

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

By HO GOKU

Translation 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 Daishonin'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.

Goro 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 Goshō.

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.

In a clear, vibrant voice, Shin'ichi Yamamoto addressed the throng of members standing outside:

"During the Pacific War, Okinawa was sacrificed by Japan's military to forestall an Allied invasion of the main islands. And many Okinawans died as a result.

"But in the Soka Gakkai's struggle for kosen-rufu, not a single person will be sacrificed. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism guarantees that all human beings will eventually find happiness. Let us work together cheerfully and gladly, enjoying to the fullest the happiness we achieve as we transform Okinawa into a haven of lasting peace and prosperity.

"Let's sing 'Heroes of Okinawa' together now. I'll conduct."

This was met with an immediate ovation. As he opened his fan and raised it high over his head, a strong, rhythmic clapping began below. Shin'ichi's movements were dignified and decisive. The voices of the Okinawa members rose clear and strong into the blue sky, in perfect time with Shin'ichi's motions.

*Now, as dawn breaks
On the spread of the True Law,*

The once devastated islands of Okinawa....

The concrete of the roof of the new Headquarters was scorching hot in the Okinawa sun. Rivers of sweat began to pour from Shin'ichi's body as he led the song, but he continued his dance, graceful as a mighty eagle soaring through endless skies.

Tears shone on the sunburned faces of the members as they sang with all their hearts. They sensed in President Yamamoto's powerful movements his devotion to them and their cause. They knew he would fight for them with his life.

When the song had finished, Shin'ichi wiped his brow with his fist and addressed the crowd again: "Take care of yourselves, and let's meet again soon!"

It was impossible to calculate the effect that Shin'ichi's solemn dance had on the spirits of the Okinawa members, the energy and courage it had stirred in them. The sight of Shin'ichi on the roof was emblazoned forever in each of their hearts. Earnest dedication always strikes a chord in the hearts of others, creating a resonant symphony of human emotion.

That evening, the Soka Gakkai directors who had accompanied Shin'ichi to Okinawa from the Tokyo Headquarters split up to give Gosho lectures or attend meetings with local members in five different areas, including the main cities of Naha and Nago.

The next day, before returning to Tokyo, Shin'ichi visited the sites of some of the bloodiest battles fought in Okinawa during the war. He also revisited the Star Lily Monument, which was dedicated to the Star Lily Corps' teenage nurses, who committed suicide in the face of Japan's defeat. Standing before the memorial, he seared the horror of the tragic war deep into his being, determined to launch himself on the vast journey for kosen-rufu, determined to realize Josei Toda's dream of world peace.

July 22. The westering sun brought a golden hue to the fountain in Tokyo's Hibiya Park as groups of young men and women — student division members — walked toward the Hibiya Civic Hall for the 5th Student Division General Meeting. The young men's crisp white shirts gleamed with a dazzling freshness.

Over the past year, the student division had grown phenomenally, doubling from 6,000 to 12,000 members. Now students who had gathered from all over Japan were waiting eagerly for their general meeting to begin. When President Yamamoto appeared on the stage just before 6:00 p.m., thunderous applause greeted him.

The general meeting opened with everyone joining in a rousing chorus of a Gakkai song, followed by a progress report highlighting the last year's dynamic growth. Experiences were given by a number of members and a research presentation on the relationship between religion and government was made. Next, the new student division song, "Young Reformers," was introduced.

At their May 23 meeting, President Yamamoto and student division representatives had decided to compose a new song, and it was now complete.

*Behold! Like a raging wildfire
Voices of reform fill the heavens
Morning has dawned after the long night of waiting
And we gaze up at our scarlet flag of revolution....*

It was a powerful song, evoking courage and ambition. It was perfectly suited to the student division, the mission of which was to blaze the trail to social reform. Laying the division's reputation on the line, Student Division Chief Goro Watari and other members had worked long and hard to ensure that this song was ready in time for the general meeting.

Shin'ichi sat on the stage, nodding his approval and clapping his hands in time with the music along with the rest of the audience.

Next, new leadership appointments were announced. First, four young men and women were announced as standing secretaries of the student division. Then, the formation of 14 corps and the appointment of corps chiefs were announced.

The student division was led by a chief and vice chiefs, with the standing secretaries forming the core staff. It was further divided vertically into corps, groups and units. But there were still many parts of the country in which a corps had not yet been organized. At this meeting, corps were at last established in those areas.

Thus, there were now 22 corps for the young men's students and 13 for the young women's students, bringing the total number to 35. A secretariat was also established, as were five new committees dealing with organization, sports, public relations, publishing and the arts.

Behind the podium were the student division flags that Shin'ichi and the representatives decided on May 23 to have designed — one scarlet flag for the division overall and 35 navy flags for each of its corps.

Shin'ichi then formally presented these flags, handing the scarlet divisional flag to Goro and a navy flag to each of the 35 corps chiefs.

The scarlet flag and the navy flags bore the same design. In the center of each was a valiant young eagle holding a globe in its talons, its wings spread as if just about to take flight.

Across the top of the flag were the words *Soka Gakkai* and across the bottom, *Student Division*, all in white. The flagpoles were painted black and capped by shining lance-shaped ornaments.

Division member and art student Akiyoshi Takashima had designed the flags at the request of Goro, who had asked him to come up with something fresh and stylish. Takashima had pondered the matter for some time. After chanting a great deal of daimoku about it, he settled on an idea. Since President Toda had stressed the importance of global citizenship and President Yamamoto placed great hopes in the student division propagating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings throughout the world, he would make the theme of the flag "Soaring Boldly Into the World."

Takashima decided to incorporate planet Earth into his design, but wondered what he could use to symbolize this intrepid launching. He continued to chant daimoku about it, and as he did so recalled the Goshō passage "This sutra [the Lotus Sutra] is superior to all other sutras. It is like the lion king, the monarch of all creatures that run on the ground, and like the eagle, the king of all creatures that fly in the sky" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 249). He also remembered the lyrics of "Song of the New Century": "In the vast unfolding sky / young eagles soar...."

"That's it!" he thought. "An eagle! A young eagle!" He drew a globe and an eagle, which would stand out in white against the flag's background. But what color should the

background be? After much experimentation, he narrowed his choices down to scarlet, symbol of passion and enthusiasm, and navy, symbol of intelligence and wisdom. Student division representatives met to consider the design that he had produced in two separate colors. Everyone liked the concept of the young eagle and the globe, but they differed on which color was best for the background. Those who liked scarlet noted that this was the color of the flag in the Nagarjuna story and the best way to symbolize their passion for world peace. Those who preferred navy said that it was the most fitting symbol for the student division, since being a student meant pursuing knowledge and wisdom; they thought it more refined for a flag and would not concede.

