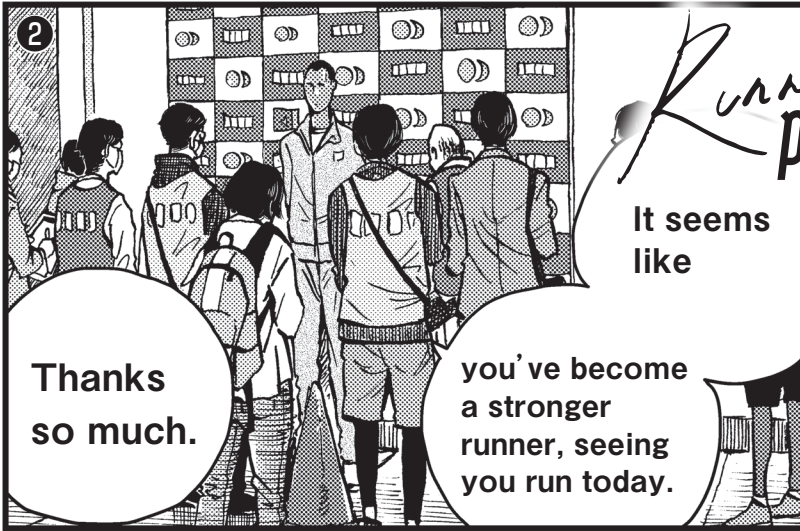


# Running for peace and love



Thanks so much.

It seems like

you've become a stronger runner, seeing you run today.



Hey, Mr. Abraham!

1



... because "I love my country and I yearn for peace."

**Guem Abraham**  
 A track and field athlete representing the Republic of South Sudan at the Tokyo Olympics



You've come to Japan from "the newest country in the world," South Sudan,

What does running mean to you?

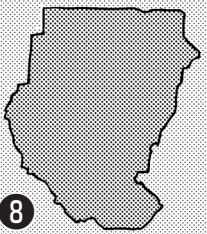


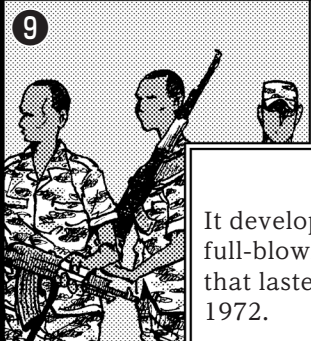

When I first met track and fields, I got great results. From that moment,

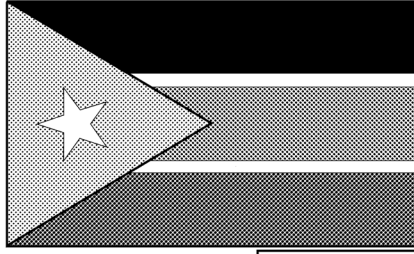
I began to think how I could use my power for the good of my country

4

7 South Sudan's history has been one of endless civil war.


8  The First Sudanese Civil War broke out in 1955 in the Republic of the Sudan, before South Sudan became independent.

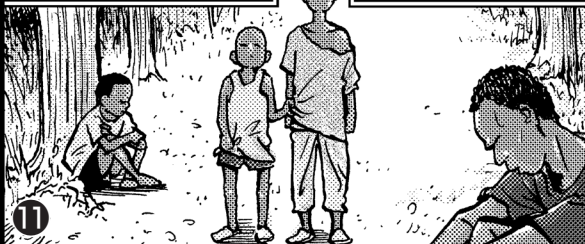
9  The conflict erupted due to racial and religious divisions between the southern and northern parts of the country. It developed into a full-blown civil war that lasted until 1972. 

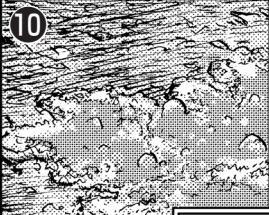

6  The Republic of South Sudan

“The newest country in the world” in East Africa that gained independence in 2011.

More than 12 million people live in a land 1.7 times the size of Japan.

and resulted in more than 2.5 million deaths and 4 million refugees.  The second civil war continued on for more than 20 years

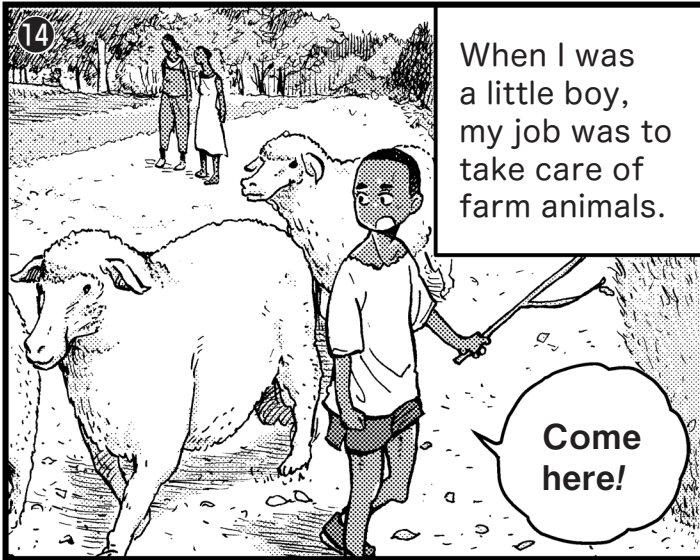
11 

10  Then in 1983, when an oil field was discovered in the southern region, a north-south struggle was ignited again; the outbreak of the Second Sudanese Civil War. 

12

In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was established.

Many people desired to make progress toward peace.

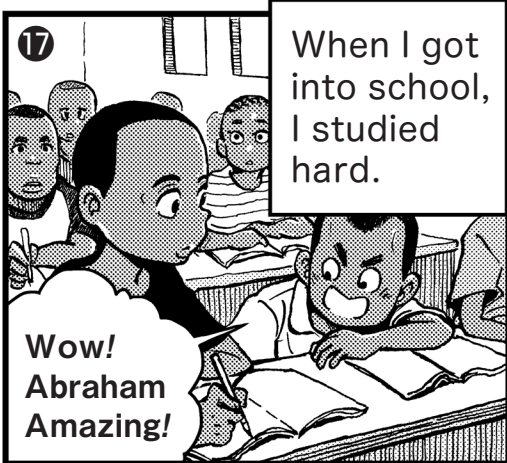


When I was a little boy, my job was to take care of farm animals.

Come here!



From here on, I am going to tell you about my childhood.

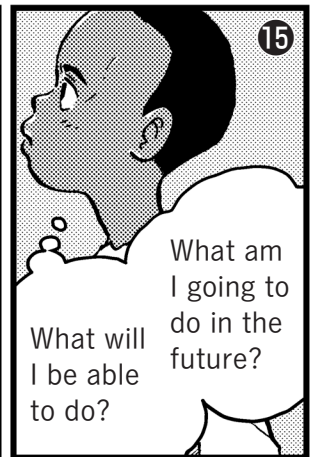


When I got into school, I studied hard.

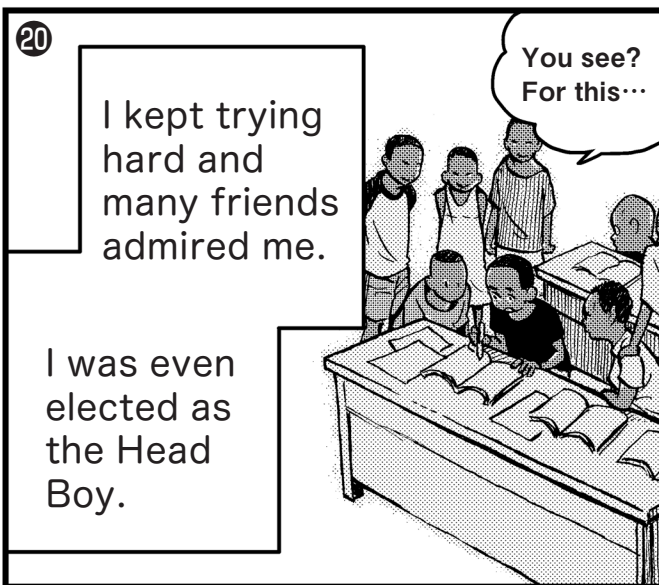
Wow!  
Abraham  
Amazing!



I wish the conflict would just end.



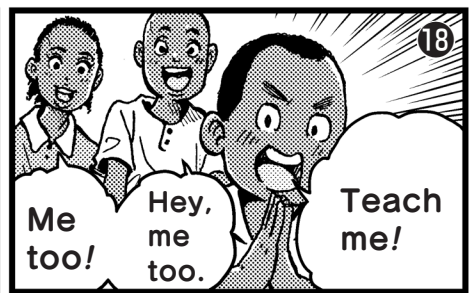
What am I going to do in the future?  
What will I be able to do?



I kept trying hard and many friends admired me.

I was even elected as the Head Boy.

You see?  
For this...



Me too!  
Hey, me too.

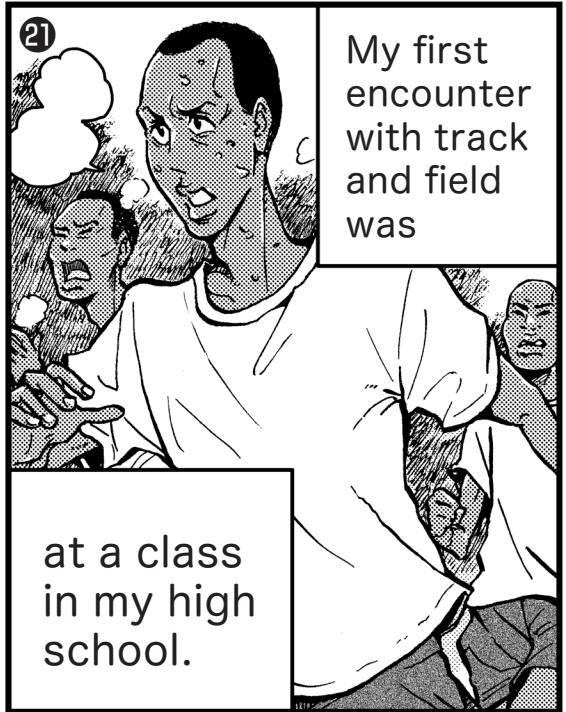
Teach me!



Sure, no problem!

