

The New Human Revolution, Volume 5, Chapter 4
Lion
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Translation of parts 30–35 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.

The final verdict in the Osaka Incident trial was to be handed down in court on Jan. 25. If Shin’ichi Yamamoto, the Soka Gakkai president, were found guilty, it would not only have serious consequences for him personally but would greatly impede the progress of kosen-rufu.

In light of the gravity of the situation, the top leaders were extremely anxious. But they were at a loss over what to do. Even the lawyers were uncertain about the outcome; when asked, not one could state unequivocally that President Yamamoto would be exonerated. With gloomy expressions, they would make some noncommittal reply such as: “It’s really hard to say. We have to be prepared for whatever outcome....”

As the day of the final court session neared, the Gakkai’s top leaders became more and more taciturn. Shin’ichi was the only one who appeared to maintain his usual confidence and composure.

On Jan. 18 and 19, he attended the respective leaders meetings for the young men’s and young women’s divisions and urged the youth to make a powerful new start in the coming year. On Jan. 21, eight days before his departure to the Middle East, he visited the head temple.

Then, on the 23rd, he attended a meeting for Study Department professors. There the results of the promotional exams for assistant teachers and teachers of the Study Department held earlier that month were reviewed and the passing candidates determined, with 7,980 new teachers and 650 new assistant professors being appointed. Added to those who had passed the entrance exam — whose names had already been announced in the Jan. 22 extra edition of the *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper — this brought the Study Department membership from a total of 40,000 to around 113,600 in one remarkable leap.

The following day, Jan. 24, Shin’ichi was scheduled to travel to Osaka for the final session of the trial on the 25th. After the Study Department meeting, all the top leaders came over to Shin’ichi and one of them said: “President Yamamoto, we’ve all prepared ourselves for the court’s verdict the day after tomorrow. Even if, by chance, you should be found guilty and the Soka Gakkai bombarded with criticism, we are determined to make sure that not a single person is swayed.”

Shin’ichi laughed: “What are you talking about? I am innocent. Even President Toda said, ‘The presiding judge will understand.’ Rest assured that I will be vindicated. There is no reason for an innocent person to be found guilty. Nichiren Daishonin stated, ‘Reason will win over your lord’ (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 238). In other words, truth will prevail over authority. Please look forward to the final verdict.”

My main concern at the moment,” Shin’ichi Yamamoto continued, looking at the leaders, “is for the other defendants in the case who, due to overzealousness and ignorance of the election law, violated it by soliciting votes door to door. Breaking the law is definitely wrong and it certainly should be dealt with strictly to assure this does not happen. But when I think of these sincere members being judged guilty, my heart aches for them. Each one of them worked really hard out of an earnest desire to improve society and the state of

Japanese politics.

“They have not bribed anyone. All they have done is ask people to vote, sharing their convictions and beliefs. Naturally, those who commit a crime have to pay the consequences, but these members were unjustly harassed by police and public prosecutors during the investigations. If they are pronounced guilty by the court, they will have to suffer again. When I think of this, it pains me deeply. That is why I implore you to sincerely encourage and support these members. While it is essential for the sake of kosen-rufu that I be exonerated, should any of these members have to go to prison my wish is that I could go in their place.”

This was the first time the leaders had heard Shin'ichi share his true feelings on the matter. They were deeply moved by his selfless concern.

As scheduled, on the 24th Shin'ichi flew to Osaka and that evening attended both the Kansai Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting at the Nakanoshima Civic Hall and the Kansai Young Men's Division Leaders Meeting at the Amagasaki Municipal Sports Center.

The Nakanoshima Civic Hall was where the Osaka members had gathered to hold a huge protest rally on July 17, 1957, the day of Shin'ichi's release by the authorities from unjust detention. On that occasion, Shin'ichi had called out from the rostrum:

“It is my firm belief that the Dai-Gohonzon is aware of everything. President Toda told us that the third of the three powerful enemies, false saints,¹ has appeared. However, convinced of the Daishonin's statement ‘When great evil occurs, great good will follow’ (MW-5, 161), I am determined to arouse strong faith and further advance the cause of kosen-rufu together with all of you.

“Let us undertake this task with the conviction that the True Law and those who strive tenaciously in faith, steadfastly upholding the Dai-Gohonzon, will definitely emerge victorious!”

This was Shin'ichi's proclamation of total victory.

Four and a half years had already passed since the Osaka rally. Whether Shin'ichi's determination at that time to win absolute victory would bear fruit, or whether he would be forced into yet another arduous battle, would become clear at the final court session the next day.

