

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 5
Young Eagles
By HO GOKU – Illustrated by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 28–29 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.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto answers the question ‘What kind of life does Devadatta represent?’ and starts new Goshō lecture series outside Tokyo.

The more Shin’ichi Yamamoto spoke, the more passion infused his words. “Also, when carrying out Soka Gakkai activities or facing the Gohonzon, our inner state of life, our attitude, is important,” he said. “If we allow ourselves to become lazy and lapse into practicing Buddhism merely out of habit, or if we practice reluctantly or halfheartedly, we will never discover true joy or happiness. Nor will we attain Buddhahood.

“But if we are genuinely committed and dedicated to faith, our Soka Gakkai activities will bring us joy, we’ll glow with health, and we’ll bring greater wisdom and creativity to our work. Even though we may encounter obstacles or sufferings in life, we will confidently transform them into good — turning poison into medicine — and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

“And though things may be going well at the moment, if you lose your faith, ultimately your life will end in sad defeat. Success in life is apparent in how we live our last years, in whether we can face death with joy, dignity and peace of mind. That also determines whether we are on a course toward eternal happiness.

“While Christianity teaches of a ‘last judgment,’ Buddhism expounds that no omnipotent being judges humanity — rather, our future is determined by the law of cause and effect inherent in life itself. Heaven and hell are right here in our own lives. The Daishonin said of the sufferings of the state of Hell: ‘Once one falls into such an evil state, even a throne or the title of general means nothing. He is no different from a monkey on a string, tormented by the guards of hell’ (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 254).

“When confronted with the enormous suffering and pain of the state of Hell, rank, privilege and social position mean nothing. Subject to the tortures of this life state, one is indeed a monkey on a string.

“From the perspective of the eternity of life as well, whether our final years are marked by triumph is an important concern. That is why it is important to walk the supreme path of faith to the end.”

On another occasion at one of the lecture sessions, Takao Harayama, a Waseda University student and son of Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama, asked, “What kind of life does Devadatta represent?” [Devadatta was a disciple of Shakyamuni who turned against him.]

Looking deeply into Harayama’s eyes, Shin’ichi replied: “Mr. Toda used to say that Devadatta is a symbol of envy, particularly of the kind often seen in men. Envy or jealousy is at the root of all attempts to block the advance of the Soka Gakkai and stop kosen-rufu.

“Every human being has some of Devadatta inside. Buddhist practice is the way we fight against the Devadatta within. Faith is a struggle between the Buddha and our inner negative forces. You must not lose.”

Years later, Takao Harayama became the head of the Soka Gakkai’s Study Department, but he allowed himself to be defeated by ambition and envy. He betrayed the Soka Gakkai

and became a sad example of one who abandoned his faith.

The lectures on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” proved a remarkable impetus to the student division’s development. By the end of June the following year, 1963, the division’s membership had grown to 20,000.

That growth was accompanied by reorganization, with the number of corps gradually increasing. Shin’ichi suggested that the chiefs of the new corps also participate in these lectures. Half-jokingly, he started calling the original participants the 1st class and the new members who joined midway the 1st-and-one-half class.

The plan had been for the lecture series to continue a year. But with the new participants, it was extended through July 1964. By then, many of the original members had graduated from college and already had jobs. Shin’ichi, wishing to nurture the younger student division members, then decided that he would continue lecturing on the Orally Transmitted Teachings to a new, 2nd class of students.

His lectures to the 1st class covered the first volume of “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” and also the beginning of the second volume. The lectures on the first volume were recorded, the text edited, and after some additions and revisions by Shin’ichi, published on April 2, 1965, as *Lectures on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,”* volume 1. A month later on May 3, immediately after the Soka Gakkai Headquarters General Meeting, Shin’ichi handed out certificates of completion to 44 members of the 1st class.

Shin’ichi had created the certificates with the intention that they indicate the qualification of these members to lecture on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” wherever they might go in the world. All of the participants who had devoted themselves so intently to his lectures — lectures he had delivered with his whole heart and life — had grown and matured remarkably. Shin’ichi was deeply moved to see these courageous young eagles holding their new certificates, their pride in their accomplishment evident in their appearance and bearing.

In addition to his lectures in Tokyo, in September 1963, Shin’ichi began a yearlong lecture series for Kyoto University students on the Gosho “The 106 Comparisons.” When those lectures came to an end, starting in November 1964, he began a lecture series on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” for Kansai student division representatives. And in December of the same year, he began a lecture series on “The True Entity of Life” for Chubu student division representatives. It wasn’t until Dec. 22, 1965, that he resumed his lectures in Tokyo on “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” this time to an entirely new class of participants, continuing from where he had left off with the second volume.

(To be continued)