

**The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 5**  
**Young Eagles**  
**BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA**

Translation of parts 1–6 of the ‘Young Eagles’ 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 summer of youth had come. The golden sun rose in the sky, casting off the rainy season’s gray. Bright, fluffy white clouds floated in the blue sky, and the fresh green of the trees glistened luxuriant in the sunlight.

On July 16, some 20 young men and women — Student Division Chief Goro Watari and other student division representatives — gathered in a traditional Japanese-style room in the Seikyo Shimbun Building in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. They waited with some excitement. After a moment, Shin’ichi Yamamoto entered the room.

“Hi there!” he said. “How are you all today?”

“Fine!” came their bright, energetic reply.

Shin’ichi sat on the *tatami* floor behind the low table placed there for him and began to speak, smiling cheerfully: “Maybe it’s because the rainy season is over, but you all look especially refreshed and relaxed today. I hope you’ll share your opinions or requests with me as freely and frankly as last time.”

And so began Shin’ichi’s second meeting that year with student division representatives. Immediately, several people raised their hands. The first he selected made a request: “President Yamamoto, we want to ask you to give lectures on the Goshō for student division representatives.”

The speaker and the other students in the room looked earnestly at Shin’ichi, awaiting his response. The gleam in his eyes seemed to heighten. He had been waiting for just such a request.

“All right!” Shin’ichi said. “Let’s do it! July 22 is the Student Division General Meeting, right? Let’s start after that. Unless you study the Goshō thoroughly and come to know the profound depths of the Daishōnin’s Buddhism, there’s really no reason for the student division to exist. Goshō study is of utmost importance. Let’s study together.” He recognized that the time had come to begin training the student division members in earnest.

Since the previous year, Shin’ichi had been devoting great thought and effort to fostering their growth. He regarded the landmark 10th Young Men’s Division General Meeting of Nov. 5, 1961, which had seen an attendance of 100,000 — the fulfillment of a goal cherished by President Toda — as proof that a solid foundation for the future of that division had been laid. The 9th Young Women’s Division General Meeting, meanwhile, had been held a week later at the Mitsuzawa Stadium and attended by 85,000, indicating that a firm foundation for that group’s dynamic growth had been secured as well.

The sound development of kosen-rufu in the 21st century had to begin with a vast network of talented individuals being created. To consolidate them into a fresh force for the future, Shin’ichi felt it vital to put all of his energy into fostering the student division members. As a first step, he had titled his editorial for the April 1962 *Daibyakurenge* “To the Student Division.” His aim had been to offer some guidelines that would help the youth advance toward the future with optimism and hope.

Revealing his high expectations and hopes for the student division members, Shin'ichi had written: "The direction for all young people in the Soka Gakkai is clearly expressed in Josei Toda's 'Precepts for Youth' and 'Youth, Be Patriotic.' But among all our young people, it is the student division members in particular who must possess a sense of responsibility and awareness of their role as trailblazers." Right at the outset, Shin'ichi declared that it was their mission to lead the way in the kosen-rufu movement. From that time on, *trailblazing* became a byword and a proud tradition of the student division.

Shin'ichi went on to express his belief that the student division was the only hope for the future. He described the trend of the times, which saw the ideals of students in society at large degenerating into self-interest and pleasure-seeking. Students were losing their sense of mission to build a new world, their desire to work for the happiness of humanity, among the people. Only the growth of the student division, whose members based themselves on the humanistic philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, could counteract this trend, he asserted.

In the editorial, Shin'ichi quoted a lecture by Josei Toda confirming that Buddhism is a supreme life philosophy that can give positive direction to all human activities, including science, government and commerce. Shin'ichi then outlined where he felt the students should put their energies at this time.

He wrote: "Please be confident that all of your earnest daily efforts to build a solid basis for your future, based on a clear awareness of your mission, a strong Buddhist practice, and the recognition that your studies are your key priority right now, constitute an important contribution to kosen-rufu.

"Learning is the accumulation of knowledge and a crucial part of the process of acquiring wisdom. Buddhism is wisdom, it's a philosophy that we can actually apply in our daily lives. It is important to realize that Buddhist wisdom makes it possible for us to put all the knowledge we accumulate to the best use for society."

Shin'ichi concluded by voicing his joy at the bright future he foresaw for the talented Soka Gakkai youth: "All of the youth division members are Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have a mission to shape a new age. But you, the student division members, who will have undergone academic training before setting out into society, have an especially important role to play as leaders of the intellectual world. I hope you will become the new backbone of the Soka Gakkai, great leaders in every field in Japan, men and women of outstanding ability who will contribute greatly to the world."

Student division members who had read Shin'ichi's editorial were awestruck. They realized anew the limitless expectations he held for them and what an important mission each of them had to fulfill. Many of them gathered together to read the article aloud again and again. Their deepening awareness that they were the vanguard of kosen-rufu, that they would forge the way to the future, kindled a flame of joy in their hearts.

