

## **The Human Revolution Vol. XII** **By Ho Goku**

*The Human Revolution is a novel based on fact, written by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda under the pen name Ho Goku. It recounts the early days of the Soka Gakkai in Japan under the second president, Josei Toda, President Ikeda's mentor. The character of Shin'ichi Yamamoto represents Daisaku Ikeda. The theme of the novel is summed up in the foreword, as the author writes,*

*"A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind." The following is an excerpt from volume twelve.*

### **Tranquil Light 25**

The Soka Gakkai continued to advance without respite toward its goal — kosen-rufu.

On April 10, there was a young men's division leaders meeting and, on the thirteenth, some 2,600 candidates nationwide took written promotional exams to become study department assistant teachers and teachers. Then, on the seventeenth, the interviews for those who had passed the written entrance exam were held in Tokyo and in Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama prefectures.

The day of the Soka Gakkai funeral service for Josei Toda, April 20, was fast approaching. On the night immediately before, a final vigil for the late president was to be conducted at the Gakkai Headquarters.

From about 11:00 a.m. on the nineteenth, the skies over Tokyo gradually began to darken, as if evening were already upon them. The cause was an annular eclipse of the sun — the moon eventually obscuring the sun's face except for a narrow outer ring. It was an event that somehow seemed to signal Toda's final passing from this world.

The vigil got under way at 7:00 p.m. with representative youth division leaders attending. Nichiren Shoshu General Administrator Hosoi led the service. Before reciting the sutra, he read an official notice of appointment from High Priest Nichijun: "Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda, appointed chief lay representative to Nichiren Shoshu — March 30, the 33rd year of the Showa era (1958)."

There were already a number of senior lay representatives in Nichiren Shoshu, a title Toda also had held. But on March 30, a few days before his death, Toda was appointed to a position even higher than that — that of chief lay representative — making him effectively the leading representative of all Nichiren Shoshu lay believers. In addition, the posthumous title bestowed on him by the high priest immediately after his passing, "Lay Practitioner Nichijo,<sup>1</sup> Great Propagator and Protector of the Law," was now elevated to a higher title "Great Lay Practitioner."

Toda had once answered a question from a member about posthumous Buddhist names in the following way:

"Originally, such names were given to individuals who had embraced the precepts and were ordained as priests; they were not bestowed upon people after their death. Though we may receive a posthumous Buddhist name, if people actually used it to refer to us, even we wouldn't know who they were talking about. Today, the custom of seeking a posthumous name for the deceased is just a means for the priests to make

money. If you really want a posthumous name, you can give yourself one. I'm not saying that posthumous Buddhist names should never be given. It's just that, in my case, I don't believe I need one. The name Josei Toda is good enough."

Toda had the greatest distaste for titles, worldly honors and formality. But the posthumous bestowal of the title "Chief Lay Representative" and the appellation "Great Lay Practitioner" was an expression of High Priest Nichijun's heartfelt praise and appreciation for Toda. The late president's disciples were overjoyed at this sincere gesture. General Director Takeo Konishi humbly accepted the official notice on behalf of the late president.

After the vigil at the Headquarters, the youth division leaders immediately set about organizing things for the next day's Soka Gakkai funeral service. All of the leaders in charge were prepared to work through the night.

There were some 800,000 Gakkai families nationwide who had cherished and devotedly followed Toda. Of course, the obstacles of time and cost would prevent many from traveling long distances, so most of those attending would probably be from Tokyo and surrounding areas. But even taking these factors into consideration, they estimated that around 200,000 people would turn out for the funeral. If such a huge number of people were to offer incense in the space of several hours, things would have to be managed with meticulous care and precision; otherwise mass confusion could prevail at the ceremony site.

To avoid such an eventuality, the youth worked through the night finalizing preparations for the event.

### **Tranquil Light 26**

Before dawn on April 20, at around 5:00 a.m., the youth serving as coordinators and staff for the Soka Gakkai funeral service began to gather at the Aoyama Funeral Hall. Wrapping up the final briefings for each function a little after 6:00, they dispersed to their assigned areas. Apparent on each face was a determination to bring that day's grand funeral service to a successful close without a single accident or mishap.