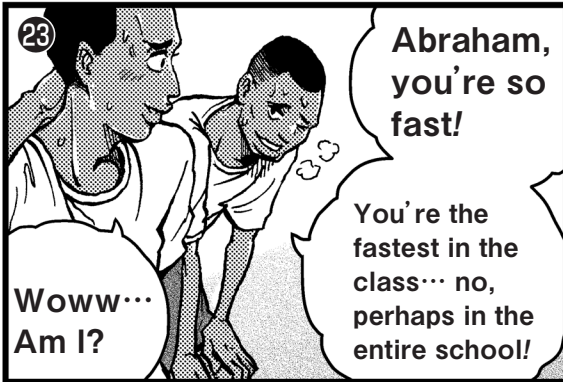


First place, Abraham!!



My first encounter with track and field was

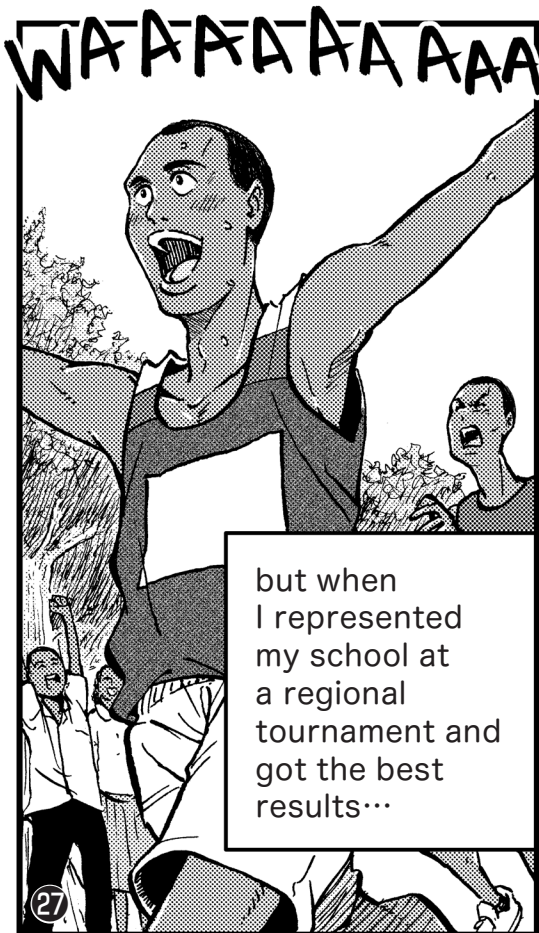
at a class in my high school.



Abraham, you're so fast!

You're the fastest in the class... no, perhaps in the entire school!

Woww... Am I?



but when I represented my school at a regional tournament and got the best results...



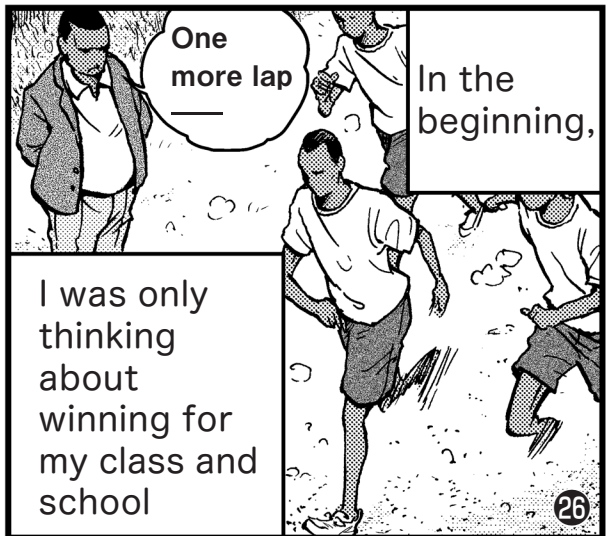
I was hooked on track and field.

OK!



Well...

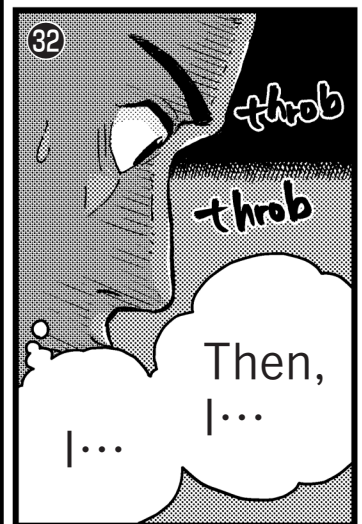
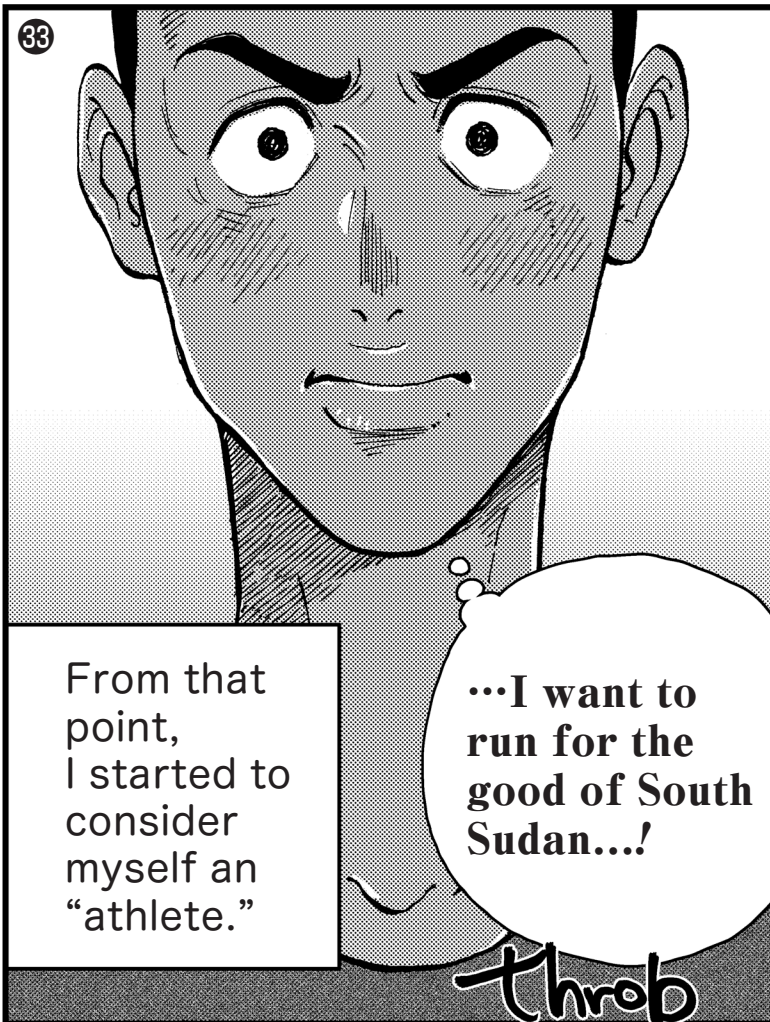
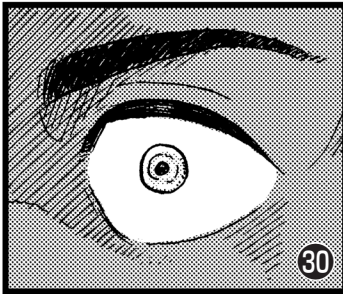
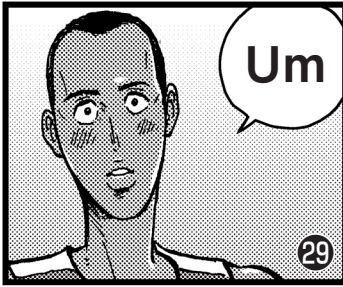
I guess I can run pretty fast