The debate continued for some time, without any sign of resolution. Eventually, they decided to solicit the opinion of a top youth division leader. After examining the design in its two different versions, he said: “This reddish one looks like a labor union flag. I think the blue one is better.” But the members who preferred scarlet were not convinced. Finally, they all decided to let President Yamamoto be the judge.

Goro brought the two flag designs to Shin’ichi for his opinion. When he heard Goro’s explanation, Shin’ichi smiled and said: “I see. It’s great that everyone was enthusiastic enough to have such a heated discussion, but now you’ve reached a point where you can’t come to a decision. That sounds just like our opinionated student division, I must say.” Shin’ichi compared the two versions carefully, looking at each again and again. “I can see your problem,” he said finally. “Each definitely has its strengths. It’s hard to abandon either one entirely...”

“So, how about this: Let’s have two flags — the scarlet one for the student division as a whole, and the navy flag will be for each of the corps across Japan. Combined, the student division will have flags that represent both the passionate commitment of scarlet and the intellect and wisdom of navy.”

It was a good solution. Goro’s troubled expression gave way to a bright smile. “Yes, that’s a great idea!” he exclaimed. “We’ll do just that.”

Shin’ichi continued: “You can see how hard it is to get people to agree on even such a simple thing as the color of a flag. Reaching a consensus among all the people of a big organization is no easy thing. I want the members of the student division to acquire that ability, because your mission is to be leaders of leaders — at the very forefront of our movement — who will shoulder the entire responsibility for kosen-rufu. I’ll do everything I can to help foster the student division members.”

Shin’ichi’s words impressed upon Goro his great expectations for the student division.

And now on the Hibiya Civic Hall stage, Goro and the head of each student division corps received a flag from President Yamamoto. The flags were solid and heavy; in accepting them, the members sensed the weight of responsibility that the student division bore.

After the flag presentation, representatives from among the newly appointed leaders gave resolutions.

Then Goro rose to the podium, speaking of the high expectations that people both within and outside the Soka Gakkai had for the student division and announcing the doubling of the membership that year. Finally, he urged the student division members that “the time has come for us to take on a serious challenge. I propose that our goal for

the next year be to reach a membership of 20,000, with all members firm and strong in faith and absolutely dedicated to their studies. Let us advance toward our goal of kosen-rufu with the youthful passion represented by our scarlet flag and the intellect represented by our navy one!”

His words met an immediate burst of supportive applause.

After greetings by the youth division chief, the general director and other leaders, President Yamamoto rose to the podium for his lecture amid thunderous applause.

“Thank you all for coming today and sitting so patiently in this hot weather,” Shin’ichi began. “I am the last speaker, so I hope you’ll bear with me just a little longer.”

Shin’ichi delivered his speech in an informal, intimate manner as if he were addressing a small gathering, honestly sharing his hopes for the development of the student division.

“The growth of the student division is the growth of the Soka Gakkai. The progress of the student division is the progress of kosen-rufu and directly linked to the progress of peace in Japan and throughout the world,” he declared. “I hope all of you will be aware of your great mission and move forward with profound confidence.”

Shin’ichi went on to say that leaders in various sectors of Japanese society had come to look upon the Soka Gakkai in a negative light, influenced by slanderous attacks or biased, uninformed reporting by some elements of the mass media. He called on the student division members to correct these misconceptions and create an understanding of the Soka Gakkai’s real nature and the rectitude of the causes it champions.

As an example of such misconceptions, he said that some had claimed the Soka Gakkai was determined to make Nichiren Shoshu Japan’s national religion. “At the young men’s division general meeting four years ago [1958],” he said, “I clearly stated that the Soka Gakkai has no intention of making Nichiren Shoshu the national religion. To do so would be a violation of the most basic tenets of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism.

“The Daishonin’s Buddhism is a teaching for the entire world. Nichiren Daishonin writes of establishing ‘the supreme object of worship on earth’ (MW-1, 81). The Daishonin never stated in any of his writings that his teaching should be made a national religion, nor have we in the Gakkai ever advocated such a thing. This is a completely baseless criticism.

“True religion is rooted in, directly linked to, the lives of the people. It spreads and develops among the people. If the government were to decree the Daishonin’s Buddhism the national religion, it would be forcing people to accept a religion by means of state authority. The Daishonin’s teachings would only be demeaned by such an action.

“His Buddhism is meant for all the world, for all humanity. If it were to be made the national religion of one country, the path of its worldwide spread would be blocked. In addition, any religion so designated would lapse into empty ritual and formalism, and no longer have the power to nurture true religious faith.”

Shin’ichi then added lightly: “Besides, if the Daishonin’s Buddhism became the national religion, we’d have no one left to introduce it to. It would then be hard to change our karma and accomplish our human revolution. We’d all be in big trouble!”

At the end of his speech, Shin'ichi Yamamoto made the following proposal: "I ask you of the student division to conduct a thorough investigation into which is superior, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism or other philosophies and systems of thought such as existentialism and Marxism. Please do research that is bold, objective and dogma-free, comparing these philosophies in terms of which provides a complete picture of human life, which offers the fundamental solution to human suffering, which best addresses the realities of daily living, and which can be fully verified by fact.

"And if through your research you conclude that this Buddhism is indeed the greatest of all philosophies and the only true means for leading humanity out of misery and toward happiness, then I ask you to put that conviction into action. Wholeheartedly embracing Nichiren Daishonin's magnificent teaching, please become friends and allies of the people, and devote your lives to helping those who are suffering find true fulfillment."

Shin'ichi had absolute faith in Buddhism. He knew that if the student division members earnestly carried out such a comparative study of the Daishonin's Buddhism and other philosophies, they would eventually come to realize which was the superior and most profound.

But many student division members at that time did not share the same unshakable faith. In the late 1950s and early '60s, many Japanese youth, galvanized by the debate over revisions to the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, had strong Marxist leanings. Although most student division members were beginning to recognize that without a human revolution or fundamental transformation in people's hearts and minds such as that brought about through Buddhist practice, there could be no true reformation of society, many still felt that the road of human revolution was the long way around.

The reactions of the student division members to the frequent student demonstrations against the proposed treaty revision had been varied. Some had been sympathetic to the demonstrations because they had friends who participated, though they themselves refused to. Others, convinced that social revolution was the first priority, had participated in the demonstrations, including the storming of the Japanese Diet compound on June 15, 1960, in which some student division members had been injured.

