

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'AT THE HELM'**  
**VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 4, PARTS 7-8**

***The 900 Niigata and Uetsu members trapped on a train in a blizzard finally get off the train – they get to spend the night at Nagaoka members' homes.***

Throughout the train, members sang such Soka Gakkai songs as “Song of the Sons of Japan,” “Song of Kosen-rufu in Asia” and “Song of the New Century.” When they finished, they were refreshed and invigorated. In the cars that held discussion meetings following the songs, members stood up one after another to share their determinations.

One man’s eyes filled with tears as he spoke: “At first I was angry, wondering why, if this faith is supposed to bring us benefits, we had to go through this ordeal! But when I saw the Nagaoka members making their way to and from their homes so many times through the blizzard to bring us food—a trip of an hour and a half or two hours each way—I felt the warm, sincere spirit of the Gakkai.

“I am determined to work my hardest when I get back to Niigata to tell as many people as I can about Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism to spread this Gakkai spirit, this truly human spirit, widely in society.”

A woman stood up next, her cheeks flushed as she spoke: “The Daishonin says, ‘When great evil occurs, great good follows’ (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1119). I feel like shouting right now, ‘I’m so happy to be a Soka Gakkai member!’ I will turn this experience into strengthened resolve to gain great benefit and show actual proof of faith.”

The mood of the passengers completely transformed.

Meanwhile, the Nagaoka members were busy preparing more food, working without a break or even sleeping.

The next day, Jan. 26, rice balls were again delivered at breakfast and lunch. This time, not only were the stranded members provided with *miso* soup along with the rice, but they were also served generous portions of carrots, cabbage and other vegetables, out of the Nagaoka members’ desire to make the meals more nutritious.

Shortly after noon on Jan. 26, the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo telephoned Miyauchi Station. When Kinji Eda took the call, he heard the voice of General Director Koichi Harayama, who asked how the members were doing. He told Eda that the Headquarters was requesting additional assistance from nearby chapters and taking every possible step to help the Niigata and Uetsu members. He encouraged them to hang on and not lose heart. When Eda told his fellow members about the phone call, they cheered, fresh courage surging through them at news of the Headquarters’ efforts.

A little after 3:00 p.m., the stationmaster came to inform Eda that in the evening the train would move on one stop to Nagaoka Station.

“That’s great to hear,” Eda replied. “By the way, will we be able to find lodgings in Nagaoka?”

The stationmaster apologized: “I don’t think so. I asked the staff at Nagaoka Station to see what they could do, but all the lodgings are full with passengers from other delayed trains. I’m very sorry, but I’m afraid you’ll have to try to arrange something for yourselves.”

Using the phone at Miyauchi Station, Eda called Nagaoka Chapter Leader Masashi

Takekawa. There was nothing for him to do but ask the Nagaoka members to put the stranded passengers up in their homes. Knowing how hard the Nagaoka members had already been working to make and deliver food for them, it pained Eda to have to impose on them further. However, the passengers could not remain in the train any longer. Several of them had heart conditions or other chronic illnesses. It was amazing that they were still in high spirits.

When Takekawa heard Eda's request, he promptly replied: "Leave it to me. Don't worry. I'll get to work right away to arrange places for you to stay. We have to help each other out in times of difficulty."

These words brought tears to Eda's eyes. "I am so sorry to have to impose on you this way. Thank you very much." As he spoke, he bowed repeatedly, as if wishing to communicate his profound gratitude to Takekawa with his entire being.

Hearing that they would be spending the night at the homes of their fellow members in Nagaoka, the Niigata and Uetsu members cheered with joy.

At long last, the train started to move. Some 60 hours had passed since it had stopped at Miyauchi Station at 3:30 a.m. on Jan. 24. The train moved slowly, inching its way forward through the blizzard. It stopped several times, but at 5:00 p.m., finally arrived at Nagaoka Station.

Nagaoka Chapter members were waiting to greet them. The 900 passengers were divided into small groups of three to five people and led off to the homes where they would sleep that night. A few homes had accepted as many as 20 or 30 overnight guests.

Within an hour of the train pulling into Nagaoka Station, all of the Niigata and Uetsu members were on their way to Nagaoka members' homes. The station personnel couldn't believe it. With as many as 900 passengers, experience had led them to expect much confusion and chaos. They were sure that it would take at least two hours to get everyone off to the right destination, and they assumed that some would be left without a place to go.

Deeply impressed, one of the station hands said: "It's amazing that lodgings for all these people under these circumstances should have been arranged so quickly. That's the Soka Gakkai for you! Seeing this has given me an appreciation for the strength of people united in faith and the incredible kindness and consideration of Soka Gakkai members."

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the  
novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto.  
The events take place in 1963.