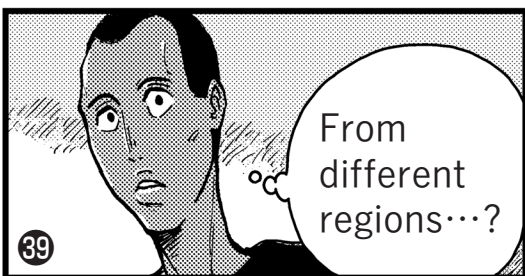
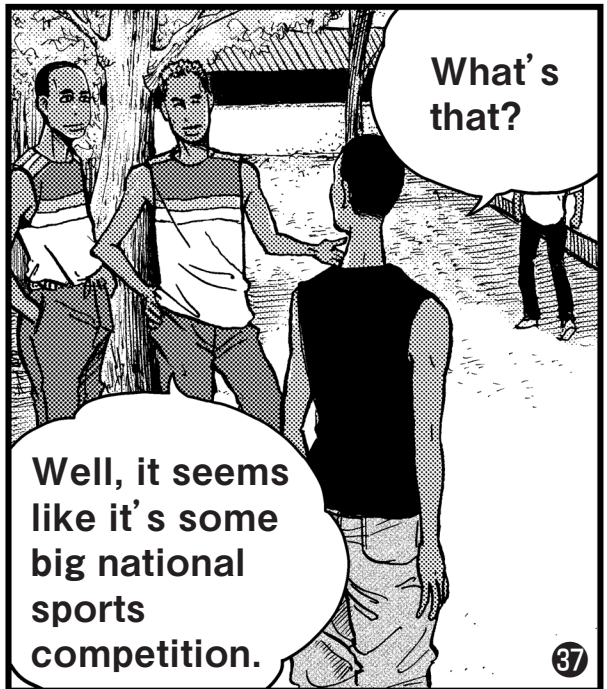
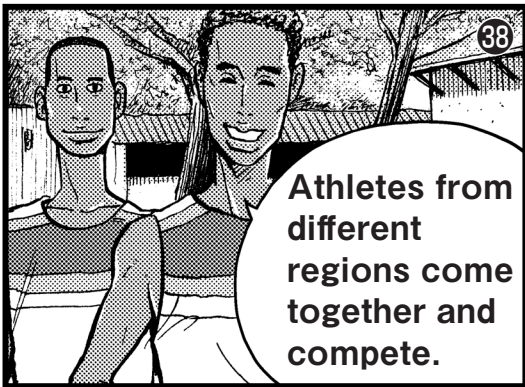
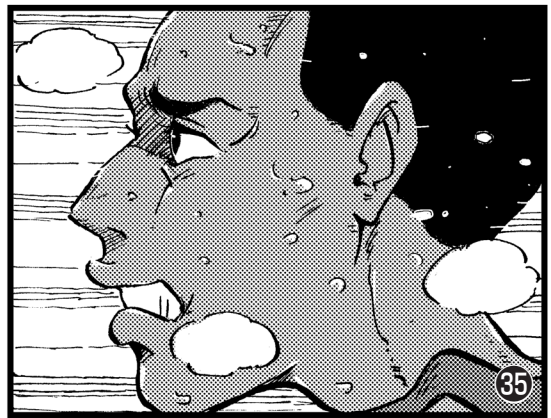
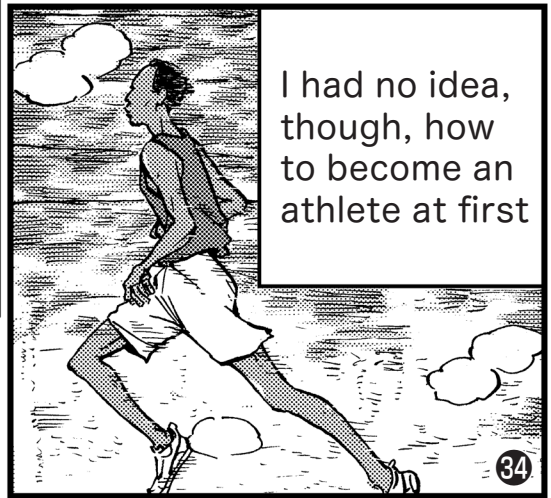
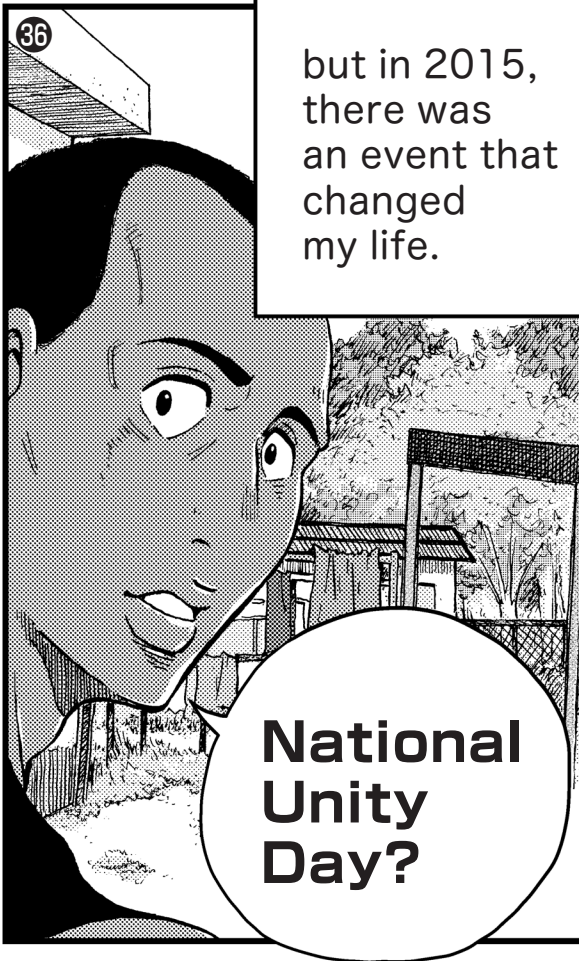


One more lap

In the beginning,

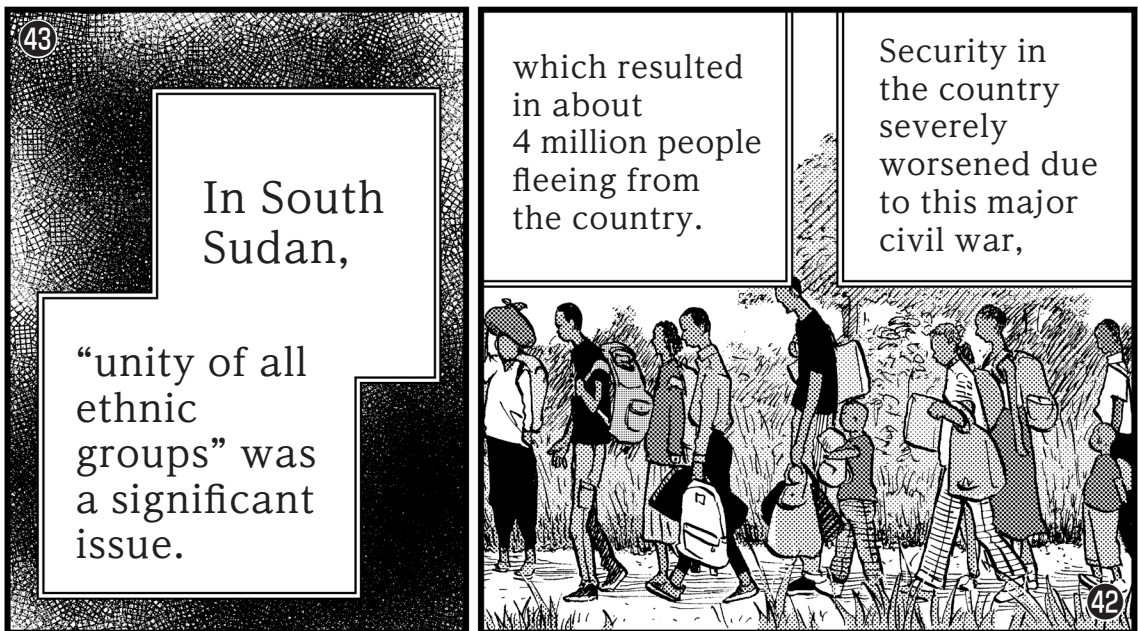
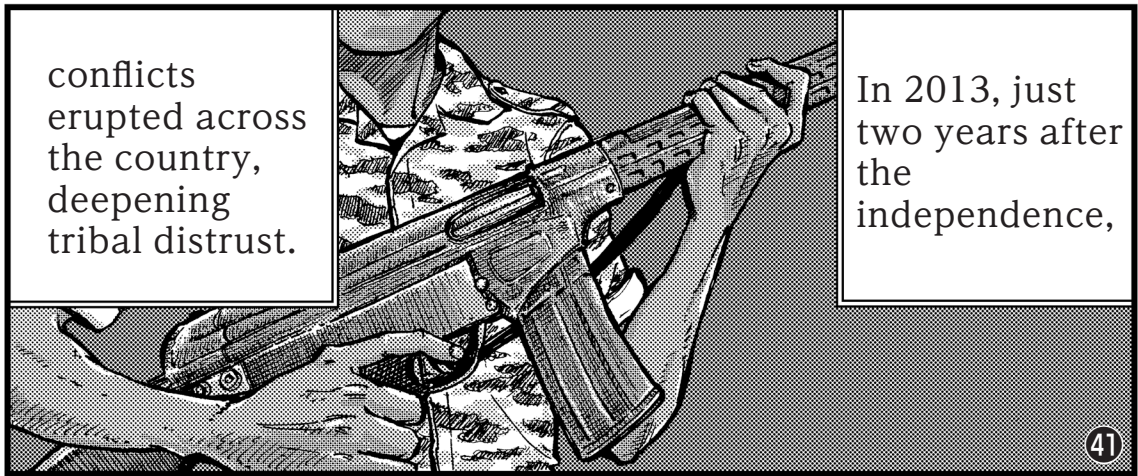
I was only thinking about winning for my class and school





## National Unity Day

An annual national sports competition held since 2016, for “Peace and Social Cohesion” in South Sudan.



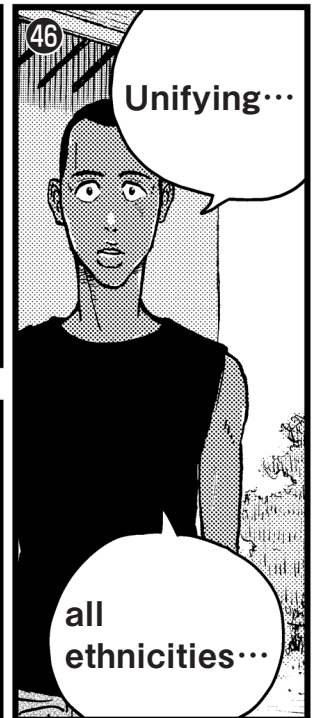
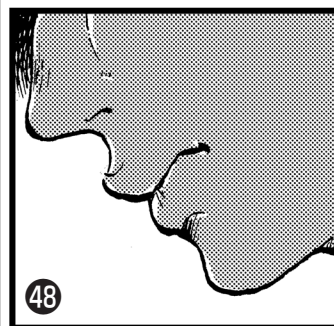
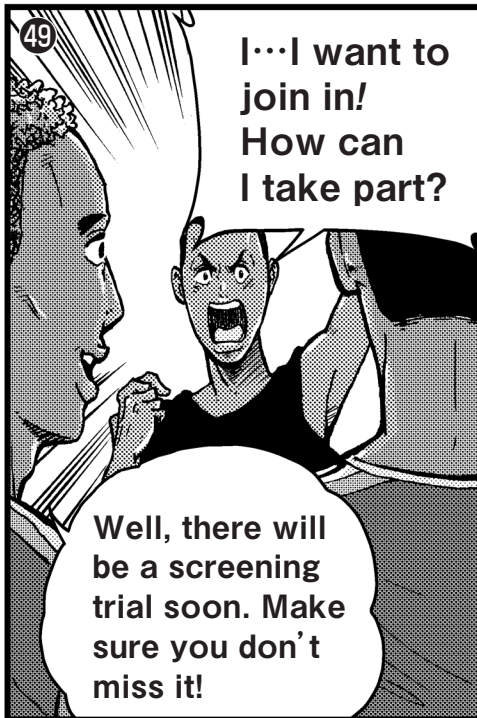
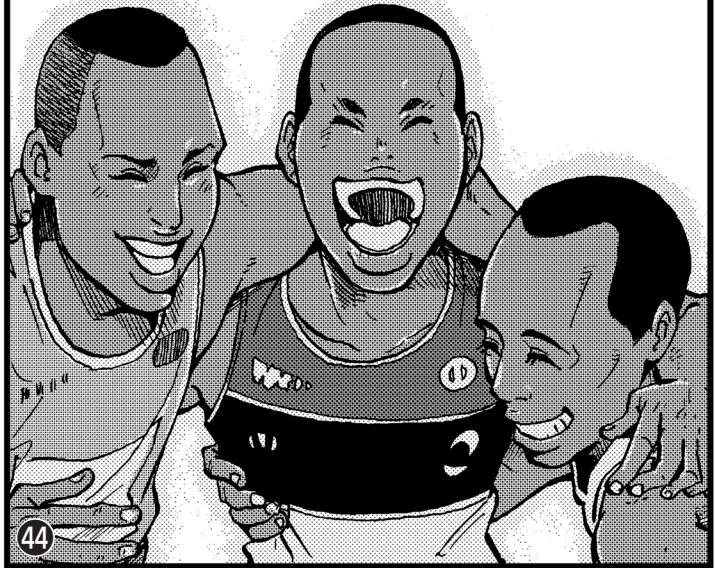
In 2016,

this first-ever attempt was organized with the cooperation of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)

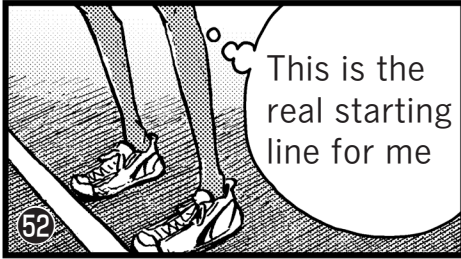
which has been promoting peace through sports in South Sudan.

to bring together young people from different regions and ethnicities to interact with each other through sports.