But a newly revised Security Treaty was enacted in spite of their efforts, and university campuses around Japan were swept with a desolate feeling of futility. This made the time particularly ripe to declare Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism the pivotal philosophy for realizing positive social change. But most of the student division members, not having delved fully into either Buddhism or the then–widely prevalent Marxist philosophy, were unable to assert the superiority of the Daishonin's teaching with confidence.

Shin'ichi wanted the students to have a strong desire for knowledge. That was what it meant to be a student, he believed.

Without serious inquiry, one cannot fully appreciate the true value of the principles and philosophy of Buddhism. The more one studies and compares the Daishonin's teaching with other religions and philosophies, the more one becomes aware of its excellence.

The 5th Student Division General Meeting concluded with a rousing rendition of the new division song, "Young Reformers," led by Goro Watari, student division chief.

Stepping down from the stage, Shin'ichi headed toward the audience seating area and then exited the hall via one of the aisles, waving and calling out to the members as he went.

It was a gesture expressing his desire to advance side-by-side with the student division members toward kosen-rufu.

The next morning, Goro went to thank Shin'ichi for attending the previous day's general meeting.

"It was my pleasure," Shin'ichi said. "And congratulations! It looks like the student division has made a fresh start."

"Yes, I believe so," agreed Goro. "Today, I've come to ask you again about lecturing us on the Gosho."

"Don't worry, I haven't forgotten," Shin'ichi assured him. "We'll start soon. How about the end of August for our first lecture? Let's aim for one lecture a month, and I think 40 or 50 members, men and women, would be a good size for such a gathering.

"Universities today are conducting education more and more like a mass production assembly line, and we don't want that. The group can be made up mainly of the student division leaders who have participated in our informal meetings along with some representatives from Kansai and other areas.

"As for the Gosho we'll study, let's make it the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.' Seeing that the lectures will be for the student division, I feel we should study something a little difficult."

"Yes...uh, thank you!" Goro stumbled over his words, unable to conceal his surprise and reservation.

"Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" is a vital collection of the most profound teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Goro was worried whether the members would be able to follow lectures on such a difficult subject.

Noting his expression, Shin'ichi said with a smile: "When you and others formed the Tokyo University Lotus Sutra Study Group and attended lectures on the Lotus Sutra by President Toda based on the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,' you had only just joined the Soka Gakkai. Don't worry! The student division leaders today are ahead of where you were then. They are all members of the Soka Gakkai Study Department. They'll do just fine — you'll see.

"Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' represents the quintessence of all systems of thought and philosophy. It fully elucidates the principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — its view of life, religion, the cosmos. The time has now come for the Soka Gakkai to apply those principles to realizing human happiness and prosperity in every realm, including government, business, education, art, literature and journalism. That is why I want the student division leaders to study the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' and gain a profound understanding of the matchless philosophy and principles of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

"From among the student division members I personally train, I am determined to foster the Soka Gakkai's successors and great leaders of society."

Shin'ichi's words deeply moved Goro.

Goro quickly related to the other student division leaders that President Yamamoto planned to lecture to them on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings." They

were overjoyed. Selection of the lecture series' participants progressed under Goro's direction.

Shin'ichi, for his part, spared no effort in preparing for the lectures. He pondered long and deeply each night, racking his brains over how to best teach and communicate the essence of this ultimate Buddhist scripture to the students.

He recalled being invited to sit in on what was President Toda's final lecture on the Lotus Sutra to the student division's Tokyo University study group on Sept. 27, 1955. Like the other participants, Shin'ichi had been determined to engrave every single word of his mentor in his heart and mind. When the lecture was finished, Toda had said to the whole group: "In the future, if there is anything you don't understand, just ask Shin'ichi here. All right?"

"Yes!" everyone answered.

"Good," Toda continued. "Now, the next lecture will be my last in this series."

But as it turned out, the next lecture never took place. That night was effectively his final lecture in a two-and-a-half-year series with the group.

Shin'ichi couldn't help thinking of Toda's words on that occasion as his wish for the future — something he was calling on Shin'ichi to fulfill after he was gone. Shin'ichi felt it his mission to carry on Toda's work in giving lectures on the Lotus Sutra to the student division members, the next generation of Soka Gakkai leaders. He believed that his planned lectures on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" would serve that purpose.

Toda, who had awakened to the ultimate meaning of the Lotus Sutra while in prison, had lectured on the Lotus Sutra based on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" and had revitalized Buddhism as a fundamental philosophy of life in the modern age. Now, Shin'ichi, through his lectures on this key Goshō, hoped to reveal the philosophy of Nichiren Daishōnin's Buddhism as a guiding principle that would shape a new era.

The times called for such a fresh guiding principle. The escalating Cold War, fueled by the opposing ideologies of East and West, had cast a dark pall over hopes for human harmony. Though many protested vociferously against nuclear weapons, the great powers raced to increase their arsenals. In Japan, the cost of its "economic miracle" was just beginning to be felt in the form of serious environmental pollution. At the same time, all aspects of Japanese life — government and education particularly — were beginning to reveal their defects.

Shin'ichi believed the time had come for the life philosophy of Buddhism, the principle of human rights and the ethos of peace, to be transmitted to the world. Such were the thoughts that occupied his mind as he spent his days studying and carefully preparing for the lecture series.

Outside, cicadas trilled a lingering farewell to summer. The afternoon of Aug. 31, in a Japanese-style room in the Seikyo Shimbun Building, Shin'ichi Yamamoto began his first lecture to student division representatives on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings." The 40-or-so participants sat around the lecture table, happy and excited that their much-anticipated lecture series with President Yamamoto was about to get under way.

Shin'ichi took his seat behind the table and said, "Let's begin!" His voice was firm and confident.

At this first session, Student Division Chief Goro Watari read out the names of all the participants and briefly introduced them one by one, each student rising in response. Shin'ichi's intent gaze seemed to penetrate their beings, yet at the same time it warmed them with its compassion.

To Shin'ichi, these leaders of the student division — the last division Josei Toda formed before his death — were diamonds in the rough left to him by his mentor. He vowed to take these rough gems that possessed a potential for limitless brilliance and polish each of them with care and effort until they shone and sparkled as beautiful jewels of talent and ability.

After the students had all been introduced, Shin'ichi shared his thoughts:

"In the past, President Toda gave a series of lectures on the Lotus Sutra based on the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' to a group of members who were students at Tokyo University. Of those members, Mr. Watari and Mr. Fujiwara have gone on to become the student division chief and vice chief and as such are now taking central responsibility for the student division. They are also playing a very important role in the Soka Gakkai as a whole.

