

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

Translation of parts 9–13 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.

June 7 was the day to file for candidacy in the upcoming Upper House elections. The nine Soka Gakkai candidates backed by the Komei Political Federation submitted their papers that morning.

Hiroshi Izumida (Soka Gakkai director and Tokyo No. 3 General Chapter chief) was running in the Tokyo district, and Seiichiro Haruki (director; Kansai Headquarters chief) was running in the Osaka district. The other seven candidates, running in the single, nationwide district,¹ were Hisao Seki (vice general director; Tohoku Headquarters chief), Shunzo Jujo (director; Saitama General Chapter chief), Minoru Suzumoto (director; Ibaraki General Chapter chief), Kunio Shiroya (director; Chubu No. 1 General Chapter chief), Hiroshi Asada (director; Kansai No. 2 General Chapter chief), Bunji Nishimiya (director; Shikoku Headquarters chief) and Katsuharu Oniyama (director; Kyushu No. 2 General Chapter chief).

All of the party slates were nearly complete that first day, June 7. One hundred candidates were running for 51 seats in the nationwide district (including one seat that had become vacant midterm), making the ratio two to one. In contrast, the ratio was a little over four to one in the Tokyo district and three to one in the Osaka district. Once registered, candidates lost no time in campaigning toward the July 1 election.

Komei members then held nine seats in the Upper House. Three of those were now up for reelection; the other six were not affected. If all nine of the Gakkai-backed candidates were elected, it would bring the total number of seats held by the Komei in the Upper House to 15. Any party or group with more than 10 elected representatives in the Upper House earned an official legislative bargaining position, which afforded it much greater influence. This was because of the House requirement that bills could only be proposed with the support of a minimum of 10 councilors.

The Soka Gakkai members had witnessed the activities of the representatives they had elected thus far. For example, when Gakkai-backed councilors learned that Japanese agricultural emigrants to the Dominican Republic had been given rocky, barren land unsuitable for farming and were on the verge of starvation, they took up the problem, making the government’s involvement an issue. In particular, they questioned the vague, faulty information the Japanese government had been providing prospective emigrants about conditions in that distant land and demanded that the government pay to repatriate the emigrants and provide them with aid once they returned.

Also, the Komei representatives began a campaign led by Katsu Kiyohara for the distribution of free textbooks for all students during their years of compulsory education. Eventually, a bill instituting that idea was passed.

Seiichiro Haruki, representing the nonaligned parties and independent House members, questioned the government on the terrible train accident at Mikawashima. Criticizing the blatant disregard for people’s safety so evident in Japanese society, he argued for a fair, honest resolution of the affair and elicited a response from the prime minister that he would do everything he could to make sure prompt, sincere efforts to provide relief and compensation were made.

This represented only a fraction of the Komei councilors' activities.

Soka Gakkai members had high hopes that if the candidates they were supporting were elected and acquired a legislative bargaining position, the Komei's influence would grow.

The election campaigns of the nine Soka Gakkai-supported candidates began under the gray skies of the rainy season. Since the seats of three Komei incumbents were up for reelection, a win by all nine candidates would mean a threefold increase for the Komei.

In the previous Upper House elections, three years earlier, all six Soka Gakkai-backed candidates (whose seats were not up for election yet) had won easily in both the prefectural and nationwide districts. In addition, the Soka Gakkai's membership had increased substantially since then, and it was generally thought that the organization was strong enough to elect all nine candidates. But precisely because victory was such a strong possibility, the members knew they would have to begin their campaign with a struggle against easy optimism and complacency.

For the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, the Upper House election was a referendum on the performance of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda's administration and cabinet, which had come into office two years earlier. For the progressive forces, an important issue was whether they could retain the minimum third of the seats (84 seats) in the Upper House essential to block any moves by the conservative LDP to change the constitution. For the Komei candidates, meanwhile, the election was a first attempt to establish credibility and independence as a third force in the Upper House, a force transcending political ideologies and dedicated to world peace and improving people's lives.

This was the first election since the Komei's formation in January 1962, so the Soka Gakkai members not only had to be familiar with the personal qualities and platform of the candidate they were campaigning for, but also have a clear grasp and ability to articulate the Komei positions and policies.

Earlier that year, in April, Komei had begun publishing a newspaper, *Komei Shimbun*. Gakkai members read it devotedly, using it to assist them in discussing Komei's policies and the government's shortcomings with friends and acquaintances. Whenever they found themselves unable to answer questions, or when they heard specific requests, they immediately contacted the Komei Headquarters in Kamiosaki in Tokyo's Shinagawa Ward.