This led to the idea of National Unity Day, sports.

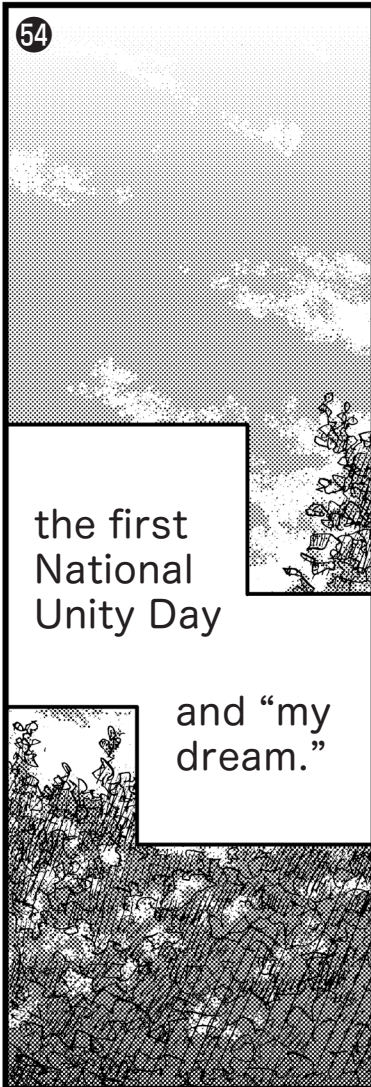






and got qualified to participate in National Unity Day representing Juba County.

At the trial, I won





Finally...  
I finally made it.



Now that I have  
been selected to  
participate in  
National Unity Day

I started off across  
land towards Rombur  
Teacher Training  
Institute, the place  
we'll be staying.



A fantastic  
opportunity to  
show off my  
talents.



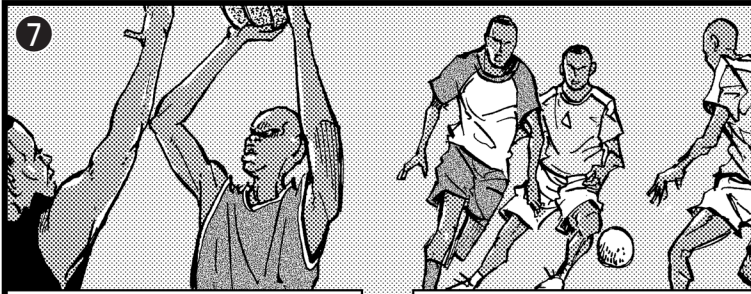
National  
Unity Day!



Running for  
my dreams,  
and...

running for  
peace in South  
Sudan.

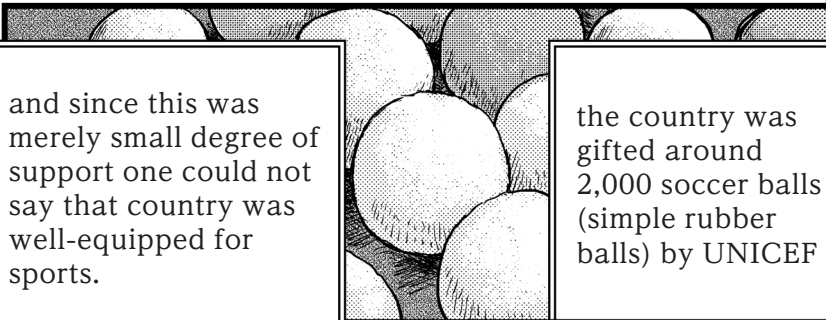
6



Basketball and volleyball are popular sports as well.

For the people of South Sudan, the most popular sport is soccer.

Let me explain again a little about how National Unity Day (NUD) came to be.



and since this was merely small degree of support one could not say that country was well-equipped for sports.

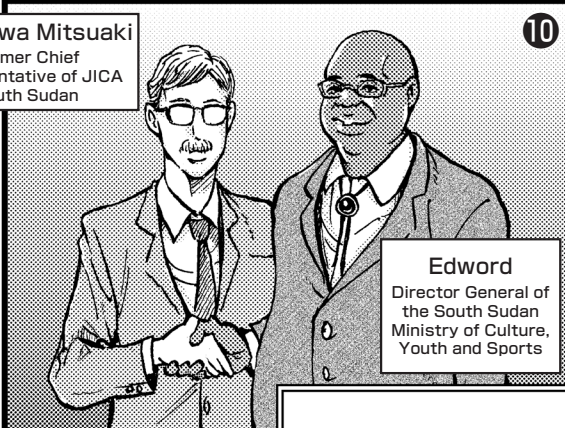
the country was gifted around 2,000 soccer balls (simple rubber balls) by UNICEF

In 2015, before the start of NUD, when there was much poverty in South Sudan,



8

Furukawa Mitsuaki  
Former Chief Representative of JICA South Sudan



10

Edword  
Director General of the South Sudan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

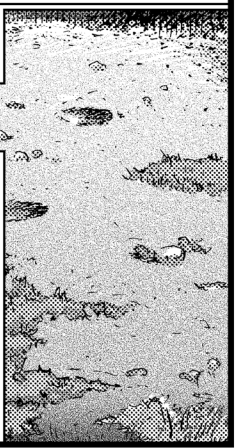
joined forces with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to establish the concept and guidelines for the event.

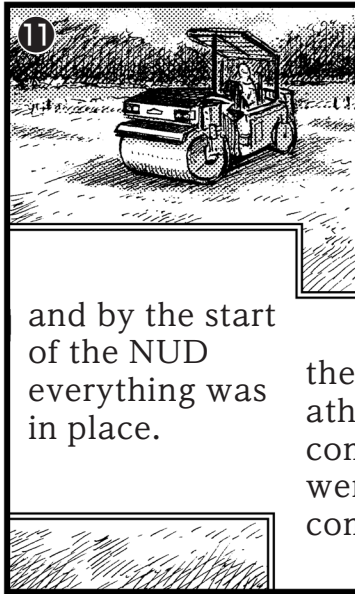
However, the South Sudan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports



One could also say that Buluk Playground Stadium, the venue for the first NUD track and field games,

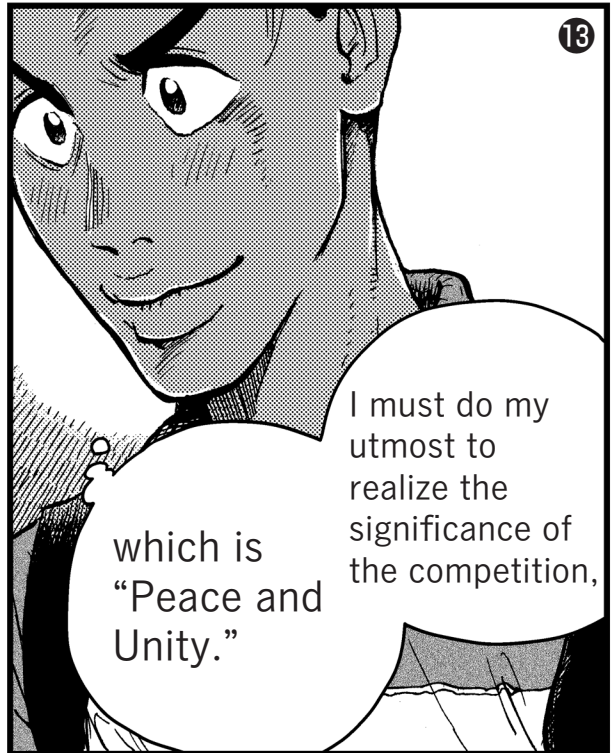
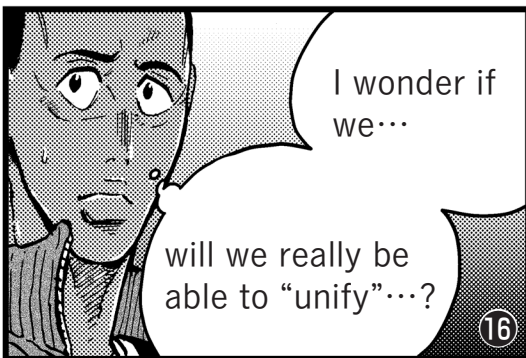
which was originally just an open field littered with pebbles and holes, was really in no condition to host a track and field competition.





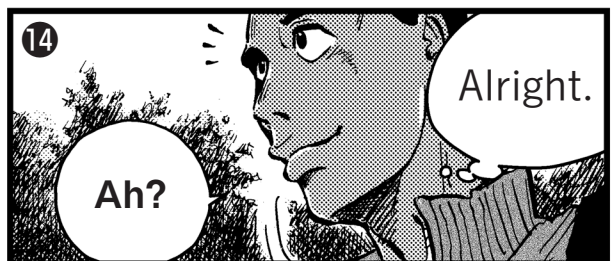
Following this, with the support of Japan's Self-Defense Forces and Japanese construction company,

the housing for the athletes and the competition grounds were rapidly completed

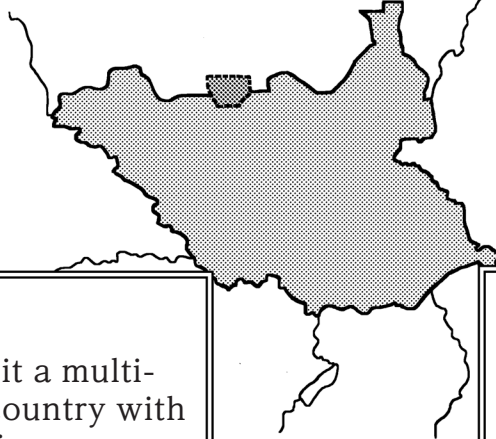


17

Obviously, there is a big reason why NUD is pushing "Unity" so much.