"As for each of you who have come here today to study the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' with me, from here on, I ask that you, too, without a single exception, develop yourselves to become exemplary leaders of the Gakkai and society as a whole. That is my earnest wish. For that reason, I am determined to put everything I have into these lectures, no matter how busy I may be with other matters.

"I also want you to know that I will be looking out for you as long as I live. I will be there to see how many of you go on to become outstanding leaders — great eagles and lions of faith — and who falls to the wayside or ends up turning against the Soka Gakkai.

"Buddhism is strict. Half measures won't work. Either you persevere in upholding faith throughout your life and attain Buddhahood, or you abandon your faith and suffer as a result. You may be active as top leaders of the Soka Gakkai for as long as 20 or 30 years, but unless you steadfastly maintain your faith to the very end, your life will be a failure, a defeat. And I don't want to see this happen to any of you."

Shin'ichi's voice rang with resolute conviction. Everyone listened intently, their expressions serious. No one so much as stirred or made a sound.

Shin'ichi then opened the Goshō and began to talk about the overall significance and background of the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings":

"The 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' is a record of Nichiren Daishonin's lectures on the most important passages of the Lotus Sutra. The lectures, given at the request of his disciples and conducted at Mount Minobu, were written down by Nikko Shonin. And that record was approved by the Daishonin himself. Together with 'On the True Cause' and 'The 106 Comparisons' — two significant documents written by Nichiren Daishonin and entrusted directly to his legitimate heir and successor, Nikko Shonin — it is a work of momentous consequence, presenting as it does the quintessence of the Daishonin's teaching.

"The writing comprises two volumes. The first begins with a detailed explanation of Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō and then moves on to a discussion of the first 15 chapters of the

Lotus Sutra — from the ‘Introduction’ through the ‘Emerging From the Earth’ chapters. The second volume examines pivotal passages from the remaining 13 chapters — from ‘The Life Span of the Thus Come One’ through the ‘Encouragements of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy’ chapters.

“It also delves into the meaning of key passages from the Sutra of Immeasurable Meanings and the Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, which are regarded respectively as the opening and closing sutras to the Lotus Sutra. [Together, the Lotus Sutra and these two bracketing sutras are commonly referred to as the Threefold Lotus Sutra.] There is also an appendix at the end of the second volume containing sections entitled ‘One Important Passage From Each of the 28 Chapters’ and ‘All 28 Chapters Are Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.’

“Each section of the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ is basically structured as follows: After excerpting a key passage from the Lotus Sutra or the opening and closing sutras, commentaries on that passage by such great Buddhist teachers as T’ien-t’ai and Miao-lo are cited, and then — preceded by the phrase ‘The orally transmitted teachings state’ — the teachings of the Daishonin’s Buddhism of Sowing implicit beneath the textual surface of the Lotus Sutra are clarified.

“These teachings represent the pinnacle of human philosophy and thought, covering a broad spectrum of principles concerning religion, life, human happiness, the universe and society, in terms of both faith and daily living.”

When Shin’ichi had given the students a basic overview of the writing’s structure, he said: “Now let’s begin our study of the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,’ exploring it together both in principle and in practice!”

He then asked for a volunteer to read its opening lines aloud.

For a moment, no one raised a hand. Then, slowly, a few hands went up. Shin’ichi picked one student, who stood and began to read, his voice weak and hesitant:

Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
The Orally Transmitted Teachings state, “*Namu* derives from Sanskrit and here [in Japan] it means devotion....” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)

When the reader finished, Shin’ichi said with some severity: “What lackluster reading! When we read the Gosho, we should do so with the profound conviction that we are reading the truth, the absolute truth — that this is exactly how it is. In other words, we should read with faith, seek with faith and understand with faith.

“Western philosophy may begin from doubt, but when we are studying Buddhism, we must begin with faith. Even Shariputra, who was said to be foremost in wisdom among Shakyamuni’s disciples, attained enlightenment not through his knowledge or intellectual powers but through faith.”

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

“The Gosho is scripture, a compilation of the Buddha’s words,” he continued. “Every word and phrase is 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-myōhō-renge-kyō,” Shin'ichi explained, “is that Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō is the basis of all sutras and the heart of the Lotus Sutra. Concerning Nam-myōhō-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-myōhō-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 the Person and the Law — that is, to Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō.”

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-myōhō-renge-kyō 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-enge-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-enge-kyo is the absolute, fundamental truth of the universe. By chanting Nam-myoho-enge-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-enge-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.”

In these installments, President Yamamoto continues his lecture to students on the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.’ While giving a detailed background on certain passages of the Gosho, he emphasizes that halfhearted Buddhist study won’t do anyone any good.

Though all the students at Shin’ichi Yamamoto’s lecture had had a hard time understanding this passage when they studied it on their own, they found themselves gradually coming to grasp its intent as they listened to his explanation.

“However,” Shin’ichi continued, “when we enter the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the True Cause, True Effect and True Land — when, where and how Shakyamuni originally became a Buddha — are elucidated. In other words, when, in the essential

teaching, the principle of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms is expounded in terms of Shakyamuni's life and deeds, the means of attaining Buddhahood are revealed. That is why the phrase "revealed in the essential teaching" appears next to "the responsive wisdom of truth."

"From the perspective of the Daishonin's Buddhism, though, both the unchanging entity of truth of the theoretical teaching and the responsive wisdom of truth of the essential teaching of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra are still merely concepts, merely theoretical teachings. That is because even the essential teaching of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra cannot lead living beings to enlightenment today in the Latter Day of the Law.

"If we were to liken Nichiren Daishonin and the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws of the Latter Day to buildings, then the 28 chapters of the Lotus Sutra could be likened to the architect's plan or blueprint. A plan is needed to build a house, but in the end it is not the blueprint but the house itself that is important.

"In 'The True Object of Worship,' the Daishonin writes: 'Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained are all contained within the single phrase, Myoho-enge-kyo. If we believe in that phrase, we shall naturally be granted the same benefits as he was' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 64). The practice that led to Shakyamuni's attainment of Buddhahood and the virtues he accrued as a Buddha are all contained in the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo. That is, in the Gohonzon. Accordingly, if we chant daimoku with faith in the Gohonzon, we will receive all the virtues that the Buddha received. That is why, when the Daishonin says, 'Devotion is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo itself' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708), he is proclaiming that to attain true, absolute happiness, we must devote our lives to the Gohonzon.

"Next, let us turn to the passage '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). The commentaries that the Daishonin cites in his writings are interpretations of passages from the sutras expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha by such great Buddhist teachers as T'ien-t'ai of China and Dengyo of Japan. In addition to such commentaries on the sutras, the Daishonin cites philosophical treatises on principles contained in the sutras by such Buddhist scholars as Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu. The 'Treatise on the Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom' and the 'Treatise on the Ten Stages' are examples of such works [both are by Nagarjuna].

