

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 4
Rough Seas
BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 3–8 of the ‘Rough Seas’ 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 rose to the microphone amid thunderous applause. Smiling warmly at the crowd, he opened with a bit of humor: “I heard that you’ve been waiting for your president to arrive. But I was a little worried that some of you might think when you actually set eyes on me: ‘Oh my! What a short, rumped, ordinary-looking president he is!’ Unfortunately, I was born this way, so I hope you’ll put up with me!”

The audience roared with laughter.

Shin’ichi was perfectly relaxed.

Shikoku had been one of Japan’s most progressive centers of democratic ideals in the latter 19th century and produced such great intellectuals as Itagaki Taisuke,¹ founder of the Risshisha (Self-Help Society),² and Nakae Chomin,³ the Japanese translator of Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*.⁴ Given this background, Shin’ichi chose to speak about the Soka Gakkai’s mission to create an era of genuine democracy.

The Gakkai was committed to working for the happiness of all people based on the Gohonzon. To achieve this goal, he stressed, it was important for all members to prove the value of faith by leading happy lives and winning the respect and praise of those around them. He concluded his speech with a call that everyone unite firmly, with strong faith, to make further great strides in spreading the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

After the entire audience joined in a grand chorus of “Song of the New Century,” the Shikoku Headquarters Leaders Meeting came to a close at 1:15 p.m.

To encourage the members, Shin’ichi went down to the stadium field and began walking around the track, waving as he went. The people in the stands stood up to cheer and applaud him as he passed. The senior leaders who knew about the threatening phone call followed anxiously behind.

Smiling at each person as he passed by, Shin’ichi waved in response to the members’ cheers, slowly making his way around the stadium.

Now and again, he would shake hands with members who held out their hands, telling them: “Thank you.” “I appreciate your efforts.” “Let’s meet again soon.” He gave of himself unstintingly to encourage and inspire the members.

Suddenly, he stopped in front of one section of the stands. A group of members was calling out, though what they were saying was indistinct to those around them. Shin’ichi, though, immediately recognized them and understood their cry — it was a group of deaf members. They were calling “Sensei!” to him, with all their heart and being. During the meeting, Shin’ichi had noticed that there was a large contingent of deaf members in the audience when he saw people using sign language to convey to them the content of the speeches.

Shin’ichi had heard from the Shikoku leaders that in Takamatsu⁵ Chapter was Saiwai District, comprised mostly of deaf members. He had also been informed that the Saiwai District chief, Shizuya Fukuyama, a man in his mid-40s, had decided to dedicate his life to working for the welfare of the hearing impaired.

Fukuyama, driven by the wish to help others since a young age, learned sign language and became a teacher at a school for the deaf. However, when the war broke out, he was

drafted into the Japanese army. He was in China when the war ended, where the Soviet army put him aboard a freight train bound for Siberia with other Japanese prisoners. En route, however, he escaped and was hidden and assisted, as fate's mysterious workings would have it, by a deaf Chinese citizen.

When he finally made his way back to his hometown, Hiroshima, he attempted to establish a charitable organization and a company to aid the hearing impaired, to repay in some small way the kindness of his Chinese benefactor. But both projects failed.

Eventually, he moved to Takamatsu, his wife's hometown, and took a job as a sign painter. But this brought him little income. He fell deeper and deeper into debt.

It was amid these difficult circumstances that he heard about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and, in 1956, became a Soka Gakkai member along with his wife. Learning how life's fundamental sufferings could be surmounted through faith, Fukuyama enthusiastically told the deaf people he knew about Buddhism. And with his proficiency in sign language, many other deaf Gakkai members began to gather around him. With a deep conviction and commitment that this was his life's mission, he devoted himself earnestly to supporting and encouraging these members to stand up in faith.

District Chief Shizuya Fukuyama attended the Shikoku Headquarters Leaders Meeting along with 240 deaf members. He stood in the very front row of the stand where they were seated, a slightly built, bespectacled man.

Shin'ichi saw Fukuyama and conveyed his appreciation and approval with a firm nod. He then gazed intently at each member in the group, wanting to engrave their faces indelibly in his heart. Each possessed a truly important mission, each was a precious child of the Buddha.

"I've heard all about you," Shin'ichi said. "The Daishonin promises that we can become happy without fail. So no matter what happens, please keep chanting and never lose hope. You must not be defeated. You must win against yourself!"

Fukuyama conveyed these words to the members by signing, his eyes overflowing with tears. And tears glistened in the members' eyes as well, as they intently followed his translation.

Smiling through their happy tears, they waved to Shin'ichi, wordlessly expressing their joy.

Shin'ichi waved back with all his strength. Through faith, these members had stood up resolutely from the brink of despair and begun to walk the great path of their mission.

The Soka Gakkai was the only organization committed to going among the people burdened with suffering and grief, teaching them the way to happiness, sending them a light of courage and hope and showing them how to tap their inner life force.

To all enemies of the people's happiness, now unseen, Shin'ichi cried out in his heart: "Draw your arrows at this noble organization if you dare! Shoot at me if you will! But I will keep fighting — I'll let nothing defeat me!"

