

**The New Human Revolution
Volume 6, Chapter 5
Young Eagles**

BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 17–19 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.

A solemn atmosphere pervaded the room. With serious expressions, everyone sat up straight and listened to Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

“The Goshō is scripture, a compilation of the Buddha’s words,” he continued. “Every word and phrase are important. And especially when it comes to ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,’ if we seek to understand it deeply, we should first read it aloud again and again in a clear, strong voice — to the point where we have practically memorized it.

“Also, we should read the Goshō in action, word and thought. This means resolving to live according to the Goshō, sharing its philosophy with others and practicing its teachings ourselves. Our actions must match our convictions. That is the attitude with which to approach the study of Buddhism, and it is also a basic premise of Eastern philosophy.”

The participants felt as if they had been jolted awake. They couldn’t help feeling ashamed that until that moment they had simply assumed it was enough to just sit back and listen to the lectures.

Shin’ichi returned to “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” to examine each passage in detail. He started again from the beginning:

The Orally Transmitted Teachings state:

Namu derives from Sanskrit and here [in Japan] it is called *kimyo*, which means devoting one’s life. There is devotion to the Person and devotion to the Law. Devotion to the Person means devoting one’s life to Shakyamuni, and devotion to the Law means devoting one’s life to the Lotus Sutra. (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708)

“The reason that ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ begins with a discussion of Nam-myōho-renge-kyō,” Shin’ichi explained, “is that Nam-myōho-renge-kyō is the basis of all sutras and the heart of the Lotus Sutra. Concerning Nam-myōho-renge-kyō, the Daishōnin tells us that *namu* derives from Sanskrit [*namas*], the literary language of ancient India, and that it translates as *kimyo* in Japanese. *Kimyo* means totally dedicating one’s life.

“There are two objects of that dedication: the Person and the Law. The Person is Shakyamuni as interpreted from the perspective of the Daishōnin’s Buddhism. In other words, Nichiren Daishōnin, the original Buddha, who is the object of fundamental respect in terms of the Person. The Law is Nam-myōho-renge-kyō, which is the Lotus Sutra of the Latter Day of the Law and the object of fundamental respect in terms of the Law. Therefore, true devotion is devotion to the object of fundamental respect — the Gohonzon — of the oneness of the Person and the Law as revealed by Nichiren Daishōnin.

“All people are devoted to something. The samurai retainers of old were devoted to their lords, and during World War II, the Japanese people were called on to give themselves utterly to their nation. Today, we see people who are devoted to their work or to their company, as well as those who give up everything for the ones they love.

“The crucial thing to remember is that what you decide to devote yourself to or give your life to is what determines whether your life will be happy or unhappy. The Daishōnin teaches us that the highest, most fundamental kind of devotion is to the Gohonzon of the oneness of

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the Person and the Law — that is, to Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.”

Shin’ichi spoke with increasing force: “More specifically, we might say that this devotion is dedicating ourselves to the realization of kosen-rufu with the resolve to widely propagate Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the Gohonzon of the oneness of the Person and the Law as our life’s purpose and lifelong goal. This is the path that leads to absolute happiness.

“I’m sure some of you regard expressions such as *not begrudging one’s life* and *dedicating one’s life to Buddhism* as encouraging a sort of self-sacrifice, some kind of tragic self-immolation. But the state of mind underlying the devotion I am talking about is entirely different. It is a state of complete, self-assured calm and peace, a state utterly without fear. It is a feeling as expansive and serene as the clear blue sky, a fullness of hope, joy and total satisfaction — a state of being ultimately free and true to yourself.

“Devotion to the Mystic Law means breaking through your lesser self, the small you that has been driven and hounded by all kinds of petty, selfish wants and desires. It means returning to your greater self, the self that is one with the universe, that is as vast as the cosmos itself.

“When you accomplish that, you will shine with your highest human potential. The process by which this comes about is called human revolution.”