"As part of your preparation for our lectures on the Orally Transmitted Teachings, I want you to look carefully into all the passages quoted therein from sutras, commentaries and philosophical treatises, as well as what comes before and after the quoted sections. You won't be able to understand the Orally Transmitted Teachings correctly unless you do. In my studies of the Gosho, I have always referred directly back to the original text of any quoted scripture or work."

In this way, Shin'ichi instructed his students on the basics of Buddhist study.

Shin'ichi continued emphatically: "I want you to make 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' the inspiration and the model for your faith, your thinking and your way of living for the rest of your lives. That is why I want you to study it thoroughly and delve into its meaning. When you dig a well, you have to keep digging until you hit a source of water, or else you'll have dug in vain. Buddhist study is the same. Halfhearted study has no power to advance your faith.

“From our next meeting on, I want each of you to look up all the passages from sutras, commentaries, and philosophical treatises mentioned in the text. From now on, my lecture will be based on the assumption that you have done that, and that you understand them all, OK?”

All present indicated their unanimous agreement and resolve to comply with Shin’ichi’s request. With that, Shin’ichi began to lecture on the passage that reads, “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).

“‘The unchanging and the responsive’ again refers to the unchanging entity of truth and the responsive wisdom of truth,” he said. “*Life moment* means life as it exists at each moment. *Tranquil* means a condition in which the mind is calm and serene — the static aspect of life. On the other hand, *illuminating* means the shining forth of the light of wisdom — the dynamic aspect of life. In other words, both the unchanging entity of truth and the responsive wisdom of truth are contained within Myoho-enge-kyo, the entity of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms, and within our lives at each moment.

“For example, we identify water by the molecular formula H₂O. If we regard that as the unchanging entity of truth, then the way water changes in response to different circumstances — for instance, taking the form of ice, cold or hot water, or steam — represents the responsive wisdom of truth.”

At just that moment, Shin’ichi happened to catch the gaze of a serious-looking, bespectacled young man sitting in the second row — Kaoru Tahara, a student in the Economics Department of Tokyo University. Shin’ichi decided to use Tahara as his next example.

“Here we have a human being known as Kaoru Tahara,” he started. “Now he is here listening to this lecture, but at other times he also rides trains, eats and sleeps. He suffers, he feels anger, he experiences sadness and joy. But whatever he may be doing or feeling, he remains the same Tahara. There is an integrity to his being, or ‘law,’ that makes him who he is. This is also the unchanging entity of truth. His many different life activities, meanwhile, are the responsive wisdom of truth.

“The unchanging entity of truth and responsive wisdom of truth are simultaneously inherent in all things. This is the reality of life. And this is what is meant by the phrase ‘Both the unchanging and the responsive are encompassed in a life-moment; one tranquil and the other illuminating.’ Our mission is to bring forth the brilliance of our inner wisdom and, in accord with this principle of the Mystic Law, to create happiness and peace for all humanity.”

President Yamamoto concludes his first lecture to students on ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.’ When he opens the floor for questions, one student’s query about death leads to a surprising answer.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto went on to discuss the Buddhist view of life, citing examples from a variety of disciplines, including psychosomatic medicine and bacteriology, to explain the Buddhist principle of the oneness of body and mind. In addition, he compared Kant’s theories of time and space with the Buddhist concept of a life-moment, using this to reveal the profundity of Nichiren Buddhism’s philosophy of life.

He also quoted from other relevant writings of the Daishonin, such as “The Entity of the Mystic Law” and “The True Object of Worship.” He quoted widely and effortlessly

from diverse fields of inquiry, capturing his listeners' minds and keeping them enthralled to the end.

Shin'ichi then returned to the Orally Transmitted Teachings and discussed this passage:

They [the Orally Transmitted Teachings] also state:

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo combines *nam*, which derives from Sanskrit, with *myoho-rengekyo*, which derives from Chinese. Sanskrit and Chinese join in a single moment to form Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)

“*Nam* or *namu* is a phonetic transcription of the Sanskrit word *namas*,” Shin'ichi said, “while *myoho-renge-kyo* is the Japanese rendering of the Chinese translation — *miaofalianhua-jing* in Chinese — of the Sanskrit title of the Lotus Sutra. In other words, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo comprises the languages of ancient India and China.

“In the center of the Gohonzon are the words *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* — *Nichiren*. And *Nichiren* is Japanese. In addition, among the various figures on the Gohonzon representing the ten worlds, the names of two guardian deities — Wisdom King Immovable and Wisdom King Craving-Filled — appear on the right and left sides of the Gohonzon, respectively, in Sanskrit letters [in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, Wisdom King Immovable represents the principle that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana and Wisdom King Craving-Filled represents the principle that earthly desires are enlightenment]. This means that the Gohonzon, which is to be spread throughout the world, is written in the script of three countries: India, China and Japan. In the Japan of the Daishonin's time, this represented the entire world.

“Whenever I read the Orally Transmitted Teachings, I am deeply struck with the awareness that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is not meant for one country or people but for all of Asia and, indeed, the entire world. I am also convinced that this passage demonstrates that *kosen-rufu* in Asia and the world can in fact be achieved.

“The task of realizing this goal falls to you, the student division members. I want each of you to seriously consider how we can spread the Daishonin's Buddhism across the globe and lead all humanity to happiness. I have great hopes for you. That is why I selected for our studies ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,’ which contains the most profound doctrines of the Daishonin's Buddhism.”

Shin'ichi concluded his lecture for that day after covering the section on Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Everyone was impressed anew at the profundity of the Daishonin's teachings and recognized how intimately connected they were to their lives. They felt as if a mist that had been obscuring their vision had parted. They were refreshed, exhilarated, as though an invigorating shower had cleansed their beings.

Let's now hold a Q-and-A session,” Shin'ichi announced, opening the floor to the participants. “Please ask me anything you like.”

Several hands shot up energetically. Most of the questions concerned passages from the Orally Transmitted Teachings Shin'ichi had just lectured on.

After several others had asked questions, Hisashi Masuyama, a recent graduate from Hitotsubashi University working for the Overseas Department at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, asked: “In today's lecture, you explained the principle of the oneness of body and mind. But how does this unity of the physical and spiritual aspects of life apply to what happens to our life, or the entity of our existence, after death?”

