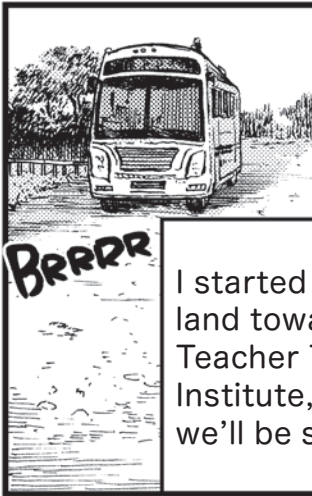




Finally...
I finally made it.



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

1

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



A fantastic
opportunity to
show off my
talents.



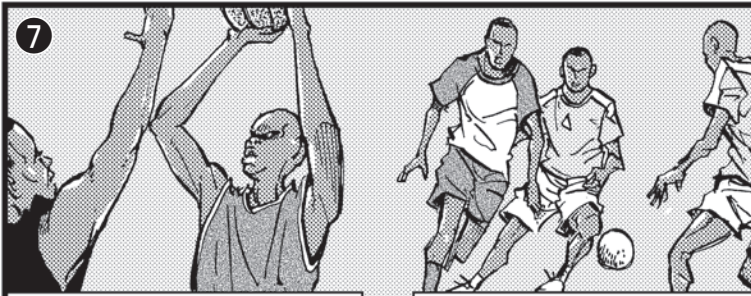
National
Unity Day!



Running for
my dreams,
and...

running for
peace in South
Sudan.

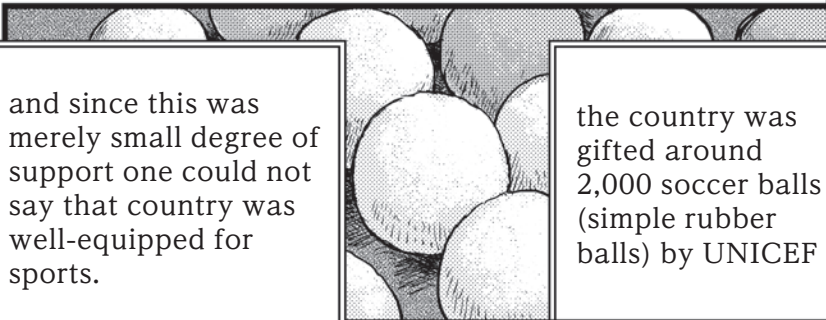
6



7
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.



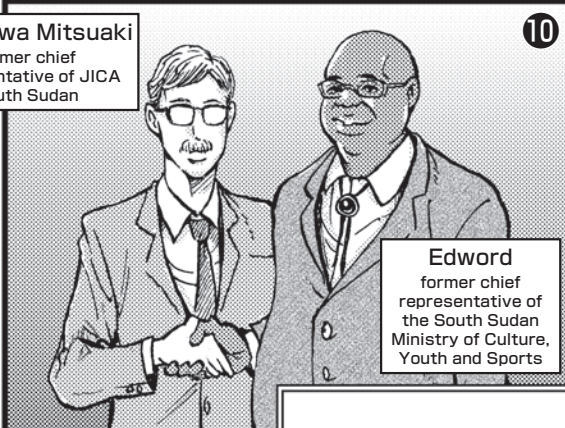
and since this was merely small degree of support one could not say that country was well-equipped for sports.

In 2015, before the start of NUD, when there was much poverty in South Sudan, the country was gifted around 2,000 soccer balls (simple rubber balls) by UNICEF



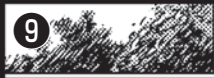
8

Furukawa Mitsuaki
former chief representative of JICA South Sudan



10

Edword
former chief representative of the South Sudan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

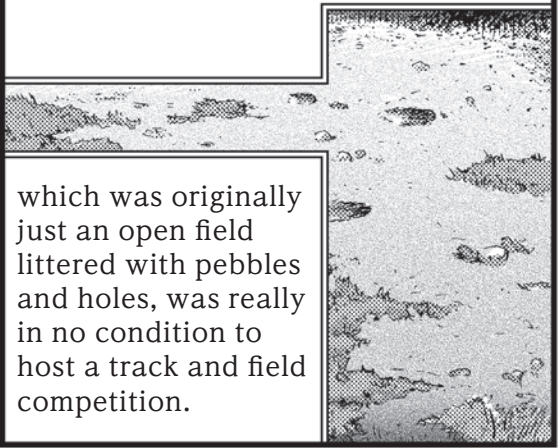


9

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

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



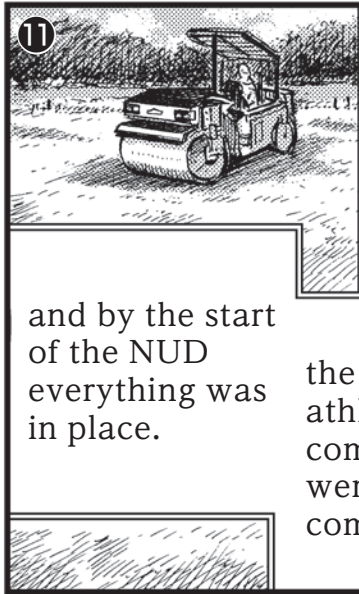
which was originally just an open field littered with pebbles and holes, was really in no condition to host a track and field competition.



12

So many people cooperated in the event preparation.

And because I was selected as a representative,



11

and by the start of the NUD everything was in place.