18




In South Sudan, widely dispersed across Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia,

making it a multi-ethnic country with 64 ethnic groups, large and small.

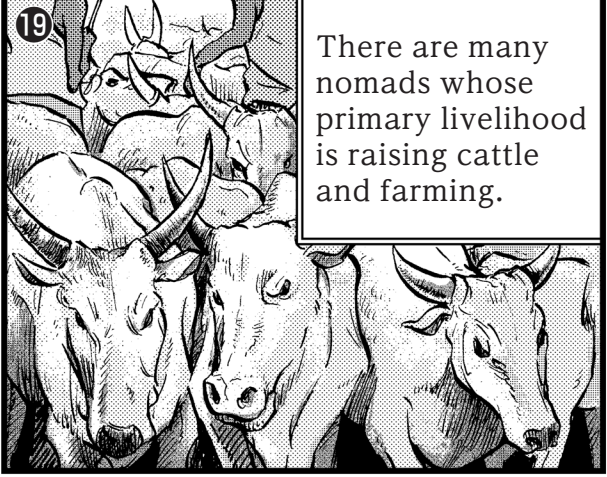
live the Dinka people, the Nuer people, and others, who speak West Nile languages,

21



After the independence, hardly any efforts were made to unite the people, so

19



There are many nomads whose primary livelihood is raising cattle and farming.

22

There were hopes that the NUD would be a beacon of hope

for national unity and reconciliation.

20

As people migrate in search of water during the dry season, disputes often break out over grasslands and watering holes for cattle,

and conflicts were triggered over fighting for livestock, thus

weak ties among ethnic groups had become a problem.

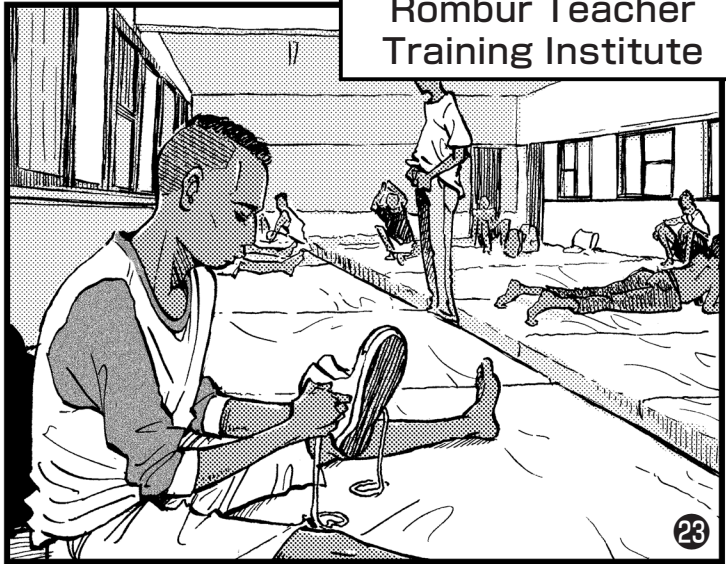
Rombur Teacher Training Institute

24

So, this is where we will be spending some time, sharing food, clothing, and shelter with people from different states and ethnicities.

Hey, you!

What?



26

I'm Abraham! I will be running in the track and field... 800m and 1500m!

Is that right? Well, nice to meet you, Abraham!

25

What are you competing in? What's your name?

28

We talked about a lot of things in our room.

We didn't care about ethnic differences, so it meant a lot to us.

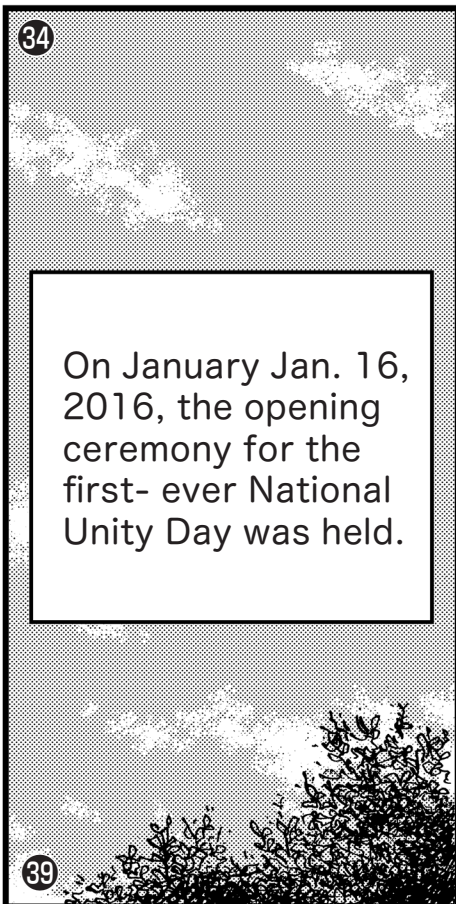
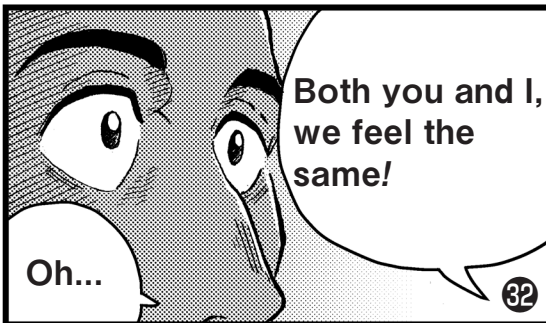
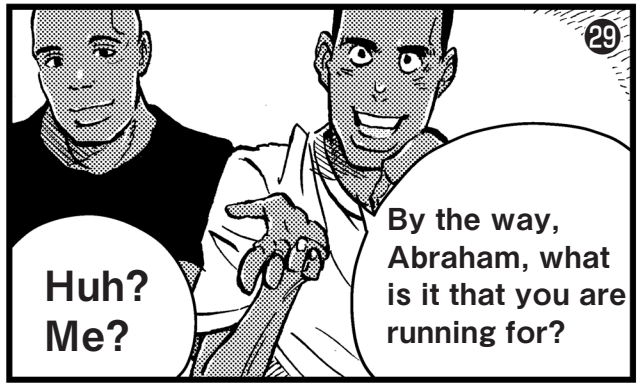
We talked about ourselves, our people, our family, and about sports.

Hey, did you eat for lunch?

Nope, not yet.

So let's go eat together then!?

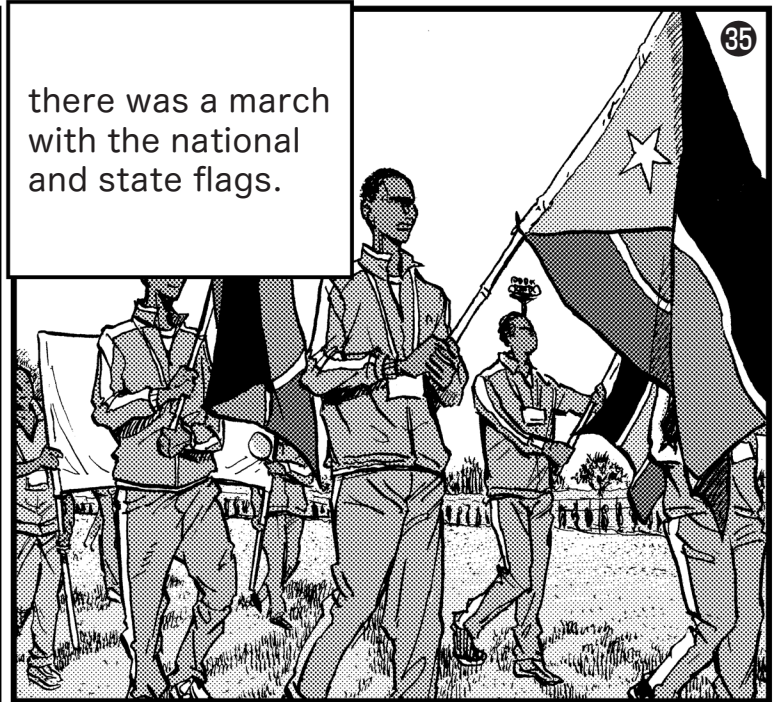
27





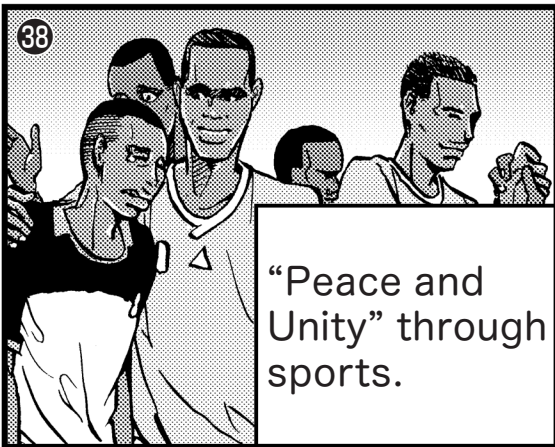
36

There were people watching and crying.