It was a question Shin'ichi might have expected from the student division, fond as its members were of exploring theoretical issues. Shin'ichi addressed his reply to the entire group:

“How to deal with the question of death is an extremely important issue. Particularly since becoming Soka Gakkai president, I have given the question of what happens to one's life after death much serious thought, seeking illumination on the matter in the Goshō and the sutras.

“I have also been chanting daimoku and exerting myself earnestly in faith each day, hoping to experience the answer for myself, in the depths of my life. As a result, I have come to gain an understanding of this issue.

“But to discuss it with you now, with the limited time available, wouldn't allow you to gain much of an understanding. It's not that easy to grasp. In fact, it isn't something that can be understood intellectually. Rather, it is something that we grasp through faith, that we come to appreciate and understand with our lives. As you accumulate experience in faith, you will gradually come to understand this.

“I want you, Mr. Masuyama, to reach your own understanding of life and death. Study the Goshō and contemplate it for yourself. Chant daimoku and gain experience in faith. That's how you will achieve a personal understanding of this matter.

“In addition, you can explore it from a philosophical perspective — and perhaps in the future you will give a presentation to all of us on your findings. I, too, will keep working to deepen my understanding. Let's study and research this together.”

Shin'ichi's words warmed Masuyama's heart. Shin'ichi looked upon the participants as comrades and fellow envoys of the Buddha. They were younger than he was, but he never thought of their relationship as one between a superior and subordinates. He respected them all as equals, as individuals.

Shin'ichi could at times be severe. This was intended to spur the students on to greater efforts. But his fundamental attitude was that of studying with them, of them inspiring one another to grow. That was Shin'ichi's, and the Soka Gakkai's, basic attitude toward people.

Shin'ichi also hoped that as each member encountered a new issue or question, that person would take the initiative to study and explore it carefully, and use the resulting insight to help open the way for others.

The first lecture on ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ ends with Shin'ichi Yamamoto's answers to questions on writing for kosen-rufu and chanting daimoku in other languages. Shin'ichi has a warm, informal dialogue with the students, even inviting them to a movie.

The next question came from Akira Usuda, a Tokyo University law student. “Earlier,” Usuda began, “you explained the passage *kyō* [of Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō] represents the words and voices of all living beings’ (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708). You said that *kyō* of Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō, which literally means scripture, has a much broader meaning — that it refers not just to Buddhist scriptures but all the words and voices of all living beings in the universe. You also said that in the broadest sense it includes action and behavior, too. Does that mean that the articles and essays we write are also scriptures, or *kyō*?”

Usuda was an editor of the student division journal *Daisan Bummei* (The Third

Civilization). Working for kosen-rufu in the sphere of journalism, he wanted to know more about the significance of his work in the light of Buddhism.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto replied: "Writing is a concrete expression of language — of words, remarks and statements. In addition, it is an action. So of course it is included in the meaning of *kyo*."

"Nichiren Daishonin's writings, the Goshō, are also NŌR, or scripture. As a result, any article written out of a sincere wish to spread Buddhism is an example of 'the voice does the Buddha's work' (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708). Ideas, philosophies and principles are all communicated through writing. Communication is really the lifeline of kosen-rufu."

"Usuda, I want you to excel in the field of journalism, doing all you can to fight oppression and protect the people's rights. I'm really looking forward to seeing you do great things."

The members' earnest seeking spirit knew no bounds.

The next question was from Masaya Ueno, who had graduated from Keio University that spring and was now employed by the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's newspaper. "I'd like to ask about the passage 'Sanskrit and Chinese join in a single moment to form Nam-myoho-enge-kyo' (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708)," he said. "When members in the United States chant daimoku, they do so in Japanese. They say, 'Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.' In the future, won't it be necessary to translate Nam-myoho-enge-kyo into different languages, so that members in other countries can chant daimoku in their own language?" He seemed seriously concerned.

Shin'ichi replied without a moment's hesitation: "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is an eternal and unchanging Law, the supreme invocation. It will never be chanted in translation."

"Of course, it is perfectly acceptable to translate Nichiren Daishonin's writings into German in Germany, into English in the United Kingdom, and so forth. And to explain the Goshō in those languages so that our members there will come to fully understand the meaning and significance of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo."

"But daimoku will be the same wherever it is chanted. Daimoku is a universal language that is instantly understood by Buddhas."

"The Lotus Sutra is called the *Saddharma-pundarika-sutra* in Sanskrit, for example, but that doesn't mean we should chant, 'Namu Saddharma Pundarika Sutra' as the daimoku. It's a matter of sound and rhythm."

Everyone listened to Shin'ichi with great eagerness and enthusiasm. "For example," he continued, "each musical composition has a unique rhythm. Beethoven's works reflect his inner rhythm, which transcends the barriers of nationality, language and culture and affects all who hear it. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is a sound that creates unity with the law of the universe, the fundamental rhythm of the cosmos."

"Life responds to the vibrations of a voice intoning this sound. This is the marvelous property of daimoku. If Nam-myoho-enge-kyo were to be translated into other languages, its rhythm would be different from language to language. That's why it can't be translated."

After fielding as many as 20 questions, Shin'ichi brought the session to a close.

"Let's stop here today," he said. "Considering the time you will need to prepare, I want to schedule the next lecture for the end of October. Henceforth, our sessions will

begin with you reading and commenting on that session's section of 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.' After that, I'll lecture, and then we'll have a Q-and-A session, as we did today. Please study hard for our next lecture!"

Then Shin'ichi smiled warmly and said: "I'll bet you're all hungry. Today I'm going to treat you all to tempura on rice."

The students responded with pleasure and delight.

"I think it's almost ready, so please just relax and wait here."

Shin'ichi stretched his legs and looked at each person, one at a time. When he noticed a student who was rather wan, he asked, "Are you tired from working a part-time job?"

"No, I'm fine," the student replied.

"Are you getting enough to eat?" Shin'ichi persisted.

"Yes," the student said.

"All right, then," Shin'ichi said, "please try to look a little brighter and happier, if you can. You're making me worry!"

And then addressing everyone, he said: "The student division members should be serious, of course, but you also need to be lively and youthful. When you study, study hard. But take a break sometimes, too. Go see a movie or something. I wonder if any good films are playing right now? Let's all go see one together soon."

He then asked, "Are there any members from outside Tokyo here today?"

Several raised their hands.

"You must be tired. Do you have enough money to get back home?"

Everyone felt Shin'ichi's warm concern. The discussion was friendly and intimate, like a conversation between an older brother and his younger siblings.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto lectures to the student division members on the Buddhist view of earthly desires. 'The greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment,' he encourages them.

That evening, after the first lecture on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," Shin'ichi Yamamoto began inscribing published copies of *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* with the names of each of the participants. He had already presented copies to several of them on an earlier occasion, but he wanted to make sure all the students had one as a keepsake of their participation in the lecture series.