As the sun rose, the number of mourners increased, until their ranks stretched from the funeral hall through the public cemetery, in which the hall was located, and all the way to the Outer Garden of the Meiji Shrine. The line of people eventually exceeded some two-and-a-half miles in length.

In the tent that housed the coordination center, Shin'ichi Yamamoto had been listening to reports that were coming in moment by moment. But to get a clearer picture of how the members were actually doing, he decided to go out and have a look around.

The sky was clear and beautiful, and the cherry trees that lined the streets around the funeral hall had already shed their blossoms and were sporting fresh leaves. Looking at the new foliage, Shin'ichi was reminded of the song, "The Green Leaves of Sakurai," more popularly known as "The Great Hero Kusunoki." This song, which had been a special favorite of Toda's, sang of the parting of a father and his son — the 14th-century Japanese general Kusunoki Masashige and his son Masatsura. In 1336, the third year of the Kenji era, Masashige prepared to march off to fight in the Battle of Minatogawa,<sup>2</sup> to defend the imperial court in Kyoto against the invading forces of Ashikaga Takauji, the imperial archenemy. Before his departure, he summoned Masatsura to his lodging in the lush green surroundings of Sakurai.<sup>3</sup> Facing almost certain defeat in the face of Takauji's overwhelming numbers, Masashige told his

young son that he was prepared to die on the battlefield, and ordered him to return home.

Masatsura was only eleven at the time, but he declared that he would stay to fight and die by his father's side and refused to leave. Masashige then explained that if both father and son should die together, then there would be no one to stop Takauji from seizing control of the entire land. He urged Masatsura, therefore, to live and grow quickly into a person who could dedicate his life to his country. With this, Masashige sent his son home.

In this song, Toda found deep parallels to the spirit of mentor and disciple that was the foundation of their struggles to accomplish kosen-rufu. He often encouraged Shin'ichi and the youth division members to sing it.

In particular, he would ask each person present to sing again and again the part that expressed Masatsura's determination, the part that began, "Father, no matter what you say . . . ." Then, looking with a fiery gaze into the eyes of each youth, he would say: "Your spirit is nothing like Masatsura's! With such an expression in your eyes, you can't fight for kosen-rufu. Look at my eyes!"

Recalling the keen brilliance of Toda's eyes and his strict yet compassionate guidance, Shin'ichi realized that today marked his final parting with this man who was like a father to him. Renewing for himself the father-son pledge they had made to realize kosen-rufu, he hurried along the tree-lined street, the fresh spring greenery glistening brightly in the sunlight.

Just before noon, the brass band and fife and drum corps began a resounding performance of the tune "A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wuchang Plain"<sup>4</sup> and the funeral procession departed from the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi for the funeral hall. The brass band and fife and drum corps led the way, and at the center of the procession, surrounded by the flags of the various youth division corps and Soka Gakkai chapters, rode the car — a convertible with its top down — that carried Soka Gakkai General Director Konishi and members of the Toda family. Konishi held a large framed photo of Toda on his lap; Toda's son, Kyoichi, clasped the ceremonially boxed urn containing his father's ashes; and Toda's wife, Ikue, held in her hands the tablet inscribed with Toda's posthumous name.

Members packed the pavements along the route that began at the Gakkai Headquarters, extending on to the Outer Garden of the Meiji Shrine and ending at the Aoyama Funeral Hall.

## Tranquil Light 27

The procession advanced with solemn dignity along the green tree-lined streets to the tune of "Wuchang Plain," the Soka Gakkai flag fluttering in the spring breeze. It was a magnificent spectacle. As the funeral procession approached where they were standing, the members' daimoku at each location along the route would grow in volume and intensity. As they paid their last respects to their mentor, many had to fight to keep powerful emotions in check and stifle their desire to call Toda's name out loud.

Many of them had never met Toda in person, but had been encouraged and inspired by his speeches and lectures that were carried in the Gakkai's newspaper, *Seikyo Shimbun*. These had served as spiritual nourishment for them, enabling many to overcome the problems that had been plaguing their lives. In a sense, they had been living with Toda's image etched clearly and vividly in their hearts and minds.