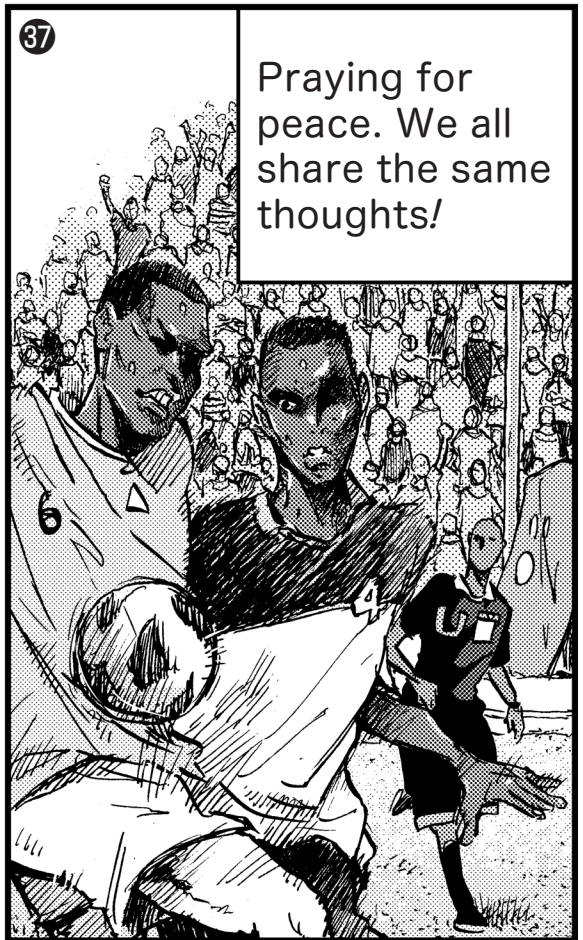
35

there was a march with the national and state flags.



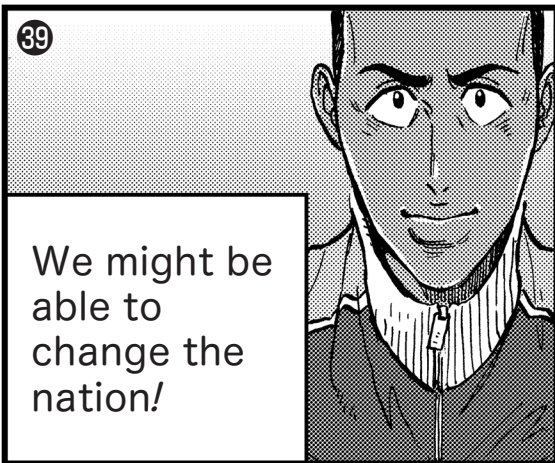
38

“Peace and Unity” through sports.



37

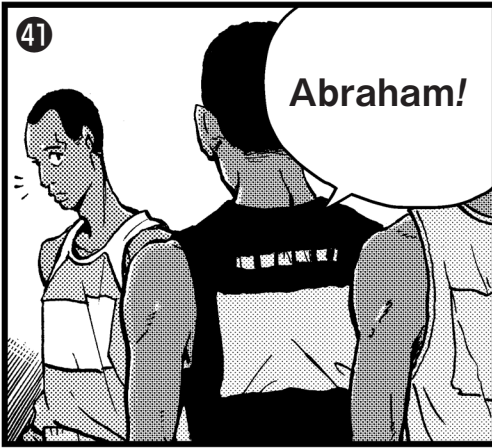
Praying for peace. We all share the same thoughts!



39

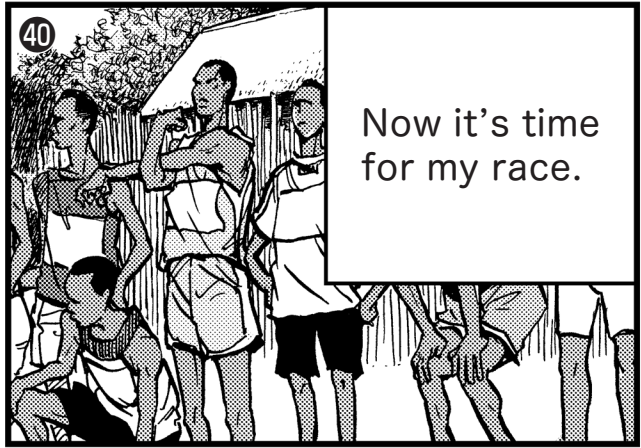
We might be able to change the nation!





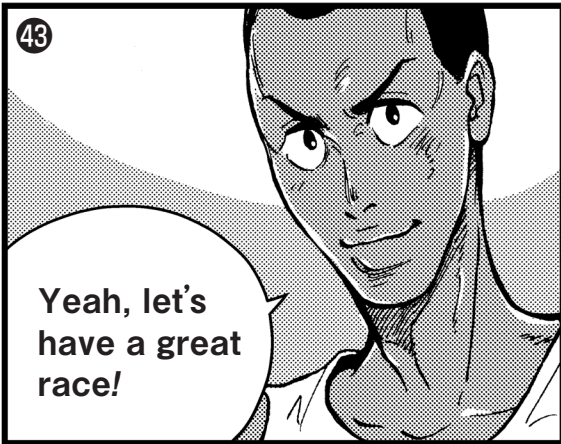
41

Abraham!



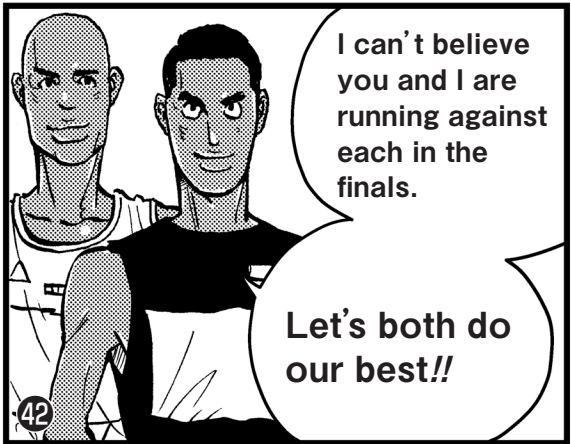
40

Now it's time for my race.



43

Yeah, let's have a great race!



42

I can't believe you and I are running against each in the finals.

Let's both do our best!!



45

Paw!

WAAAAA

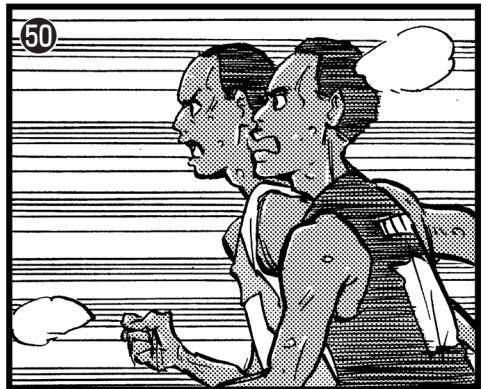
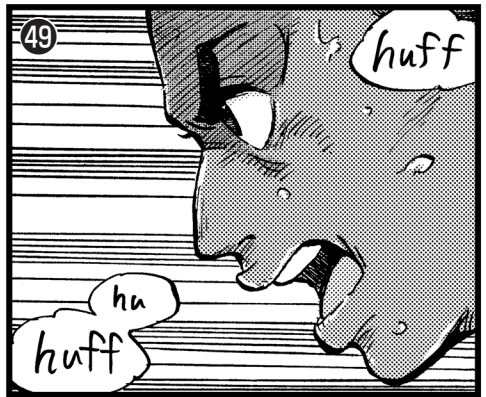
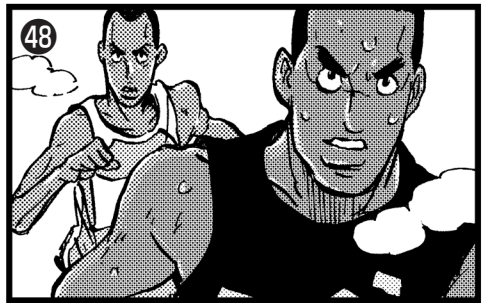
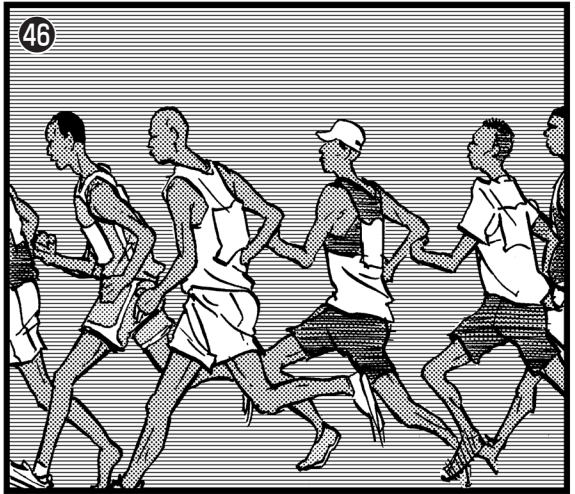
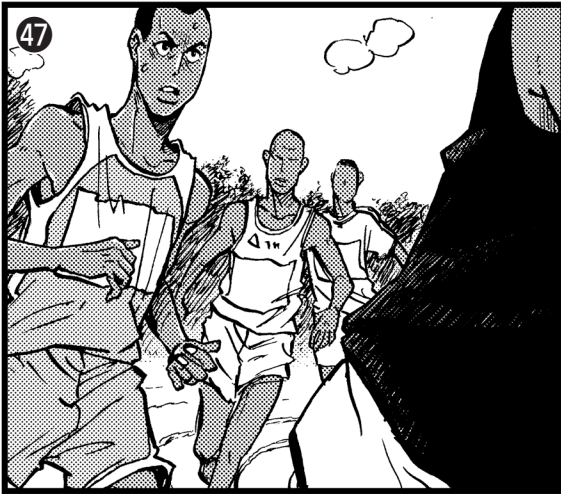