Shin’ichi moved on to the next passage:

Ki [of *kimyo*] means returning to the unchanging entity of truth revealed in the theoretical teaching. *Myo* [of *kimyo*] means conforming to the responsive wisdom of truth revealed in the essential teaching. Devotion is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo itself. A commentary says, “Both the unchanging and the responsive are encompassed in a life-moment; one tranquil and the other illuminating.” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)

This passage had given virtually every member of the group trouble. No matter how hard they tried to study it in preparation for the lecture, they had all eventually thrown in the towel. At the time, there were no good commentaries to assist anyone who wanted to study the Orally Transmitted Teachings.

The only reference book available was an edition of *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* — compiled by the head temple [and published by the Soka Gakkai] just the year before, 1961 — which contained the Chinese text of the Lotus Sutra and its opening and closing sutras with a parallel Japanese translation. This scarcity of reference material only made the students more eager to hear what Shin’ichi would say.

“Here,” Shin’ichi continued, “the Daishonin discusses the meaning of *kimyo*, devoting one’s life, in terms of its two elements, *ki* and *myo*. I’m sure you must have struggled with this passage.

“The Daishonin starts by saying that *ki* means returning to the unchanging entity of truth revealed in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra. He then goes on to say that *myo* means conforming to the responsive wisdom of truth revealed in the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

“The unchanging entity of truth is the ultimate truth that remains eternal throughout time and space. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the absolute, fundamental truth of the universe. By chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we align ourselves with this basic universal law. This is what it means to return to the unchanging entity of truth.”

Shin’ichi lectured with all his concentration and energy. Sweat gathered on his brow, but he didn’t stop to wipe it.

He continued: “The responsive wisdom of truth, meanwhile, is the true Buddha wisdom, which responds to circumstances that are constantly changing in accord with various causes and conditions. It describes the function of Buddhahood, the highest state of life manifested through faith.

“The unchanging entity of truth is the ultimate truth of the Mystic Law. Manifesting the power and function of the Mystic Law in our daily lives is the key to achieving happiness. Faith in the Mystic Law enables us to tap infinite life force and Buddha wisdom from within to surmount our problems and sufferings, to achieve our human revolution and to transform our lives. All activities directed toward value creation correspond to conforming to the responsive wisdom of truth.

“To use another allegory, the Gosho, which teaches the eternal, unchanging, absolute truth, might be described as an expression of the unchanging entity of truth. Our earnest study of the Gosho right now corresponds to returning to the unchanging entity of truth. Later, when we understand the teachings of the Gosho through faith and wisdom, make them the basis of our philosophy toward life and society, and proceed to apply that philosophy to our activities in society and the world, we are conforming to the responsive wisdom of truth.

“This formula can be applied to anything. For example, a microphone picks up voices and sounds, transforms them into electronic signals and communicates those voices and sounds to many other people. Understanding the operation of the microphone corresponds to returning to the unchanging entity of truth. Now imagine turning on the switch of the microphone, allowing electricity to run through the system and actually using the microphone for some purpose. You can think of this as conforming to the responsive wisdom of truth.

“Why does the Daishonin use this phrase from the theoretical teaching in connection with the unchanging entity of truth? Because it is in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra that for the first time the true aspect of all phenomena is revealed, and all things in the universe are identified as entities of Myoho-renge-kyo, of the principle of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms. The theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra also expounds for the first time that practitioners of the two vehicles [Learning and Realization] as well as women and evil people have the potential to attain enlightenment.

“In other words, the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra reveals the absolute and unchanging truth that all living beings and the universe itself are entities of the Mystic Law. That is why this phrase from the theoretical teaching appears in this passage. But though the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra teaches us that all living beings are Buddhas, that each of us is an entity of the Mystic Law, that we possess the Buddha nature in theory, this abstract knowledge alone will not enable us to transcend our real problems and sufferings.

“It remains only a concept. The difference between the theoretical and the actual is as marked as night and day.”

(To be continued)