

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 4 Rough Seas

Translation of parts 1-2.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's intense struggle continued without a moment's respite, like a river rushing powerfully to the sea.

On June 2, he was scheduled to attend the Shikoku Headquarters Leaders Meeting. The night before, the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo received an anonymous phone call. A gruff male voice said: "I hear your president, Shin'ichi Yamamoto, is coming to Shikoku. If he knows what's good for him, he'll stay away. But if he doesn't, then you'll have to suffer the consequences...." The caller then hung up abruptly.

The Gakkai was being threatened. The atmosphere at the Headquarters grew tense.

As the Upper House elections slated for July 1 approached, the Soka Gakkai, in supporting candidates from the Komei Political Federation, became the target of malicious harassment. It had received a spate of threatening phone calls with abusive demands that the Gakkai stop endorsing candidates or violent tactics would be employed.

Shin'ichi had already left for Shikoku when this latest threat was received and didn't learn of it until after arriving at the Shikoku Headquarters Building the evening of June 1. General Director Koichi Harayama, who was traveling with him, took the call from the Gakkai Headquarters and briefly related the details to Shin'ichi, adding: "Though I'm sure it's nothing more than a crank call in connection with the elections, perhaps we should take the precaution of canceling the meeting just to be on the safe side?"

Shin'ichi glared indignantly at him. "Absolutely not!" he answered. "Everyone has spent days preparing this meeting, fully expecting that I will attend. Are you going to tell the Shikoku members to cancel the meeting because you're afraid of one crank call?!"

"No.... I see what you mean. We can't cancel the meeting. But do you think everything will be all right?"

"A leader has no time for speculation. He must be firmly resolved to win over all obstacles and negative forces without the slightest shadow of a doubt. If President Toda could hear you, he would be furious."

"Er, yes....," Harayama mumbled awkwardly, looking self-conscious as he wiped perspiration from his brow.

From the time Shin'ichi had gone to work for Josei Toda, more than a decade before, he had been ready to lay down his life. For that reason, he feared nothing. He had resolved that if anyone ever launched an attack on the Gakkai, he would personally stand in the forefront — he would be a shield to protect the members, not letting anyone harm them in the slightest. Shin'ichi was frustrated and disappointed that a top Gakkai leader, someone who should have shared this resolve, so obviously lacked the necessary passion or commitment to do so.

The Shikoku Headquarters Leaders Meeting was held at the prefectural athletics stadium in Yashima, Kagawa Prefecture.¹

Yashima was the site of a famous battle between the Minamoto and Taira clans. It was here that Minamoto no Yoshitsune,² following his victory at the Battle of Ichinotani (present-day Kobe) in 1184, defeated the Taira forces for a second time in February 1185, routing them westward all the way to Dannoura (present-day Shimonoseki at the western tip of Japan's main island).

For Shikoku Headquarters, this leaders meeting, the kickoff toward the third anniversary

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of Shin'ichi's inauguration as Soka Gakkai president, with more than 30,000 members in attendance, was a landmark event that would determine the future course of kosen-rufu in this region. Consequently, Shin'ichi applied himself to this meeting with the spirit of Yoshitsune, resolved to inspire all those present to advance with fresh enthusiasm, to open the way forward to victory for Shikoku.

June 2 dawned with overcast skies and the distinct prospect of rain. But around noon, faint rays of sunshine filtered through the cloud cover. The weather turned out to be just right for an outdoor event.

Participants started entering the stadium early that morning, and before noon some 30,000 packed the stands and stadium field. Hearing that all those expected to participate were already gathered and waiting, Shin'ichi asked that the meeting begin ahead of schedule.

He had no way of knowing whether the previous day's threatening call was merely a hoax or a genuine threat to sabotage the meeting. Consequently, he thought it a good idea to commence the meeting as soon as everyone had gathered and bring it to a close before its originally slated starting time.

The entire schedule was moved up approximately two hours. Shin'ichi made his entrance at 12:15, and the meeting was declared open. Having anticipated a long wait, the participants were delighted by the early start. The program flowed without a hitch: experiences in faith, determinations by divisional representatives, greetings by directors, and so forth.

Apart from a handful of individuals responsible for organizing the event, none of the participants knew about the threatening call. It had been decided not to inform them so as not to cause unnecessary worry.

Happy and excited, the participants warmly applauded the speeches of the leaders at the podium. It was like any other Gakkai leaders meeting, overflowing with a vibrant seeking spirit toward Buddhism and a lively joy and enthusiasm.

Shin'ichi's normally gentle eyes glinted with a razor-like sharpness. Nothing would escape that keen gaze. He vowed that, even from the platform, he would protect the members no matter what. While chanting daimoku continuously in his heart, he carefully scanned every corner of the stadium.

(To be continued)

1. Kagawa Prefecture: in the northeastern part of Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four main islands.
2. Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–89): a principal figure in the Taira–Minamoto War. He defeated the Taira forces in a decisive battle at Dannoura in March 1185, leaving the Minamoto clan the rulers of Japan.