As the car neared the Nakanoshima Civic Hall, Shin'ichi gazed out the window at the Dojima River. Flickering on the water's surface were the lights of the brick building that housed both the Osaka District Court, where he would appear the following morning to hear the judge's verdict, and the Osaka District Prosecutor's Office, where he had been subject to unjust interrogation.

The young men's and young women's division members gathered for their respective leaders meetings. While justly angered at the abuses of the prosecutor's office, the youth were also anxious about the outcome of the trial.

When Shin'ichi stepped to the rostrum at the young women's division meeting in the Nakanoshima Civic Hall, thunderous applause erupted. Seeing him self-assured and confident as always, the young women's fears evaporated.

Shin'ichi didn't mention the trial at all in his speech. He announced that land had been purchased for the construction of a new community center in the western Yodogawa region, where Typhoon No. 18 had wreaked extensive damage the previous September. This fulfilled a promise he had made to the members upon visiting the area immediately after the disaster, hoping it would encourage them in their efforts to rebuild in the storm's aftermath.

He also announced plans for the construction of a new Headquarters Building in Kansai,

which he lauded as an area of strategic importance to kosen-rufu. Shin'ichi recalled how he and the Kansai members had written a golden page in the history of their movement and urged the young women to make the Kansai organization a model for the entire Soka Gakkai.

He also voiced his hope that they would all persevere in faith with great confidence and conviction, pointing to the countless members who had clearly proven with their lives that faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism was the key to attaining absolute happiness. He closed by calling on the young women to make the year ahead one of ceaseless advancement toward great happiness, without retreating in faith or being swayed in the slightest by anything.

It was a powerful speech. Many were confident that Shin'ichi would emerge victorious from court the following day. Through his example and demeanor, many learned what it meant to live with the undaunted courage of a lion king.

One of the young women present would later remark: "You'd expect someone waiting to be judged by the court to be wracked with anxiety. But Mr. Yamamoto was far more concerned about the typhoon victims and encouraging everyone by announcing a new community center. I was moved to tears by his warmth and strength. I resolved that I, too, would strive to win, no matter what."

Immediately afterward, Shin'ichi attended the young men's division leaders meeting. Here he outlined the events leading up to the Osaka Incident, solemnly relating the injustice of his arrest, based as it was on trumped-up charges.

"I will not flinch in the face of any persecution," he declared. "Even if I am pronounced guilty and imprisoned again, it would be a small matter compared to the great persecutions Nichiren Daishonin endured. Having pledged to carry on the work of presidents Makiguchi and Toda, I do not hold my life dear.

"But this I declare: I will fight resolutely throughout my life against any authority that inflicts suffering upon ordinary, upright citizens — upon people who are selflessly working for the happiness and welfare of others.

"Buddhism concerns itself with winning. Let's continue to discern who is just and correct: we of the Soka Gakkai, or the prosecutors who interrogated our members in a cruel, inhumane manner and the authorities who compelled them to do so."

Passion infused Shin'ichi's words. He wanted the young men's division members to stand up with the same spirit, as lion-like champions of the people who would fight fearlessly against abuses by corrupt authority.

The Kansai youth felt Shin'ichi's strong, unyielding conviction to fight this unremitting battle against injustice. Making his spirit their own, they resolved to march ahead valiantly on the long journey of kosen-rufu.

With even greater intensity, Shin'ichi proclaimed: "Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is an unsurpassed life philosophy that elucidates the enduring principles by which all people can achieve happiness. Spreading this Buddhism and enabling people to become happy is the task of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth; it is the mission of all of us who are the Daishonin's disciples.

"Based on this conviction and awareness, let's set forth anew with confidence and dignity as allies of the suffering, committed first and always to the people's happiness."

In this way, the Kansai young men's division leaders meeting became an opportunity for the youth to make a pledge together — a pledge to live and work for the good of ordinary people.

The morning of Jan. 25, the day of the verdict, was bright and crisp. A Headquarters staff member, Ryoji Nishibuchi, picked Shin'ichi up at his hotel and drove him to the

Kansai Headquarters. In the main Gohonzon room, Shin'ichi did a resonant morning gongyo and chanted daimoku. Upon finishing, his conviction that he would be acquitted was even more unshakable.

“OK, let's go!” Shin'ichi said confidently and then walked outside. With a reassuring smile to the well-wishers who had come to see him off, he climbed into the waiting car.

In the back seat of the car on the way to the courthouse, Shin'ichi reflected on all that had transpired over the past four and a half years. Nine months after his wrongful arrest, President Toda had passed away. And then, two years later, he himself had been inaugurated the third president of the Soka Gakkai. His being a defendant in this trial had been the main reason why he had repeatedly turned down requests to assume that position. What he had feared most at the time was that, should he become president and then be found guilty, this would cause harm to the Soka Gakkai and severely hinder the progress of kosen-rufu.

