviction that we are reading the truth, the absolute truth — that this is exactly how it is. In other words, we should read with faith, seek with faith and understand with faith.

"Western philosophy may begin from doubt, but when we are studying Buddhism, we must begin with faith. Even Shariputra, who was said to be foremost in wisdom among Shakyamuni's disciples, attained enlightenment not through his knowledge or intellectual powers but through faith."

(To be continued)

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