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The procession advanced solemnly, finally arriving at the Aoyama Funeral Hall, the ceremony site. Services began at 1:00 p.m. with Shin'ichi Yamamoto serving as master of ceremonies. High Priest Nichijun led the recitation of the "Expedient Means" chapter and the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, after which eulogies were read. First, a representative of Hokkeko lay believers rose to speak.

Toda's death, he said, "was not only a great loss for Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai, but a tragedy for Japan and the people of all Asia." Declaring that Toda, who had devoted all of his energies to kosen-rufu and the prosperity of Nichiren Shoshu, should serve as a model for all believers, he concluded, "I am confident that when believers of Nichiren Shoshu, beginning with the Soka Gakkai members who are carrying on Mr. Toda's legacy, unite single-mindedly in their service of Buddhism, then they can accomplish even the gargantuan task of kosen-rufu, which the Daishonin has entrusted us to fulfill."

This praise of Toda — an individual who had courageously resisted wartime oppression, emerged to protect the true teachings of Buddhism and brought kosen-rufu into the realm of reality — most certainly expressed the honest feeling of someone who sincerely believed in the Mystic Law. When viewed in light of the Daishonin's teachings and from the true perspective of faith, no one could help but accord Josei Toda's monumental achievements the highest praise and adulation.

Following this, representing Toda's friends, Kunizo Minato, a writer and the author of a book titled Nichiren Daishonin, read a tribute he had written to the late president.

Next to come forward was Tokie Tani, representing the young women's division. Over many long years, Tani had been fortunate enough to receive personal training and instruction from Toda. As she began to speak, a flood of emotions — arising from her love and admiration for her departed mentor — welled up inside her, but she struggled desperately to keep them in check:

"The opportunities that we members of the young women's division have had to receive guidance from you, President Toda, are too numerous to mention. Among these, in particular, we will never forget your declaration last September calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which represents your foremost legacy to us. In addition, you always strongly encouraged us to live and practice so that each and every member of the YWD would definitely become happy. You taught us again and again to advance with resolute dignity along the path of kosen-rufu, the highest path of human existence, and that this is the way to achieve true and unsurpassed happiness. As a result, we will absolutely never betray the pledge we have made to you, and will dedicate our lives to advancing steadfastly toward the goal of kosen-rufu. From your vantage point in the Treasure Land of Eternally Tranquil Light, please watch over the future development of the young women's division."

Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki then rose speak. Before he began, he bowed solemnly to Toda's picture.

## **Tranquil Light 28**

Akizuki spoke with deliberation, infusing each word with heartfelt emotion:

"Today, I have been reflecting on each of the many opportunities we have had to receive guidance and training from you, President Toda over the years. I remember the time, during the May youth division pilgrimage in 1954, when you stood out in the pouring rain without an umbrella watching over us as we made our way through

the temple grounds.

“And how, on the second floor of the old Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Nishi-Kanda, you taught us the principles for achieving kosen-rufu, constantly admonishing us to ‘Remember this!’ In particular, at a meeting of the young men’s division training group Suiko-kai held at the Nishi-Kanda Headquarters, you once said, ‘The students of Yoshida Shoin<sup>5</sup> who attended his private school, Shoka Sonjuku — which began in a single eight-tatami-mat<sup>6</sup> room — were instrumental in accomplishing the Meiji Restoration.<sup>7</sup> With the great numbers of youth we have, we can accomplish kosen-rufu without fail.’ I will never forget these words as long as I live. I feel as though I can now hear your voice proclaiming, ‘I have taught the youth division everything I know!’

“Sensei, you showered us with your boundless love and affection. You helped an endless stream of young people who were lost, without hope and without direction, back on their feet again. You gave them a sense of pride in being your disciples and helped them develop into people of truly outstanding caliber. Words cannot express the great debt of gratitude we owe you. But each of us, filled with pride at being known as your disciple, vow never to bring disgrace to that honor.