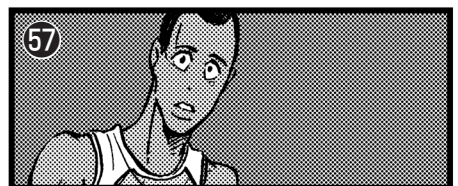
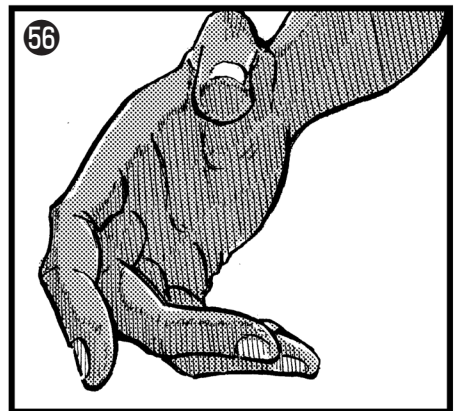
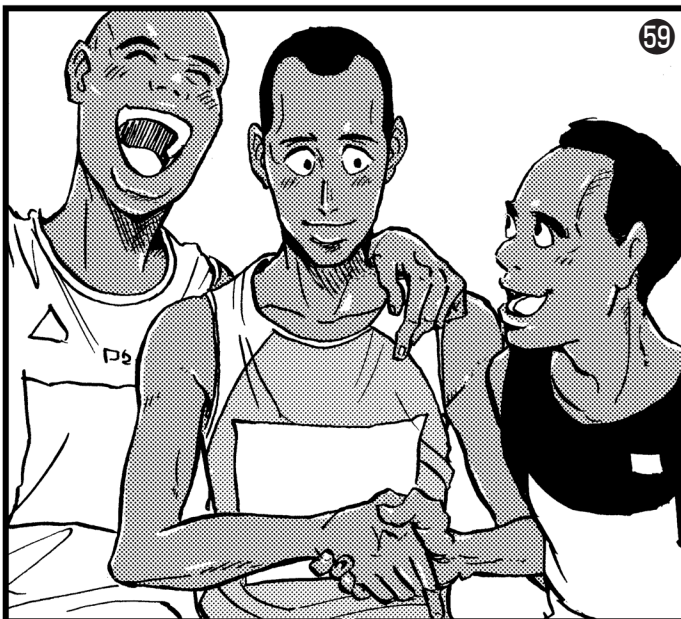
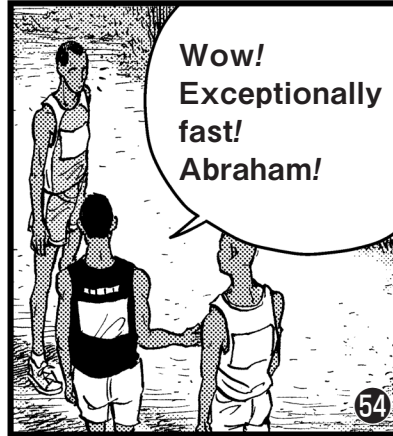
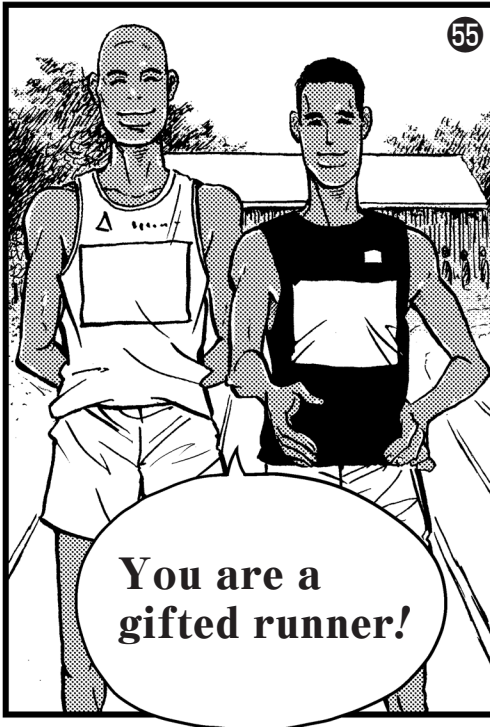
44

I told myself to believe in myself

and decided to just go for it and just get absorbed in the moment.

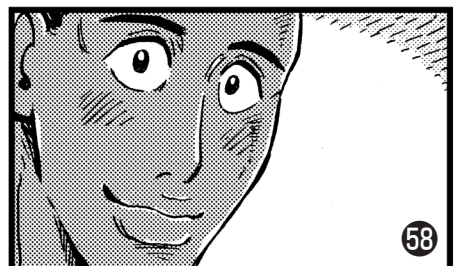
On your mark





This was the exact moment I felt "Peace and Unity" within myself.

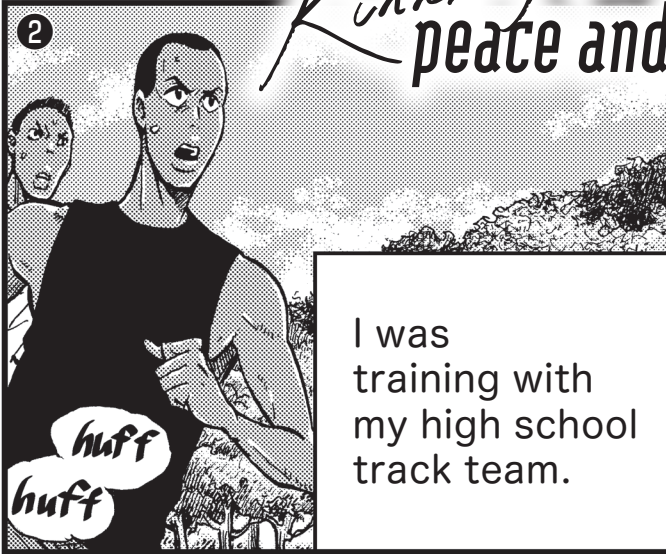
We both waved hands, congratulating each other on a job well done.



● to be continued...

# Running for peace and love

<<Read This Way>>

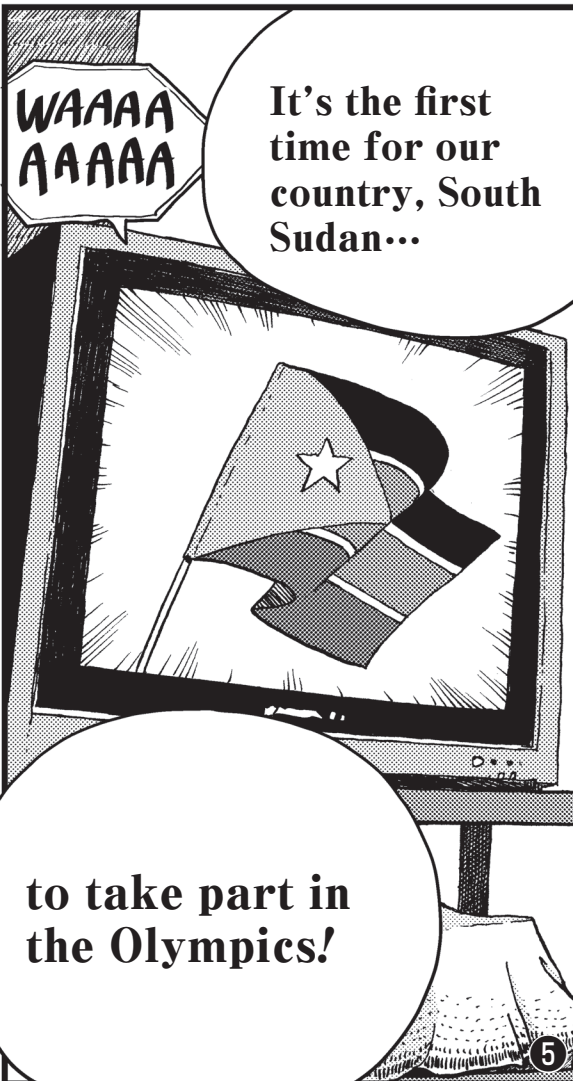


I was training with my high school track team.

Six months after the first National Unity Day (NUD)

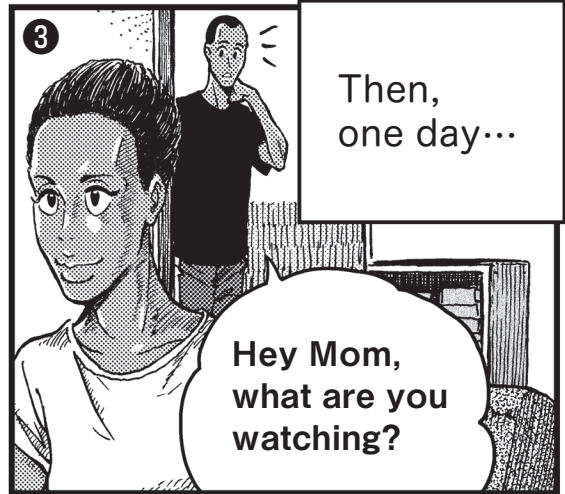
in August of 2016...

1



to take part in the Olympics!

It's the first time for our country, South Sudan...



Then, one day...

Hey Mom, what are you watching?

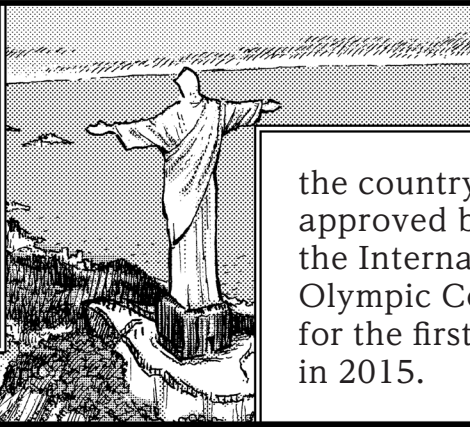


It's the opening ceremony of the Rio Olympics, dear.

Olym... pics?

Isn't it amazing?

South Sudan made its first-ever appearance in the Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro.

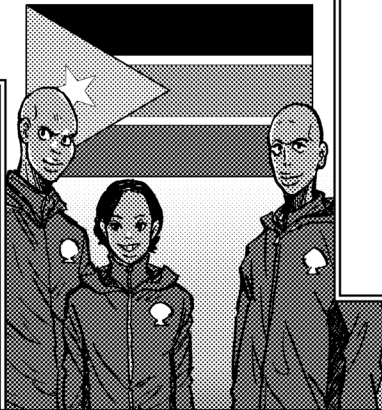


After independence in 2011

the country was approved by the International Olympic Committee for the first time in 2015.

6

They stepped into the Rio Olympic Games with the weight of South Sudan on their shoulders.



Three track and field athletes were granted special permission to participate.

7



9

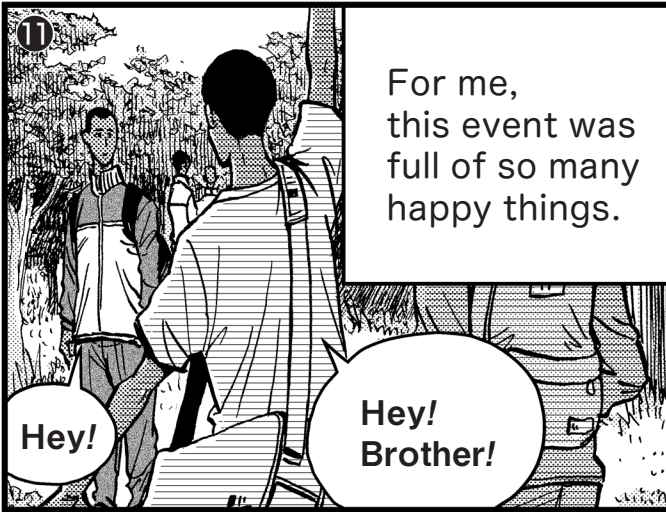
I will too!  
I will do that someday!!