The Komei Headquarters valued this feedback from supporters and made positive efforts to reflect it in the association's policies. In other words, the Komei and its supporters worked together to promote candidates, unified in their purpose of bringing a new government to Japan that had the people's welfare at heart.

Through their campaigning, many Soka Gakkai members became extremely well versed in party policies and positions. For example, in discussing the housing problem, members showed a detailed grasp of the situation and could offer concrete solutions: They called for the nationwide standardization of housing policy, increased land set aside for residential development, and measures to ensure the fireproofing of multistory dwellings.

Filled with pride and a deep sense of purpose, they sought to revitalize Japanese government themselves, arguing in support of the Komei's policies with a powerful conviction, as if they, too, were running for office.

The women's division members were especially active in campaigning for the Komei candidates — despite the fact that married women in Japan were usually thought to have little interest in politics and government. It signaled the rise of a new, awakened grass-roots force, a new powerhouse in the movement to restore the reins of government to the people.

One question that they encountered frequently gave them particular trouble — was the Komei a conservative or progressive group? One day, when Shin'ichi was encouraging

some women's division members visiting the Gakkai Headquarters, one of them asked him this question.

Shin'ichi responded: "Actually, I believe the Komei should respond to this question. But let me tell you what I think. The Komei is a middle-of-the-road political organization that defies conventional pigeonholing as conservative or progressive. By middle of the road, I don't mean that it is halfway between the two. It is not constrained or fettered by traditional political ideologies, whether capitalist or socialist. It is a free, unbiased organization that bases itself on bringing happiness to the people and peace to the world.

"It looks at people's happiness from a practical standpoint, seeking to further policies that benefit their welfare and seeking to oppose those contrary to their best interests. The Komei is a new kind of political association, one without precedent.

"That may make it hard for some to understand, and it may be a bit hard for you to explain at times. But it is always difficult to create something new. Whenever we encounter a fresh problem or question, let's discuss it together — not only with our elected representatives and the Komei staff, but among ourselves as well. Together let's build and nurture a new kind of political organization."

The Komei was attempting to take a great leap forward in this election, as an organization supported by and grounded in the people, as exemplified by the ordinary men and women of the Soka Gakkai.

Shin'ichi continued to travel all over Japan, devoting himself to inspiring and encouraging members in every region as they made a fresh start toward May 3 the following year. On June 9, he attended the Chubu2 Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the municipal gymnasium in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, and afterward gave a lecture on the Goshō "Letter to Niike" for district chiefs. On the 10th, he attended the Kansai Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Osaka Baseball Stadium.

Then, on June 12, he gave a rousing speech at that month's Women's Division Leaders Meeting at the Taito Gymnasium, Tokyo. At his proposal, such meetings had been held each month since April. Foreseeing the trend of the times, Shin'ichi was confident that women would be a major force in building a new society.

Shin'ichi's travels around Japan to meet with and encourage the members continued without interruption. On June 15, he gave a lecture on "Letter to Oi Shoji Nyudo"³ at a guidance meeting in Sapporo, Hokkaido. On the 18th, he attended a leaders meeting for Suwa Chapter in Okaya City, Nagano Prefecture, after lecturing on the Goshō "Reply to Lord Matsuno's Wife" to a group of Nagano leaders.

Then, on the 20th, he attended a Wakayama Chapter leaders meeting in Wakayama.⁴ He referred to two of the Daishonin's writings — "How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra" and "Reply to Yasaburo" — explaining that faith was a contest between the Buddha and devilish functions. The next day, after a brief discussion with men's and women's division district chiefs, he visited the site where the new Wakayama Community Center was to be built.

From Wakayama, he flew to Kyushu, speaking to members in Omuta, Fukuoka Prefecture, on June 22, and then studying the Goshō "Letter to Niike" with local leaders. The next day he attended the Kyushu Headquarters Leaders Meeting, again lecturing on "How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra."

He rushed from one place to another, day after day, literally without a moment's rest. He would be in Nagoya one day, then Osaka the next. And just when everyone thought he had returned to Tokyo, he was off again to Hokkaido. The other Soka Gakkai leaders were

impressed by his hectic pace of activities — some wondered if there weren't four or five Shin'ichis rushing around at the same time!

