

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

Translation of parts 26–27 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.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto lectures to the student division members on the Buddhist view of earthly desires. ‘The greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment,’ he encourages them.

That evening, after the first lecture on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” Shin’ichi Yamamoto began inscribing published copies of *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* with the names of each of the participants. He had already presented copies to several of them on an earlier occasion, but he wanted to make sure all the students had one as a keepsake of their participation in the lecture series.

Shin’ichi squeezed what time he could from his busy schedule to prepare the books. As he wrote a dedication in each one, he thought of each student and prayed for his or her growth.

He imagined the members eventually spreading their wings and taking flight into the vast skies of their respective missions, and his heart raced with joy. He didn’t at all mind staying up late to prepare the books.

Several days later, when he had finished, Shin’ichi brought the books to Student Division Chief Goro Watari and asked him to present them to each study group member. When the students opened the books, a heartwarming surprise awaited them. “Presented to” and the date were written there in Shin’ichi’s distinctively bold, vigorous hand.

In the upper left, he had written the student’s name in large characters. In the lower right, in smaller characters, he had written his own name and imprinted his seal.

These gifts made a deep impression on the students. Inspired by Shin’ichi’s sincerity, they vowed to study even harder.

The lecture series proceeded smoothly from the second session on. The participants made certain to check in advance all the scriptural passages and commentaries quoted. They would meet before the lecture and share their results, helping one another greatly.

Sometimes two or three of these preparation meetings, each lasting four or five hours, would be held before a lecture. The lecture format changed slightly to reflect this: After the reading and interpretation of the Gosho passages, the students now also reported to Shin’ichi the results of their research. Then Shin’ichi would lecture.

The students made remarkable progress in their grasp of Buddhist principles. They absorbed everything, just as parched earth absorbs every drop of falling rain. Through his lectures, Shin’ichi was trying to communicate the true philosophy of Buddhism — a guiding force for ushering in a new age for all humankind — and transmit the Soka Gakkai spirit to his young listeners.

On one occasion, for instance, Shin’ichi commented on the passage from the Orally Transmitted Teachings that reads, “We burn the firewood of earthly desires and behold the fire of enlightened wisdom before our eyes” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 710) [“Point 2. Concerning Ajnata Kaundinya (one of the five ascetics who heard Shakyamuni’s first sermon)” from “Seven Points on the ‘Introduction’ Chapter (of the Lotus Sutra)”]. Shin’ichi explained: “Traditional Buddhism has viewed earthly desires — and the sufferings that arise as the results of deluded cravings — as something to be rejected and denied. But here the

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Daishonin tells us that burning the firewood of earthly desires will summon forth the enlightenment and wisdom of Buddhahood.

“This is the distinguishing feature of the Daishonin’s Buddhism. True Buddhism by no means rejects desires.”

Shin’ichi continued: “In the Hinayana teachings expounded before the Lotus Sutra, earthly desires were regarded as the cause of all the world’s unhappiness, and the sutras taught that one should extinguish and eliminate all such desires. But human life cannot exist apart from desires, wants and aspirations. Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism teaches us how to use those yearnings and desires as a springboard to establish deep, lasting happiness.

“Your wanting to be at the top of your college class or to better yourself in life — these are earthly desires, worldly ambitions. An ardent wish to better our nation or realize world peace — these are also desires, noble ones.

“When our desires are firmly anchored in faith, we can ‘burn’ them to our heart’s content. In fact, the greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment. That is the true spirit of Buddhism.”

Shin’ichi then discussed a passage in “Point 1. Concerning the ‘Expedient Means’ Chapter” [from “Eight Important Points on the ‘Expedient Means’”], which reads:

All phenomena in the universe contain 3,000 realms. This is called secret and mystic.

Secret means strict and that all the 3,000 realms are present without exception in each phenomenon. There is nothing more wondrous than this. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 714)

Going on to explain the strict law of cause and effect that governs life, Shin’ichi said: “Here, the Daishonin states that *secret* of ‘secret and mystic expedient’ means strict. This passage is saying that the Mystic Law is the strict law of the universe, that which governs all things. This is because all phenomena in the universe are entities of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms and are without exception endowed with 3,000 constantly changing conditions.

“All of us, too, are entities of the Mystic Law. That’s why if we exert ourselves in faith, we will definitely attain Buddhahood. At the same time, it is also why none of us are exempt from this unbending causal law of life.

“In other words, the causes that determine our future are made right here, right now, in this life-moment. Our future is determined by our life at this moment, by what we are doing right now — and with what attitude or inner resolve.”

“Even though we have faith in and practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism, the attitude and commitment with which we go about our day-to-day activities are extremely important. You can always fool others — whether they be your colleagues or your seniors in faith. No one knows what’s going on in the deepest recesses of your heart, in your most private thoughts. *This* is truly secret.

“But we cannot fool the uncompromising law of cause and effect that governs all life. All pretense is in vain, since our present attitude and actions will become clearly manifest as future results. The reason I am so strict with you is that the Buddhist law of cause and effect is strict.

“For example, suppose a person lectures on the Gosho out of some sense of obligation, inwardly finding it a bothersome chore. While that person may appear to be in the world of Bodhisattva, in fact his or her mind is in the state of Hell. Giving the lecture becomes just an empty formality — simply going through the motions. The reluctant mind behind the lecture, the feeling of suffering, of having to perform an unpleasant duty, is the reality of the person’s life or state of mind at that moment.”

(To be continued)

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