“We of the youth division will always take your spirit as our own. In society, we will never slacken in our efforts to advance kosen-rufu — pressing forward with the same serenity and strength as majestic whales gliding through stormy seas. In the organization, meanwhile, we will strive to become solid and reliable pillars of the entire Soka Gakkai, and in line with the hope you expressed in your essay “Youth, Be Patriotic!” we will definitely bring together 100,000 young ‘patriots’ and work to make kosen-rufu a reality. We are also determined to fight with the spirit of ‘selflessly devoting our lives to the Gohonzon’ that you set forth in your “Precepts for Youth.” And beginning again tomorrow, we will energetically strive with this spirit in all endeavors, looking forward to the day when we can stand by your side and proudly report what we have accomplished.”

Only half a month had passed since Toda’s death, but a fresh determination to achieve kosen-rufu was already evident in the Soka Gakkai youth. Since the day Toda died, Shin’ichi had continually encouraged the youth he encountered, calling on them with all his might to stand up as ‘children of the lion king.’ It was as if Shin’ichi’s image was already becoming superimposed upon that of Toda’s in the youth division members’ hearts and minds. Shin’ichi’s fervent appeal transformed their grief into hope, sentimentality into determination, and disappointment into joy, stirring in them the vibrant dynamism of youth.

Next to eulogize Toda was Soka Gakkai Chief Secretary Tame Izumida. Having spent many years by Toda’s side, her eyes now grew moist as she tried to voice her boundless regard and respect for her mentor:

“In 1943, President Makiguchi was arrested in Izu where he had gone to conduct propagation activities. I shall never forget the words he said to me on that occasion — simply: “Ask Toda to look after things in my place.”

## **Tranquil Light 29**

Tame Izumida continued speaking, her voice at times becoming choked with emotion:

“I hurried back to try to relay Mr. Makiguchi’s words, but by the time I arrived, Mr. Toda had been arrested as well. At that moment, I was utterly dumbfounded. I felt

absolutely helpless.

“And last fall, Ms. Kiyohara and I were with President Toda in his office when his expression suddenly turned serious and he said, ‘I’m going to have to leave you very soon.’ However, I didn’t understand his intent at the time. I took it for granted that President Toda would live for a very long time.

“To have worked side by side with you, President Toda, serving you over these last fourteen years, has been my greatest joy and happiness. And now to have lost you is my greatest sadness. But please don’t worry, Sensei. Following what you have taught me day in and day out and in keeping with your spirit, I now pledge, as your disciple, to work wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu. With this promise, I bid you farewell.”

Izumida’s tribute stirred many memories of Toda among those present.

Last to eulogize Toda was Soka Gakkai Director Koichi Harayama. He, too, began to speak as if he was addressing Toda directly:

“Sensei! Thank you for all you have done for us over these many years! Now, the time has come for us to bid you a final farewell. Here today are members from throughout Japan — from as far as Hokkaido in the north and Kyushu in the south. In addition, the youth, whom you have always loved so dearly, have been here since early this morning to be with you.

“In the ten-odd years since you inherited President Makiguchi’s legacy and took on the task of saving postwar Japan, some 2 million members have appeared. They have sincerely followed you in spite of the constant abuse society has heaped upon you. Sensei, I recall a poem you once wrote:

With the roar of the lion king,  
A life dedicated,  
Over seven years,  
To saving the masses —  
How wondrous!<sup>8</sup>

“In so short a time, you have shown the way to happiness to so many who had been shedding bitter tears over their miserable fate.

“Sensei, you often wept when you heard the song ‘Wuchang Plain.’ I’m sure that is because it made you recall the spirit of the legendary Chinese hero Chuko K’ung-ming who, leaving his refuge in the wilderness in Nanyang,<sup>9</sup> went on to sacrifice his life in supporting the forces of the kingdom of Shu.<sup>10</sup>

“It may be impossible for us to truly apprehend the depth of commitment with which you stood up amid an age rampant with evil to lead those who were suffering to happiness. But when I consider what you must have been feeling, my heart fills with emotion.

“At a time when we were lost and confused as to our organization’s future following President Makiguchi’s death, you emerged from prison and took leadership for kosen-rufu on our behalf. We have continued to rely on you in this way until today. As disciples, we are truly unworthy. You often said that it was tough being president. But now we are deeply awed and moved by the degree of hardship and pain you took upon yourself.”