8

For their country...

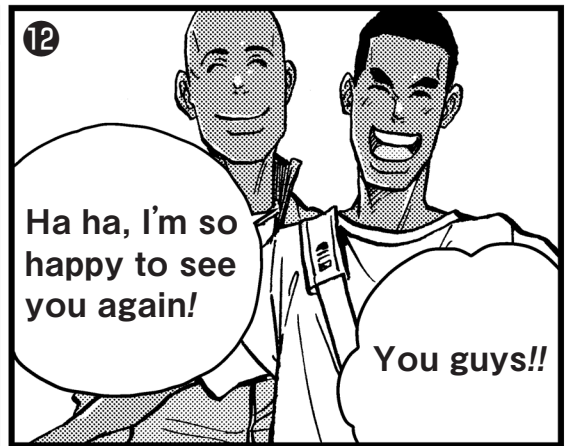
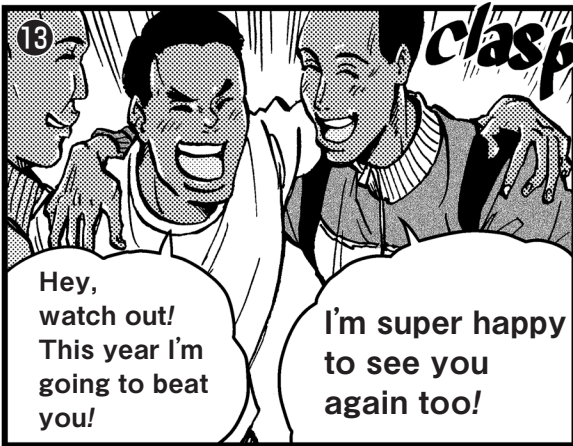
They ran with the weight of their country...



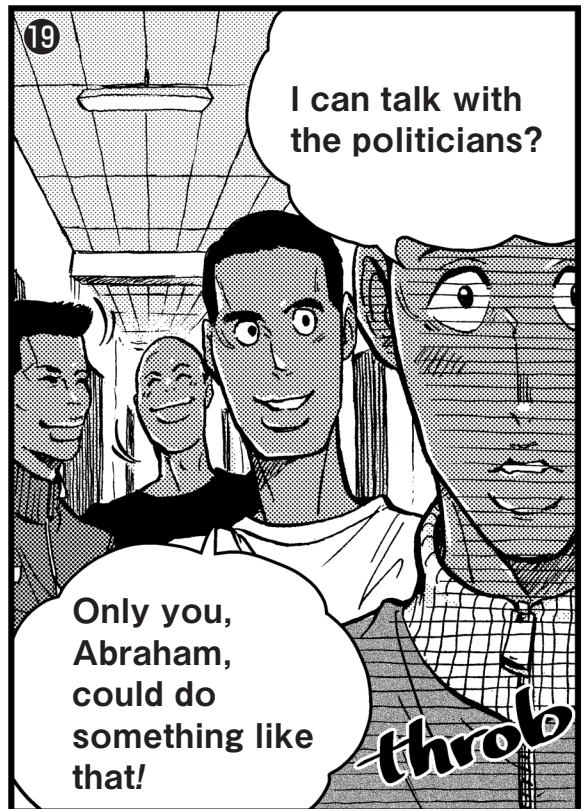
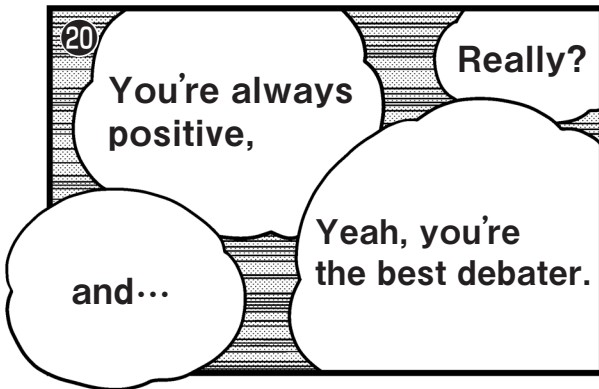
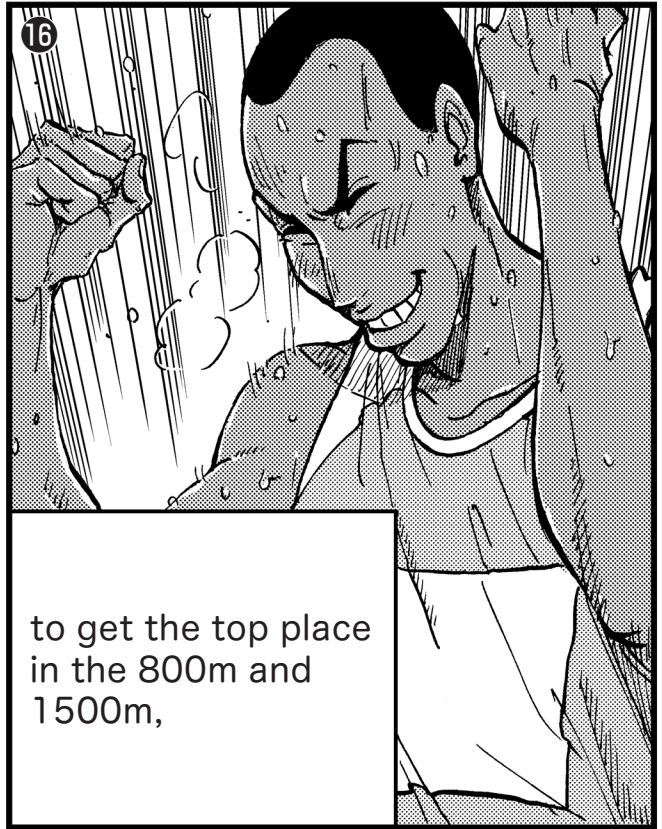
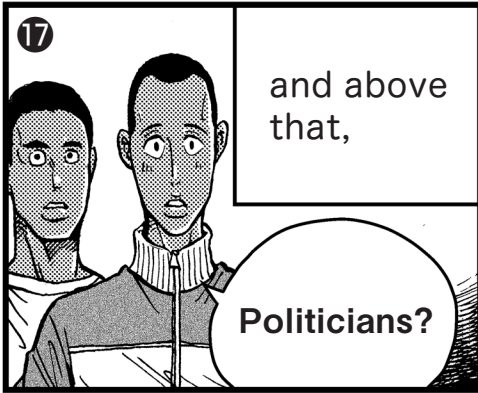
For me,  
this event was  
full of so many  
happy things.

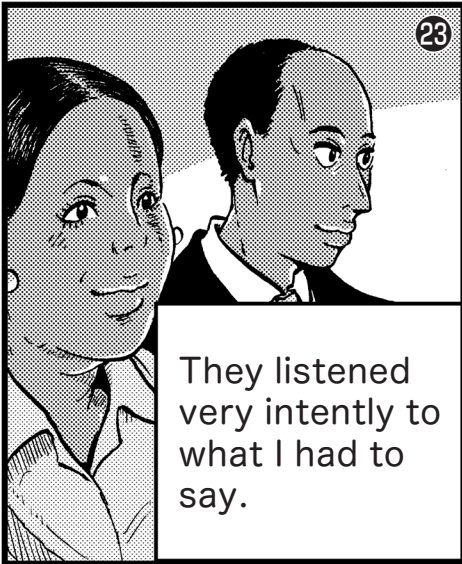


In January  
2017,  
the second  
NUD was  
held.



Being able to  
meet my  
friends after  
one year,

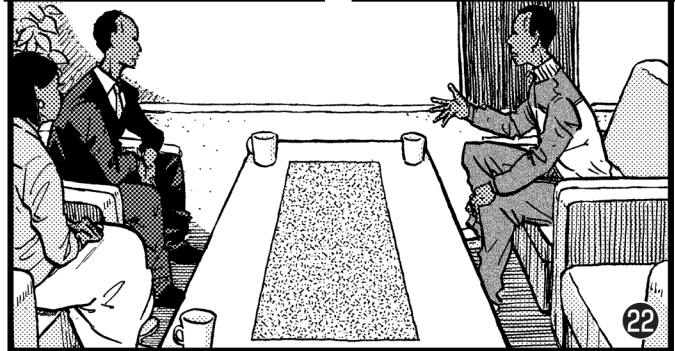




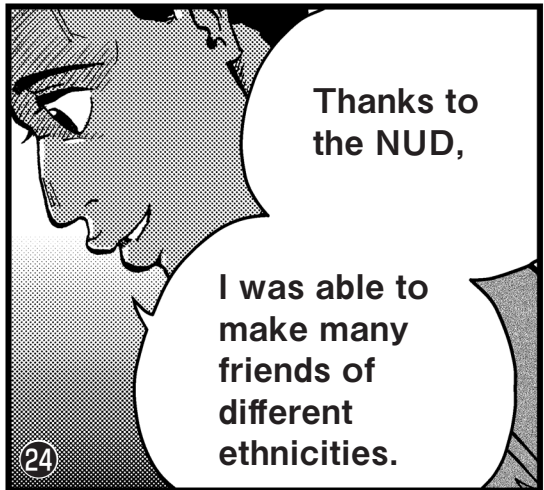
They listened very intently to what I had to say.

meet with politicians.

And that's how I got to



**I could affirm that, "Through sports we can unify our country"!**



Thanks to the NUD,

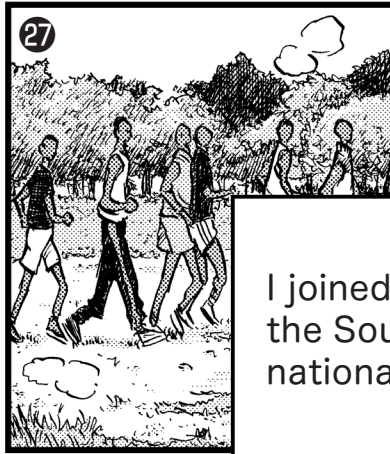
I was able to make many friends of different ethnicities.



By spending our time together, talking and competing,

I realized that we could learn many things from each other.





Having graduated from high school,