Shin'ichi squeezed what time he could from his busy schedule to prepare the books. As he wrote a dedication in each one, he thought of each student and prayed for his or her growth.

He imagined the members eventually spreading their wings and taking flight into the vast skies of their respective missions, and his heart raced with joy. He didn't at all mind staying up late to prepare the books.

Several days later, when he had finished, Shin'ichi brought the books to Student Division Chief Goro Watari and asked him to present them to each study group member. When the students opened the books, a heartwarming surprise awaited them. "Presented to" and the date were written there in Shin'ichi's distinctively bold, vigorous hand.

In the upper left, he had written the student's name in large characters. In the lower right, in smaller characters, he had written his own name and imprinted his seal.

These gifts made a deep impression on the students. Inspired by Shin'ichi's sincerity, they vowed to study even harder.

The lecture series proceeded smoothly from the second session on. The participants made certain to check in advance all the scriptural passages and commentaries quoted. They would meet before the lecture and share their results, helping one another greatly.

Sometimes two or three of these preparation meetings, each lasting four or five hours, would be held before a lecture. The lecture format changed slightly to reflect this: After the reading and interpretation of the Goshō passages, the students now also reported to Shin'ichi the results of their research. Then Shin'ichi would lecture.

The students made remarkable progress in their grasp of Buddhist principles. They absorbed everything, just as parched earth absorbs every drop of falling rain. Through his lectures, Shin'ichi was trying to communicate the true philosophy of Buddhism — a guiding force for ushering in a new age for all humankind — and transmit the Soka Gakkai spirit to his young listeners.

On one occasion, for instance, Shin'ichi commented on the passage from the Orally Transmitted Teachings that reads, “We burn the firewood of earthly desires and behold the fire of enlightened wisdom before our eyes” (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 710) [“Point 2. Concerning Ajnata Kaundinya (one of the five ascetics who heard Shakyamuni's first sermon)” from “Seven Points on the ‘Introduction’ Chapter (of the Lotus Sutra)”]. Shin'ichi explained:

“Traditional Buddhism has viewed earthly desires — and the sufferings that arise as the results of deluded cravings — as something to be rejected and denied. But here the Daishonin tells us that burning the firewood of earthly desires will summon forth the enlightenment and wisdom of Buddhahood.

“This is the distinguishing feature of the Daishonin's Buddhism. True Buddhism by no means rejects desires.”

Shin'ichi continued: “In the Hinayana teachings expounded before the Lotus Sutra, earthly desires were regarded as the cause of all the world's unhappiness, and the sutras taught that one should extinguish and eliminate all such desires. But human life cannot exist apart from desires, wants and aspirations. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches us how to use those yearnings and desires as a springboard to establish deep, lasting happiness.

“Your wanting to be at the top of your college class or to better yourself in life — these are earthly desires, worldly ambitions. An ardent wish to better our nation or realize world peace — these are also desires, noble ones.

“When our desires are firmly anchored in faith, we can ‘burn’ them to our heart's content. In fact, the greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment. That is the true spirit of Buddhism.”

Shin'ichi then discussed a passage in “Point 1. Concerning the ‘Expedient Means’ Chapter” [from “Eight Important Points on the ‘Expedient Means’”], which reads:

All phenomena in the universe contain 3,000 realms. This is called secret and mystic. *Secret* means strict and that all the 3,000 realms are present without exception in each phenomenon. There is nothing more wondrous than this. (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 714)

Going on to explain the strict law of cause and effect that governs life, Shin'ichi said:

“Here, the Daishonin states that *secret* of ‘secret and mystic expedient’ means strict. This passage is saying that the Mystic Law is the strict law of the universe, that which governs all things. This is because all phenomena in the universe are entities of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms and are without exception endowed with 3,000 constantly changing conditions.

“All of us, too, are entities of the Mystic Law. That’s why if we exert ourselves in faith, we will definitely attain Buddhahood. At the same time, it is also why none of us are exempt from this unbending causal law of life.

“In other words, the causes that determine our future are made right here, right now, in this life-moment. Our future is determined by our life at this moment, by what we are doing right now — and with what attitude or inner resolve.”

“Even though we have faith in and practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism, the attitude and commitment with which we go about our day-to-day activities are extremely important. You can always fool others — whether they be your colleagues or your seniors in faith. No one knows what’s going on in the deepest recesses of your heart, in your most private thoughts. *This* is truly secret.

“But we cannot fool the uncompromising law of cause and effect that governs all life. All pretense is in vain, since our present attitude and actions will become clearly manifest as future results. The reason I am so strict with you is that the Buddhist law of cause and effect is strict.

“For example, suppose a person lectures on the Goshō out of some sense of obligation, inwardly finding it a bothersome chore. While that person may appear to be in the world of Bodhisattva, in fact his or her mind is in the state of Hell. Giving the lecture becomes just an empty formality — simply going through the motions. The reluctant mind behind the lecture, the feeling of suffering, of having to perform an unpleasant duty, is the reality of the person’s life or state of mind at that moment.”

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 Goshō "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.

At a Goshō lecture, Shin'ichi Yamamoto reprimands the students for their lack of preparation. One of the leaders has hatched a plan to make the students look more prepared than they are, and Shin'ichi sees right though it.

For the student division participants, the lectures were like a furnace or forge where their lives merged and fused with the life of President Shin'ichi Yamamoto. They were always eager and happy at the prospect of seeing him, but they were also nervous. When they locked gazes with him, they felt he could see right through them, fully aware of what was in their hearts or what state of life they were in.

In fact, Shin'ichi was keenly attuned to their moment-to-moment feelings and thoughts. He had made himself familiar with the personality, thinking and circumstances of each participant. And above all, he had sent daimoku to them every day, praying for their growth and development.

The lecture series for the 2nd class was going well, but as it went on, the members became more relaxed. And in time, they started to grow lazy and complacent toward their preparation for the lectures. The usual pre-sessions were still held, organized by student division leaders under the direction of the division's senior vice chief, Takao Harayama, who was a graduate of the 1st class. But it was increasingly obvious the participants weren't studying enough. The student division leaders responsible for organizing and coordinating the lectures could see that if this continued, they would be reprimanded by President Yamamoto.

So it was that one of the leaders hatched a little plan: At the next lecture, all the members would raise their hands enthusiastically when President Yamamoto called on someone to explain a passage of the text — irrespective of whether or not they could describe its significance or meaning. Since this leader would serve as the moderator, he would select only those who had raised their hands the quickest and with the most confidence.