## Tranquil Light 30

Koichi Harayama conveyed the disciples' resolve:

"Though we may be unworthy disciples, we stand firm in the conviction that we have each inherited a portion of your spiritual legacy and we will unite resolutely to accomplish kosen-rufu.

"Sensei, when we heard of your passing, we were overcome with shock and grief. But now we realize that you have fulfilled your purpose in this life, completely securing the foundations for kosen-rufu in Japan, and that now you have left it to us to carry on your work. We are single-mindedly committed to striving together courageously to advance kosen-rufu. Please watch over us always."

This concluded the eulogies from six representatives. The disciples' words overflowed with their love and respect for Toda. They also brimmed with a passionate spirit to realize his wish that they thoroughly protect the Gakkai and realize kosen-rufu without fail.

Presently, the high priest began to recite the sutra once again. When he entered the *jigage*, the verse portion, of the liturgy, the mourners began offering incense at the funeral altar. Among them were Japan's Prime Minister Naosuke Mine, Education Minister Hiroshi Matsui, former Construction Minister Toshio Saijo and Tokyo Prefectural Governor Shin'ichiro Takai.

It must have been with mixed emotions that Prime Minister Mine stood before Toda's portrait to pay his last respects, with the knowledge that he had failed to keep his promise to his old friend to visit the head temple that March 16. After offering incense, Mr. Mine stood for a while and politely greeted General Director Takeo Konishi, Toda's son, Kyoichi, and Toda's widow, Ikue, before departing.

The chanting of daimoku ended at 2:30 p.m., at which time High Priest Nichijun read, in a clear and resonant voice, a message praising Josei Toda's superb accomplishments and contributions to kosen-rufu.

Afterward, Toda's son, Kyoichi, got up to express his appreciation on behalf of the entire Toda family. His words were simple and direct, but they moved the members deeply:

"I wish to sincerely thank all who have gathered here today to participate in this Soka Gakkai funeral service for my father, Josei Toda. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to all the members of the Soka Gakkai who, after my father's death, have united solidly in continuing to dedicate themselves to his sincerest wish — that of achieving kosen-rufu.

"My father often told me, 'I cannot leave you any money; all I can leave you is trustworthiness as a human being.' I regret that I have neither the capacity nor ability to inherit all of my father's character. I deeply apologize for this. But I am convinced that the members of the Soka Gakkai will unite to carry on his great dream, bringing it even more beautifully into fruition. Thank you all very much for everything today."

Kyoichi's words were eloquent and moving.

*Illustrations by Teikichi Miyoshi*

## Footnotes

1. Nichijo: This name is written with the two Chinese characters for *nichi* (of Nichiren, signifying “the sun”) and *jo* (of Josei Toda, meaning “castle”).
2. Battle of Minatogawa: A battle fought in an area near the river Minatogawa near present-day Kobe. Before the battle began, Kusunoki Masashige knew victory was impossible and death certain. When the general Ashikaga Takauji’s forces overwhelmed the loyalist warriors, Masashige committed suicide. In his selfless sacrifice, Masashige remains a symbol of loyalty in Japanese folk tradition.
3. Sakurai: An area located in present-day Osaka Prefecture.
4. “A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wuchang Plain”: (Abbr. “Wuchang Plain”). A song about the death of the great Chinese minister and general Chuko K’ung-ming, the hero of the epic saga, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
5. Yoshida Shoin (1830–59): Japanese scholar, teacher and writer of the late Edo period (1600–1868).
6. Eight tatami-mat room: Approximately 15 square yards.
7. Meiji Restoration: A political revolution that in 1868 brought down the Tokugawa shogunate and returned control of the country to direct imperial rule under Emperor Meiji. It led to Japan’s opening to the West following its long self-imposed seclusion and developing into a modern nation-state.
8. This poem was written by Josei Toda for New Year’s 1958, a few short months before he passed away. It rejoices the achievement at the end of the previous year of his goal of a membership of 750,000 households and the upcoming seventh anniversary of his inauguration as Soka Gakkai president.
9. Nanyang: A city in southwestern Henan Province, China.
10. Kingdom of Shu: One of a trio of warring states in the period following the demise of the Han dynasty that came to be known as the Three Kingdoms period (B.C.E 220–280) of Chinese history.