Awakening to your mission changes you, unlocking boundless inner strength.

At that time, the student division had been aiming for a membership of 10,000, and their youthful joy exploded in a renewed enthusiasm for their studies and introducing others to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

One day in mid-April, not long after the editorial had been published, a beaming Goro had come to report to Shin'ichi. "Sensei, according to last night's report, we have finally reached our goal of 10,000 members!" he told him happily.

"Is that so?" Shin'ichi responded. "Wonderful! You've done well. The future belongs to the student division. I intend to devote all my energies to its development. I hope to produce a whole galaxy of brilliant leaders for the future. Let's arrange an informal

discussion meeting with student division representatives soon.”

“Certainly,” replied Goro with delight.

Shin’ichi’s first discussion meeting with student division representatives for that year had been arranged on May 23. Rather than simply give one-sided guidance, Shin’ichi made a point of listening to the opinions and wishes of the members. He didn’t want to mold the students into a uniform type. He wanted to help them grow and mature — but each in his or her own way — respecting their autonomy and personal initiative.

At that first meeting, the representatives had expressed a variety of wishes. One student said: “Every Soka Gakkai chapter has a chapter flag. The young men’s and young women’s divisions also have flags. Would it be possible for the student division to have a flag, too?”

Shin’ichi had responded immediately: “That’s a good idea. I think the student division should have its own flag. Let’s design something stylish and new, something that really fits the student division.

“There is a story about the great Mahayana Buddhist teacher Nagarjuna involving a flag. In the southern part of ancient India, there was a king, a follower of non-Buddhist teachings, who ruled his kingdom in an unenlightened manner. That kingdom happened to be Nagarjuna’s homeland.

“One day, Nagarjuna decided to convert the king to Buddhism. But no matter how earnestly he petitioned for an audience with the king, some obstacle intervened, and he was unsuccessful.

“He didn’t give up. Nagarjuna made a scarlet flag, and day after day he carried it around the castle’s front gate and perimeter. He continued this for seven years, until at last he was granted an audience. And he converted the king to Buddhism.

“I think that the scarlet flag Nagarjuna carried was a symbol of his passionate commitment to spread the Buddhist teaching. A flag is a distillation of the ideas, philosophy and ideals of those who carry it.

“In making this student division flag, we should bear in mind the 100,000 or 200,000 members who will gather under it in the future. It should be a distinctive flag really representing the student division. Let’s design a flag that surpasses those of the young men’s or young women’s divisions — a flag with even more style and character. Why don’t you discuss this and then bring me your proposals?”

The students’ eyes sparkled.

**Another student said:** “Since the formation of the Komei Political Federation, we have seen increased criticism of the Soka Gakkai by Japanese scholars and commentators. I think that the more socially active we become, the stronger such criticism will be. How should we respond to this?”

“Haven’t we faced plenty of criticism already?” Shin’ichi asked. “Just because those criticizing us now are intellectuals doesn’t mean we need to be afraid. If the criticisms directed at us are mistaken, then the student division should point out the errors.

“Instead of asking, ‘How should we respond to this?’ you should simply take the lead yourself and speak out in support of your comrades. If you listen closely to what most of the so-called commentators or social critics say, you will find that they have no real opinions of their own. They haven’t the slightest idea of what the Gakkai is really like. Simply speculating, they indiscriminately accept at face value whatever wild and completely baseless rumors they hear.

“In contrast, we of the Gakkai can think for ourselves! That is because we possess a great philosophy. Moreover, we have been putting this philosophy into practice, making great contributions to the welfare of many people. We are not irresponsible bystanders with

plenty to say but nothing to show for it. We have translated our beliefs into action.

“That’s what makes the Gakkai strong and enables us to rebut any groundless criticism. All you have to do is confidently defend your beliefs with the strength of your convictions.”

Another student said: “I think that the student division song is very old-fashioned and doesn’t match our present pace of advancement. I think we should come up with a new, fresh song. Can we do that?”

“Now that you mention it, I don’t think we hear the student division song very often, do we? I can’t sing it. Who on earth wrote it?”

Goro replied, “We wrote it together.”

“Well, then,” said Shin’ichi lightheartedly, “I guess that means that none of you have any musical taste!”

Everyone laughed.

“The whole point of a song is for people to sing it,” Shin’ichi continued. “Either we force everyone to sing the song we have now, or we come up with a new song that everyone will enjoy singing. Since coercion won’t win anyone’s support, that means we’ll have to write a new one, doesn’t it?”

“If we start now, I bet we can introduce the new song at the July Student Division General Meeting. This time, let’s write a song that everyone can sing. Can you do it?”

“Yes!” cried the representatives enthusiastically.

**G**oro waited for Shin’ichi to finish speaking before making another request: “Sensei, would you consider meeting with the leaders of the student division on a regular basis and lecturing to us on the Goshō?”