When it came to interpreting the more difficult passages, he would arrange in advance which students to call on. His intention was actually to protect his position, fearing that

the members' lack of study would be exposed, and that he would be held responsible in some way.

When the strategy was put into operation, at first everything seemed to go as planned. Everyone raised their hands, and the students selected by the moderator commented on the passages smoothly and confidently.

When Shin'ichi finished explaining one section, the moderator asked: "All right! Who wants to explain the next section?" Everyone raised their hands, volunteering enthusiastically. Shin'ichi abruptly stilled their voices, calling out in a sharp tone: "Stop this game! Why on earth are you doing this?" Shin'ichi knew immediately what the plan was and who had dreamed it up.

Some of the members could not understand what Shin'ichi was getting at, simply looking puzzled. But all of them knew that they hadn't studied enough.

The room went silent. Shin'ichi began to call on the members in the front row, one after another. None of them could read or interpret the passage satisfactorily. Some just sat there, shamefaced and at a loss for words.

Shin'ichi prepared for these lectures with an unequalled seriousness of purpose and commitment. "What a shame it is for student division representatives to stoop to this!" Shin'ichi's voice resounded with anger.

He didn't simply mean that it was a shame that they couldn't sufficiently explain the text — what disturbed and disappointed him so was the mentality of the leader who had tried to manipulate the situation to make himself look good.

But Shin'ichi didn't say much else.

"That's all for today," he announced, closing his Goshō. When the students saw the expression of deep sorrow in his eyes, they were ashamed of the casual attitude they had developed toward the lectures, and that they had neglected to prepare seriously.

The next lecture was completely different, however. Everyone studied hard and prepared carefully. Shin'ichi acted as if nothing had happened. He smiled at everyone, and went on with his lecture in a pleasant tone.

Beginning with the first lecture, held in late August 1962, this lecture series on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" allowed Shin'ichi to personally foster and educate the next generation of Soka Gakkai leaders.

Shin'ichi often told the members: "For 10 years, I thoroughly studied and learned the principles of kosen-rufu under Mr. Toda's tutelage. The mentor provides the principles, and the disciple puts them into practice.

"In the future, I want you to make enormous progress in kosen-rufu, building tens and hundreds of times on the foundation that I have established. I am a stepping stone for you. Our goal is the happiness of all people and world peace."

Shin'ichi always saw to it that there were snacks or a meal for the students after the lectures, and he never forgot to set aside time to warmly interact with them, offering words of personal encouragement. Sometimes he sternly rebuked them, but that, too, was an expression of his deep compassion. He would at times stand before the shoe rack at the entrance, and when he noticed a pair of shoes with worn-out soles would later purchase and present the owner with a new pair.

The lectures allowed the members to know their young Buddhist leader as a human being. They also became acquainted with the brilliance of humanity that emanates from the life of one who lives and breathes the principles of Buddhism.

Shin'ichi was a model to them, and a clear image of him as a mentor in life gradually formed within them. This relationship between mentor and disciples, who were working together for the highest, grandest goal of all, kosen-rufu, was founded on a spirit of warm sharing and mutual inspiration. The lectures became a rare forum of humanistic education for nurturing a new generation of talented leaders.

The 'Young Eagles' chapter concludes with Shin'ichi Yamamoto looking up at a star-filled sky and determining to 'create a whole galaxy of bright, shining young leaders for the Soka Gakkai's future....'

In July 1966, Shin'ichi Yamamoto formed the Rising Tide Group, consisting mainly of the student division members who had participated in the 2nd class, which heard lectures on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings." Those lectures continued until April 1967 — five years after the start of the first series in 1962. During those five years, Shin'ichi devoted himself to fostering the student division members.

The second series of lectures was published as *Lectures on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,"* volume 2, on Oct. 12, 1967.

Shin'ichi gave top priority to these student division lectures despite his incredibly busy schedule during these years, because he believed that fostering the younger generation was the Soka Gakkai's most pressing imperative if it were to realize its grand vision for kosen-rufu.

A mighty river that flows for eternity — kosen-rufu is like this. Just as tens and hundreds of tributaries join to form a great river, a convergence of people of diverse talents is needed to achieve kosen-rufu. And no matter how broad the river becomes, or how gentle and steady its flow, it must remain clear and fresh, never stopping, never stagnating.

Just as the true spirit of Buddhism had been handed down from Tsunesaburo Makiguchi to Josei Toda — the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents — and then to Shin'ichi Yamamoto, the movement's future depended entirely upon the cultivation of genuine disciples.

Also, well aware of his weak physical constitution, Shin'ichi wondered how long — working at such a demanding pace day after day, as he was now, giving utterly of his life and energy — he might live.

Shin'ichi officially formed the Rising Tide Group during an outdoor training course for participants of the 2nd class. This was held in Sengokubara, an area in the resort town Hakone.

Gazing up at the night sky, he said to the young members gathered around: "Look at the starry sky. You can't see the stars during the day, but once the sun goes down, they fill the night with their light. Each of them is a star like our sun. I want to create a whole galaxy of bright, shining young leaders for the Soka Gakkai's future...."

Shin'ichi put every ounce of his being into his student division lectures, driven by his determination to raise successors who would carry on the work of kosen-rufu in the future.

Nearly a century earlier, the great educator and reformer Yoshida Shoin (1830–59) instructed a group of disciples at his private school, the Shokason Juku, in his hometown, Hagi (in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture in western Japan). These young men later carried out their mentor’s legacy, bringing about the end of feudalism in Japan and the establishment of the new Meiji government. Shin’ichi was certain that his students, for whom he had poured his life into the lectures, would likewise bring about the dawning of a new age, an age characterized by respect for life, an age in which the teachings of the Daishonin’s Buddhism would flourish.

And he was not mistaken.

The young eagles spread their wings and soared high into the skies of a new era. Aside from a very few who abandoned their faith, the majority grew to play central roles in their chosen fields, to become the shining hope of the Soka Gakkai.

(This concludes the chapter “Young Eagles” and also volume 6 of The New Human Revolution.)

‘Young Eagles’ Chapter Discussion Questions:

1. In part 11 (Nov. 21, 1997, *World Tribune*), how would you respond to Shin’ichi’s statements about why Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism is meant for the world and could not be made into a national religion?
2. In part 27 (Feb. 20, *World Tribune*), Shin’ichi gave the participants in his lecture series inscribed copies of *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*. What is his attitude in conducting the lectures? What do you feel are the main points of the lectures?
3. In part 28 (Feb. 27 *World Tribune*), what does Shin’ichi describe as the benefits and purpose of faith?