With his fists clenched in determination, he looked into the distance at the serene, forested mountain rising into the overcast sky beyond the stands.

As he continued on his round, a united cry erupted from another section of the stands. "Kochi!" they shouted. This was the name of a neighboring prefecture.

Shin'ichi answered: "Thank you for your efforts! Please have a safe trip home. We'll build a community center in Kochi soon."

The Kochi members' cheers echoed in the stands.

As if trying to embrace each of the 30,000 participants, Shin'ichi made his way around the stadium, waving and offering words of encouragement. By the time he finished his circuit, his voice was hoarse, throat sore. His arms and shoulders ached.

Fortunately, despite the threatening phone call, no trouble had occurred. After the leaders meeting, Shin'ichi attended a gathering of district chiefs at the Shikoku Headquarters Building and delivered a lecture on the Gosho "A Letter to Choraku-ji Temple" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 176–77). Then he discussed future activities with Shikoku leaders until late in the night.

The next day, June 3, Shin'ichi traveled from Takamatsu to Okayama⁶ for the Chugoku Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Okayama Prefectural Gymnasium. The meeting began a little before noon. Twenty-five thousand people had gathered, and the venue could not accommodate all of them. The rainy season in the Chugoku region⁷ had set in the previous day, so many had to stand outside in the rain, straining to hear the guidance over the loudspeakers.

In his speech, Shin'ichi declared that Gakkai meetings were truly joyous, momentous events. In them, one could find irrefutable proof of the power of faith. This was evidenced by the members' experiences of becoming happy as well as guidance based directly on the unsurpassed teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

In addition to speaking on the importance of studying the Gosho and Buddhist philosophy, he announced the decision to designate 1963 the Year of Study.

After his lecture, he stood up to lead the assembly in a chorus of "Song of Dynamic Advancement," which had originated from Chugoku. Shin'ichi infused his movements with a powerful spirit and resolve to inspire courage and determination in every member.

When the leaders meeting ended, Shin'ichi went outside immediately — he wanted to encourage the members who had been in the rain listening over the loudspeakers. As he emerged from the gymnasium, one of the leaders traveling with him from Tokyo quickly opened an umbrella and held it over his head.

"I don't need an umbrella," Shin'ichi said. "As long as our members are standing in the rain, so will I." He began to walk in the rain. Applause and cheers suddenly rose as the members spotted Shin'ichi.

"Thank you for coming!" Shin'ichi shouted. "Please be careful not to catch cold in this rain."

He walked around the area, talking and waving to members. Soon his suit was drenched.

He would do anything for his fellow members if it would inspire them in their mission for kosen-rufu. If he could, he would have embraced and encouraged each and every rain-soaked member. And so he walked through the crowd, continuing to offer encouragement with his entire being and stir the members to even greater achievements.

The leaders meeting was followed by a gathering for district chiefs. Shin'ichi lectured on the Gosho "The Day Before Last" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 183–84). Written in Kamakura on Sept. 12, 1271, and addressed to Hei no Saemon-no-jo Yoritsuna, Nichiren Daishonin in this letter pointed out the accuracy of the predictions he had made in the "Rissho Ankoku Ron" (written in 1260) and discussed the proper course of action for the nation's leaders.

Two days before the Daishonin composed the letter ("the day before last" of the title), Sept. 10, he was interrogated by Hei no Saemon, the de facto leader of the government who was controlling its military, police and administrative functions. During the interrogation, the Daishonin remonstrated with Hei no Saemon to abandon all mistaken teachings and embrace the correct teaching. But the official showed not the least readiness to do so, which led the Daishonin to compose and dispatch this letter two days later.

But on that very day, Hei no Saemon directed a force of several hundred armed soldiers to arrest the Daishonin and execute him that evening at Ta-tsunokuchi. This is the famous Ta-tsunokuchi Persecution.

The Daishonin was fully aware that his remonstrance of Hei no Saemon would provoke a life-threatening attack. In his lecture, Shin'ichi discussed why the Daishonin, who

sincerely loved his country and thought only of saving it, should become the object of persecution. He wanted to highlight the true nature of this oppression.

Shin'ichi declared: “If the Daishonin had not remonstrated with the regent Hojo Tokiyori, Hei no Saemon and others in government, it is very likely that the foul plot against him and the persecution that followed would never have occurred. But to relieve the people’s misery, the Daishonin had no choice but to try to correct the way the government leaders thought and lived, since the social influence and political power they wielded so greatly affected the country’s destiny.

“In most cases good advice still only gives offense, and those in power hate people who stand up and speak out, who refuse to bow down to their authority. Such is the arrogance of the powerful, the demonic nature of authority. In addition, Ryokan⁸ of Gokuraku-ji temple and the Nembutsu school priests feared that they would lose their patronage and privilege if Tokiyori heeded the Daishonin’s remonstrations and adopted the Lotus Sutra, so they painted the Daishonin a villain. Of course, as he himself said, ‘My present exile is not because of any crime’ (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38) — the Daishonin was completely without fault or blame.