Shin’ichi had already considered holding such lectures, but he avoided committing himself either way then. “I am so busy right now,” he said, “that I can’t even attend the youth division executive leaders meetings. I am exerting myself in every possible way to build the foundation that will support kosen-rufu 10, 20, 30, even 50 years from now. But I promise to think about it, if it’s something all of you really want....”

Shin’ichi had deliberately kept his answer vague. He didn’t sense a real desire among the representatives to fully involve themselves in studying the Goshō. If they had such a desire, he felt, the request would not have come from the division chief [not himself a student, appointed from the youth division], but from the students themselves.

If he were going to lecture on the Goshō, Shin’ichi was determined to give his heart and soul to it. Just as Josei Toda before him had devoted himself to educating and training members of the young men’s and young women’s divisions through hand-picked groups such as the Suiko-kai (young men) and Kayo-kai (young women), Shin’ichi intended to use his Goshō lectures to nurture the student representatives into true heirs to kosen-rufu. [Both the Suiko-kai and Kayo-kai were formed in 1952, the Suiko-kai to discuss great works of world literature, the Kayo-kai to discuss politics, economics, philosophy and the humanities.]

Shin’ichi knew that no matter how passionately he might commit to doing so, his efforts would be wasted if his listeners didn’t fully appreciate the significance of these lectures and lacked the seeking spirit and real desire to diligently study the Goshō. He could not afford to waste even a moment. Each second was golden and precious — time to be used for developing the Gakkai’s movement to spread the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

Hence he decided to wait until the student division members were truly ready to receive such training. And so it was that two months after Goro’s original request — at the second meeting with student leaders on July 16 — the first question he fielded was a request for

him to lecture student representatives on the Gosho.

This made Shin'ichi very happy. Sensing the time was ripe, he said yes.

At that second meeting, members expressed other opinions and requests, too. They suggested forming several new committees within the student division and establishing an editorial office for *Daisan Bummei* (The Third Civilization), which was then the student division journal.

Shin'ichi addressed every request.

"I will make every effort to respond to the suggestions you've made today," Shin'ichi told them. "But remember, it is important to experience hardship when you are young. The difficulties of your youth will later become wonderful memories and an invaluable asset for the future. You mustn't think that you can only start something if you have everything perfectly prepared and set in place for you."

Shin'ichi was determined to devote his utmost to fostering the growth of the student division members.

The following day, July 17, Shin'ichi visited Okinawa for the third time. On this date five years earlier, he had been released from jail following his unjust arrest by the Osaka Prosecutor's Office on trumped-up charges of election campaign violations. And on the same day two years ago, Shin'ichi had attended the inaugural meeting for the Gakkai's Okinawa Chapter.

The members were delighted to greet President Yamamoto in Okinawa again on such an auspicious day. Their joy was heightened by the fact that the opening of the long-awaited Okinawa Headquarters Building would take place the following day with Shin'ichi in attendance.

Shin'ichi was happy beyond measure to see the birth of the first Soka Gakkai community center in Okinawa. During World War II, Japan had used these islands as a first line of defense against the Allied forces, deeming them expendable in preventing an assault on Japan's main islands, and as a result countless Okinawan lives had been cruelly sacrificed. After the war, under American rule, Okinawa had become home to several U.S. military bases. The new community center, therefore, would be a first outpost, a citadel of peace, in these islands that had seen far too much of the violence of war.

When the opening ceremony began at 10:30 a.m., July 18, a large number of members had gathered, filling not only the building but the area outside. The new Headquarters Building was a modern two-story, steel and concrete structure.

The sky was clear and the Okinawan sun beat down relentlessly. Despite the hot weather, the members standing outside listened intently to the speeches of leaders inside broadcast by loudspeaker. All of them smiled with happy pride, so oblivious to the burning sun that they didn't even wipe away the sweat streaming down their brows.

The kosen-rufu movement had made phenomenal progress in Okinawa. Only two years had passed since a chapter had been formed there and a year since a general chapter had been established. Now a new palace of peace and kosen-rufu was being dedicated. Joy and pure-hearted faith shone on the faces of all those gathered and filled them with hope for the future.

After the opening, Shin'ichi stood by while new leadership appointments were announced. Among the new leaders were chapter vice chiefs and chapter women's division vice chiefs as well as chapter chiefs for the young men's and young women's divisions. Each new leader emanated a strong sense of commitment to work for kosen-rufu that was both pleasant and inspiring to behold.

Once the announcements were made, Shin'ichi hastened to the roof. He was concerned

about the members waiting outside. When he looked down, he saw that many of them were still standing there. They seemed reluctant to return home.

A speaking platform and microphone had been set up on the roof. Event staff had anticipated the possibility that President Yamamoto might go up there and had made the necessary preparations so that he could address the members outside.

Spontaneously, Shin'ichi stepped onto the platform. Waving to the members below, he began to speak: "Thank you all for coming in this heat!"

The crowd roared with joy.

*(To be continued)*