But now he was certain he would be exonerated — although there was no substantive reason to expect such. His confidence was based in part on his belief that an innocent person would not be found guilty. In addition, he possessed a deep, unshakable conviction that if he should by some chance be found guilty, it would be the profound intention of the Buddha.

No matter what happened, the Gohonzon would know the truth. And finally, underlying his tenacious proclamation of innocence was a powerful confidence that when the truth was illuminated by the universal Law of Buddhism, no one, not even the courts, could make him guilty of a crime he did not commit.

Shin'ichi arrived in the courtroom of the Osaka District Court about 10 minutes before the final session began. Around two dozen reporters crowded into the room and almost everyone else was present — including the 20 other defendants indicted for violating the election law and their lawyers. Shin'ichi greeted them all with a smile and a nod and sat down in the defendants' section.

Before long, the prosecuting attorneys took their seats and presiding Judge Yusuke Tagami, along with the other justices, entered the courtroom. The 84th and final session of the trial was declared open.

The atmosphere was tense as Judge Tagami read out the defendants' names and then solemnly announced, “I will now read the court's decision.” In a clear voice, he slowly began to deliver the court's ruling on each count.

All of the defendants, Shin'ichi excepted, incurred fines: Nine, of •10,000 each; four, of •7,000; two, •5,000; another two, •4,000; and three, •3,000. Out of these 20, the court temporarily deprived 17 of their right to vote, engage in election activities or run for public office.

The prosecution had originally recommended much harsher sentences: fines for only two of the defendants and prison sentences for all the rest, from two months and upward for those who had engaged in door-to-door vote-canvassing — and 10 months for Shin'ichi. On top of this, temporary suspension of the right to vote, campaign or run for office had been recommended for all. Compared to these, the court's judgments for these 20 were extremely light.

P pausing for a breath, Judge Tagami then announced the court's last decision: “This court finds the defendant, Shin'ichi Yamamoto, not guilty!”

An excited buzz rose from the spectators, joy lighting their faces.

The verdict was finally in. For Shin'ichi, it was a triumphant moment of vindication.

The judge then proceeded to read the reasons for the court's decisions. He explained that

there was conclusive evidence of election law violations in the cases of the 20 who had solicited votes door-to-door. Regarding the charges against Shin'ichi, though, the judge refuted the prosecution's claims one by one, dismissing their contention that Shin'ichi had conspired with other leaders such as then-Kansai General Chapter Staff Kunizo Toriyama and Okayama Chapter Chief Ittetsu Okada in instigating the members to break the election law. "There is no evidence to substantiate such charges," the judge concluded.

Then the judge referred to the deposition made by a Kyoto men's division member, who had been caught and arrested in the act of canvassing door-to-door for votes, in which he claimed to have been following Shin'ichi's instructions at a meeting to engage in such activities.

This particular testimony had been coerced from the men's division member by the police investigators, who had threatened to continue to hold and interrogate him without allowing him to sleep until he signed a confession stating that he had acted on Shin'ichi's directive.

The judge questioned the veracity of statements made in that deposition, shrewdly observing: "Suppose...Shin'ichi Yamamoto had asked or even ordered members to canvass for votes, urging, as the statement claims: 'Please do not hesitate to go out and canvass for votes door-to-door. I will accept full responsibility.' It is difficult to imagine that only one person — and no one else out of the more than 100 who heard him — would have seen fit to comply with his request."

The judge's reasoning was unequivocal. Shin'ichi was fully exonerated and the prosecutors' ignoble motives exposed.

Presently, the judge declared the case closed. Shin'ichi's name had been cleared. Justice had triumphed over the repressive forces of authority. The heavy clouds that had dogged him and shrouded the Gakkai's future were now swept away.

"Sensei, congratulations!" said the Gakkai leaders present in the courtroom who now hurried over to congratulate Shin'ichi. Everyone beamed with delight. All were comrades with whom Shin'ichi had shared so many joys and struggles.

Then, one of the prosecutors walked directly up to Shin'ichi. The leaders glared icily at him. He wasn't one of those who had interrogated Shin'ichi and the other defendants — he had been assigned only to the trial phase. Smiling, he said to Shin'ichi: "The verdict was just as I expected. It's only natural."

(To be continued)

1. False saints (Jpn *sensho zojoman*): the third of the three powerful enemies. Priests who are revered as saints and those highly respected by the general public who, in fear of losing fame or profit, induce the secular authorities to persecute the votaries of the Lotus Sutra.