Another thing that amazed the leaders working closely with Shin'ichi was his endurance and energy. He had been weak of constitution, but the harder he drove himself the stronger he seemed to become.

One day, one of the leaders accompanying Shin'ichi asked, "How can you work so hard and still be so full of energy?"

Shin'ichi smiled and responded: "That's the wondrous thing about Soka Gakkai activities. There are many people I have to encourage. They are all waiting for me. When I think about them, I can't rest. I find courage. And when I meet people, I think, 'I have to inspire courage and determination in this person' or 'I mustn't allow this person to be unhappy.' The strength of my determination then arouses a powerful life force within me.

"Praising and encouraging the children of the Buddha who spread the Mystic Law — the act of speaking about Buddhism — causes joy to well forth from the depths of your life and gives you strength. At such times, the strong life force of a bodhisattva or Buddha fills your entire being.

"That's why the harder I exert myself in Gakkai activities, the more energetic I feel. Working for kosen-rufu is my secret to health.

"Of course, I am only human, and sometimes I get tired. Buddhism is a rational teaching. We mustn't overlook the need for rest. But the tiredness that comes from giving your all to Gakkai activities is a satisfying kind of tiredness, one that you recover from quickly."

The leaders accompanying Shin'ichi listened intently as he continued: "On the other hand, there are those who seem to be exerting themselves energetically in Gakkai activities, but who always end up absolutely exhausted. This is because they are participating passively. As long as you feel somewhere in your heart that you have to do activities because you've been told to or are expected to, then you won't feel any real joy. Nor are you likely to have much energy and enthusiasm.

"To feel that energy, it's important to boldly take initiative in your activities. Set concrete personal goals and then strive to realize them. When you exert your utmost toward a goal and then achieve it, you will experience great joy and pleasure. Also, the wonderful thing about doing Gakkai activities is that they constitute compassionate action, which benefits others, members and non-members alike. Our involvement in such activities strengthens us.

"I once heard a story about a group of Japanese who escaped from a Soviet prison camp just after the war ended. On the verge of starvation, they continued their flight. However, the only ones to survive the ordeal were not the young men or women, who should have been at the peak of their physical strength, but a mother and the infant she carried. That mother knew that if she died, her child would most certainly perish. Her love for her child is what gave her strength and enabled her to draw forth incredible mental and physical stamina.

"When I think of the Soka Gakkai and my fellow members, I can't allow myself to fall ill or be lazy. My commitment makes me strong and gives me energy. If, whatever your circumstances, you carry out your responsibilities in the organization and fulfill your mission for kosen-rufu, you too will enjoy increased strength and energy."

Shin'ichi's intensive efforts in every region of Japan strengthened the members' determination to work for kosen-rufu — the establishment of a peaceful society. With a growing awareness of their social responsibility as Buddhists, they devoted even further efforts to supporting the election campaigns of Gakkai-backed candidates.

There was a sharp rise in the threats and harassment directed at the Komei-backed

candidates and the Soka Gakkai as a result. Some candidates of other parties, as they made the rounds giving speeches in their districts, spent all their time attacking the Soka Gakkai, without even mentioning their own positions or policies.

In not a few instances, the Komei candidates were subjected to catcalls and jeers when they tried to speak. When Hisao Seki delivered an outdoor campaign speech in Otaru City, Hokkaido, someone even threw a stone at him, hitting him in the back of the head.

All over Japan, Komei candidates' posters were torn down. In Osaka, 2,200 posters for candidate Seiichiro Haruki disappeared. Other dirty tricks surfaced, including false claims that Soka Gakkai members had offered to buy votes for ¥1,000 each.

(To be continued)

1. The Upper House has a complex election system. Its members are elected for six-year terms, and seats are divided into nationwide and prefectural districts. Prior to major electoral reform in 1994, the Upper House had 252 seats — 152 for 47 prefectural constituencies, including Tokyo and Osaka, and 100 for a single, nationwide constituency elected by proportional representation on party lists. Elections for the Upper House are staggered so that half the representatives in each district are up for reelection every three years. Prior to 1994, this meant that 50 seats in the nationwide district and 76 in the prefectural districts were up for election each time.

2. The Chubu region, comprising Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures. It's located in central Honshu, the largest of Japan's four main islands.

3. *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1377. Not yet available in English.

4. Capital of Wakayama Prefecture, located in the southwestern part of the main island of Honshu.