

The New Human Revolution, Volume 5, Chapter 4
Lion
BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 10–12 of the ‘Lion’ 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 his speech at the Hokkaido General Chapter Leaders Meeting, Shin’ichi praised the members’ splendid bearing and appearance. The members’ lively spirit and growing prosperity, evident each time he visited Hokkaido, was itself actual proof of the great beneficial power of the Law, he told them. He stressed that the time to accomplish kosen-rufu was at last upon them.

He continued: “President Toda often said: ‘In the Warring States period¹ of feudalistic Japan, the samurai had to wear armor and helmets. During the Pacific war, *monpe* [baggy female work pants gathered at the ankles] became an essential clothing item for women. But neither armor nor *monpe* are necessary today. The times have changed. Similarly, you can’t sell heating coal in the summer, nor can you sell ice in the winter. Everything has its proper time. It’s the same with Buddhism. Now is the right time for Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism to spread widely throughout the world.’

“In fact, the Gakkai is advancing at a blistering pace toward a membership of 3 million households. The time for the worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism has surely arrived. I wish to declare that now is the time for the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to awaken to their mission. Let’s advance confidently and joyously again this year to work for the happiness of our friends.”

After the general chapter meeting, Shin’ichi attended a meeting of district leaders from around Hokkaido at the Hokkaido Headquarters Building. Here he again stressed that the time for kosen-rufu had arrived.

“If we have indeed entered the time of kosen-rufu,” he said, “then, as the Gosho predicts, the three obstacles and four devils will appear and persecution will definitely assail us. We will also be the target of malicious schemes, criticism and slander. Nevertheless, it is precisely by struggling against obstacles and persecution that we can attain Buddhahood.

“Hokkaido has the glorious history of triumphing over the injustices perpetrated against our members in the Yubari Coal Miners Union Incident. A commitment to truth and a firm refusal to tolerate injustice characterize the lofty spirit that pervades Hokkaido. With this sense of justice, please always hold high the banner of triumph for the ordinary people. My most fervent wish is that the ‘lions of Hokkaido’ will rise to this challenge.”

The following day, Shin’ichi managed to squeeze some time out of his tight schedule to attend a wedding reception for Fusataro Fujita, the Hokkaido young men’s division chief, and Makiko Aoi, a local young women’s division member. He wanted to offer his congratulations on this fresh start for two young people who would shoulder responsibility for the coming era.

The Hokkaido cold played havoc with Shin’ichi’s health, but he pushed himself to the limit to meet and encourage members, to exert himself for their well-being. All who came in contact with him were left with a palpable sense that a new springtime — a fresh season alive with promise — would soon be upon them.

A gray fog blanketed Tokyo on Jan. 17. That day the 40th regular session of the Japanese Diet resumed, having been in recess for the New Year’s holidays. Opening ceremonies were held in the plenary chamber of the House of Councilors [Upper House] at 11:00 that

morning. Afterward, reporters and photographers from a dozen news organizations, including the major newspapers *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, and the government-sponsored TV station NHK, assembled in the pressroom on the third floor of the House of Councilors building. A group of House of Councilors representatives who were Soka Gakkai members — Hisao Seki, Chuhei Yamadaira and others — were seated on a sofa in the room’s center. Seki, looking a bit nervous, began to speak.

“We representatives who are supported by the Soka Gakkai have formed a political group called the Komei [Clean Government] Political Federation,” he said.

A buzz rose momentarily from the reporters, but Seki went on speaking: “We have called this news conference today to announce this fact.” With that he began to read the guiding principles of the Komei Political Federation:

“We are deeply concerned that all political parties, whether conservative or progressive, devote most of their time and energy to factional infighting, place partisan interests above the welfare of the Japanese people and, as a result, are increasingly alienated from the electorate.

“The Komei Political Federation is fundamentally different from other parties. We are dedicated to promoting policies that will ensure that social prosperity leads to individual happiness and to achieving not only true happiness and prosperity for the people of Japan but lasting peace for humanity the world over.

“Our political ideals are founded in Nichiren Daishonin’s spirit of *rissho ankoku* — the realization of a peaceful and prosperous society based on Buddhist ideals. With this unsurpassed philosophy and its unbounded compassion as our guide, we pledge to apply these ideals in a contemporary fashion and, as the most democratic of political organizations, to demonstrate an unwavering opposition to all injustice.

“These points constitute our basic philosophy. Now I will announce the Komei Political Federation’s policy platform.”

Seki went on to identify opposition to nuclear weapons, preservation of Japan’s democratic peace constitution, fair and honest elections, clean politics and the strengthening of the House of Councilors’ autonomy as comprising the group’s major agenda.

The last point addressed the need to reform the House of Councilors and solidify its autonomy from the House of Representatives so that the bicameral legislature could perform its originally intended function.

The prime purpose of the House of Councilors when it was established was to correct the excesses of, and to make up for any shortcomings in, legislation passed by the more openly partisan House of Representatives [Lower House]. But the Upper House, too, had become heavily partisan — so much so that it often functioned as no more than an extension of the House of Representatives. The Komei Political Federation wanted to restore the Upper House to its original function as the conscience of the legislature.

The primary reason Shin’ichi Yamamoto decided to take the step of forming the Komei Political Federation was that it was important, in his judgment, to preserve the Soka Gakkai as a strictly religious organization that refrained from direct involvement in government. This, he felt, was particularly vital when considering the Gakkai’s future. His aim was that the Gakkai, on its own accord, would implement an institutional division between religion and the political activities it supported.

Essentially, Japan’s Constitution guaranteed religious groups the right to field political candidates and participate in politics. To bar religious organizations from involvement in political activities was an infringement upon the freedom of expression, the guarantee of equality under the law and freedom of religion.

Article 20 of the constitution mandated the separation of church and state. But *state* here meant the national government, not political parties; and church, religion or religious organizations. The article separated the national government and religion, saying that the state must remain neutral and unaffiliated religiously and could not interfere with religious activities. It did not prohibit religious organizations from taking part in political activities.

The principle of the separation of church and state as articulated in Japan's Constitution was based on the legal history of the West and was a result of the lessons learned from the acts of religious repression perpetrated before and during World War II by the Japanese government, which had made Shinto the state religion in order to promote its Imperialist national war policy. Article 20 was implemented to bolster religious freedom, not to limit it.

As a result, the Soka Gakkai was perfectly free to sponsor candidates for elections, as well as to take part in political activities.

In fact, the basic aims of religion and politics are the same: to ensure happiness for the people. But the two operate on different levels. If religion is the earth, the basis of everything, political activity is a tree that flourishes on top of it. Given this fundamental distinction, the way they go about achieving their aims must also be different.

This might be illustrated by a look at the approach politics and religion take to the problem of nuclear arms. As a religious institution, the Soka Gakkai's role is to cultivate in the minds of individuals the idea that nuclear weapons threaten our basic right to life and therefore must be eliminated. The function of politics, in contrast, is to seek, in the context of differing national interests, points of agreement and cooperation among nations that can lead to practical negotiations for reducing and eventually eliminating such armaments.

Religion also differs from politics in that it bases itself on an absolute truth or ideal, while politics is concerned with the temporal or worldly realm, in which all is relative and changing. For these reasons, Shin'ichi had concluded that a clear organizational and institutional distinction between the religious and political activities of the Soka Gakkai was needed. He had felt that the best direction to head in would be for a political organization to direct all political activities, while the Soka Gakkai limited itself to popular support of the political organization and its candidates.

(To be continued)

1. A 100-year period from 1467 to 1568.