“Ryokan and the Nembutsu priests hired underlings to set fires and murder people, and then loudly complained that those crimes were perpetrated by the Daishonin’s followers. Their intent was to have the Daishonin exiled to Sado Island. Such persecution and oppression fit a pattern that has remained unchanged throughout the ages: The victim is accused of crimes he or she did not commit, made out to be an evil person and then condemned as guilty.”

After this introduction, Shin'ichi began the main part of his lecture, quoting a passage from “The Day Before Last”:

One who knows the Law and is concerned about his country should, by all rights, be praised and honored to the highest degree. But because the followers of false doctrines and heretical teachings have slandered and defamed me, I have not yet been able to carry out even the smallest part of the great purpose I have embraced for so long. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 183)

“The Daishonin should have been most highly applauded and esteemed for his profound grasp of Buddhism and wish to save the country. However, the slanders and false rumors spread by the priests and followers of other Buddhist schools had poisoned the minds of those in power, causing them to see the Daishonin as an enemy and rebuff his counsel. This had thus far prevented the Daishonin from realizing, in even the smallest way, his long-cherished goal of saving the nation.

“Slander is the standard method to waylay a just cause, and the Gakkai faces the same situation in present-day society that the Daishonin did centuries earlier. We have worked earnestly to improve Japan, bring happiness to people and peace to the world. No other organization’s motives are so pure, honest and sincere.”

All eyes were riveted on Shin'ichi as everyone listened intently to his lecture, eager to catch every word.

His voice resounded: “Certain elements of the mass media spread lies and demagoguery about the Soka Gakkai, calling this organization of sincere, concerned people a violent religion, or claiming that we plan to take over the Japanese government and impose our beliefs on the nation. Unfortunately, society unquestioningly accepts those lies as facts and rejects the Gakkai because of them. In this way, the Soka Gakkai is being directly attacked. And slander is the weapon of choice.

Title: Volume 6: Chapter 4 Rough Seas (3-8)

Subject: World Tribune 09/26/97 n.3158 p.5 WT970926p05

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Chapter History Human Kosen-rufu Revolution Rough Seas Tribune Volume World

“The struggle to achieve kosen-rufu is, from one perspective, a struggle against slander and lies — a war of words in which our goal is to break through the web of lies, and let people know the truth about Buddhism and the Gakkai, and thus win support and empathy for our cause. It is a battle we must fight with our humanity.

“In this struggle, the Soka Gakkai’s victory is certain. No matter how one piles up lies and distortions, the truth can never be overturned. As the Daishonin says, ‘Many evil forces are vanquished by a single great truth’ (MW-1, 154). Still, we cannot overlook the fact that no matter how absurd and outrageous a lie may be, it cannot be recognized as a lie unless the truth is also known. Even those who first doubt such a lie may come to accept it if it is repeated often enough and no one speaks out against it.

“There is a proverb ‘Speech is silver, silence is golden.’ But that doesn’t mean we can afford to be silent. The proverb means that there are cases in which silence is more persuasive than eloquent argument, but that when the time comes to speak out one must do so, and fight for the truth. To fail to do so is simply cowardice.

“As the Daishonin’s disciples, and with as many members as we have today, it would be a truly shameful thing if we were to be defeated by slander. Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would be deeply disturbed and saddened by such a turn of events. If any of you think for even a moment that you don’t need to stand up for the truth — because others will do so in your stead — you are paving the way for a pitiful, tragic defeat.

“What’s crucial is whether we have the courage to fight injustice. Slander can be vanquished by sincerity, by an impassioned cry of the truth for all to hear. We will win when each and every member of the Soka Gakkai stands up, brave as a lion, and testifies to the rightness of our cause, pleading our case with honesty and sincerity.”

The Chugoku members were inspired by Shin’ichi’s lecture, and they rose intrepidly to the challenge of letting the truth be known.

(To be continued)

1. Itagaki Taisuke (1837–1919): politician born in Kochi, Shikoku. He was the leader of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement and founder of Japan’s first major political party, Jiyuto (Liberal Party), in 1881.
2. Risshisha (Self-Help Society): political association active in the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, which Taisuke formed in 1874.
3. Nakae Chomin (1847–1901): philosopher and political theoretician born in Kochi, Shikoku. He was a leading spokesman of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. In addition to being a prolific writer, Chomin, who studied for a time in France, translated Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* into Japanese and later came to be called the “Rousseau of the East.”
4. *The Social Contract* is the major work of French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). Written in 1762, it maintains that government authority must be derived from the people as a whole and reflect their will, which will always be directed to the common good. It was one of the writings that influenced the leaders of the French Revolution.
5. Capital of Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku.
6. Capital of Okayama Prefecture in western Honshu, across the strait from Shikoku’s Kagawa Prefecture.
7. Area encompassing the western tip of Honshu, the largest of Japan’s four main islands, comprising Hiroshima, Okayama, Shimane, Tottori and Yamaguchi Prefectures.
8. Prominent priest of the Shingon-Ritsu school of Buddhism. He was one of the leading persecutors of Nichiren Daishonin and his disciples, both openly and covertly, using people in positions of power to assist him.

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