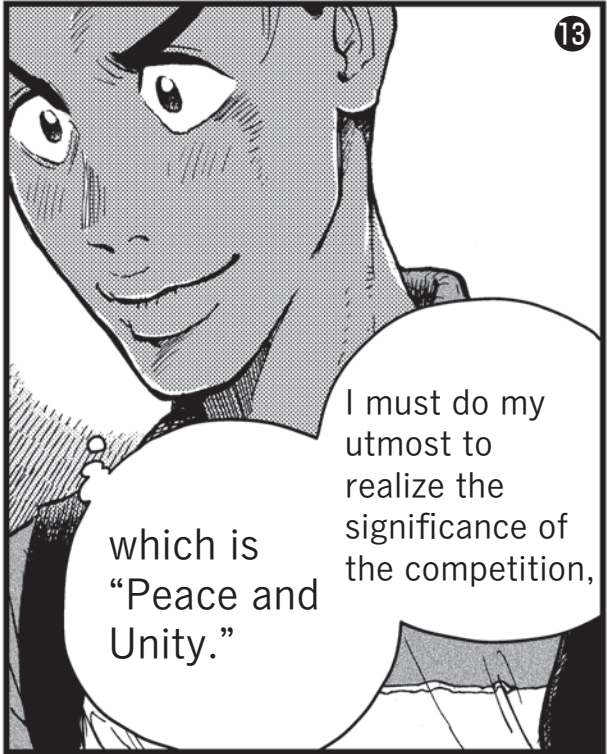
Following this, with the support of Japan's Self-Defense Forces and construction organizations,

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



15

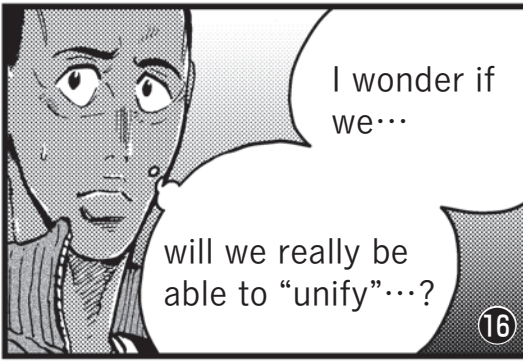
athletes from other states...



13

which is "Peace and Unity."

I must do my utmost to realize the significance of the competition,



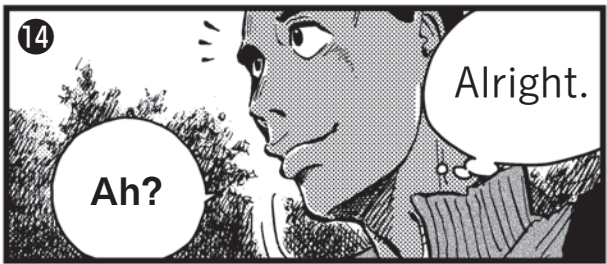
16

I wonder if we...

will we really be able to "unify"...

17

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



14

Ah?

Alright.

18




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

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


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

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.

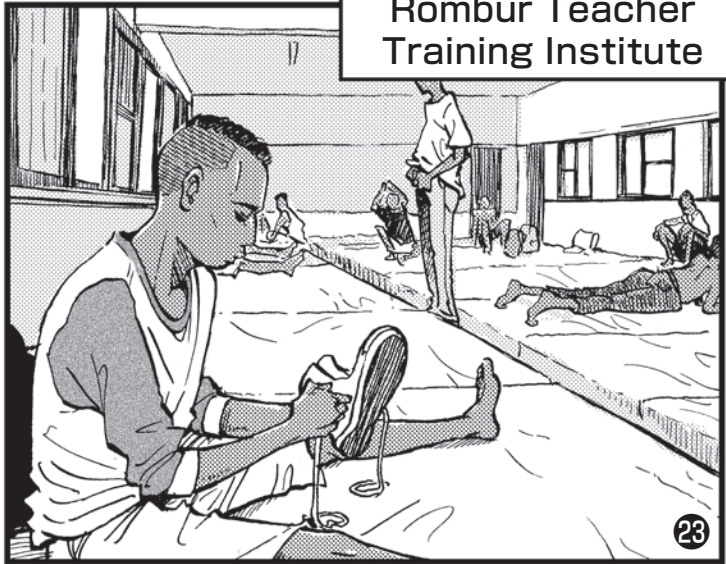
Rombur Teacher Training Institute

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.

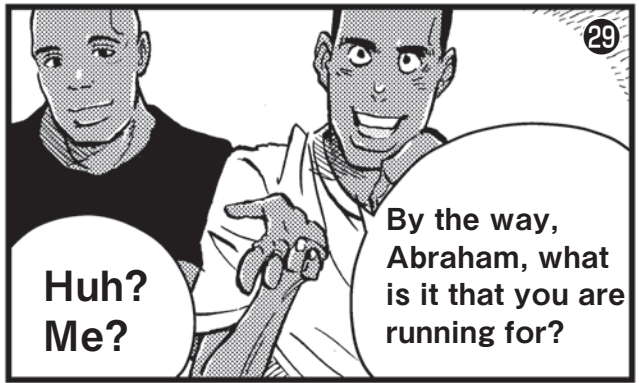
So let's go eat together then!?

27



For me,
it's all
about
running for
"peace"!

30



Huh?
Me?

By the way,
Abraham, what
is it that you are
running for?

29



Both you and I,
we feel the
same!

Oh...

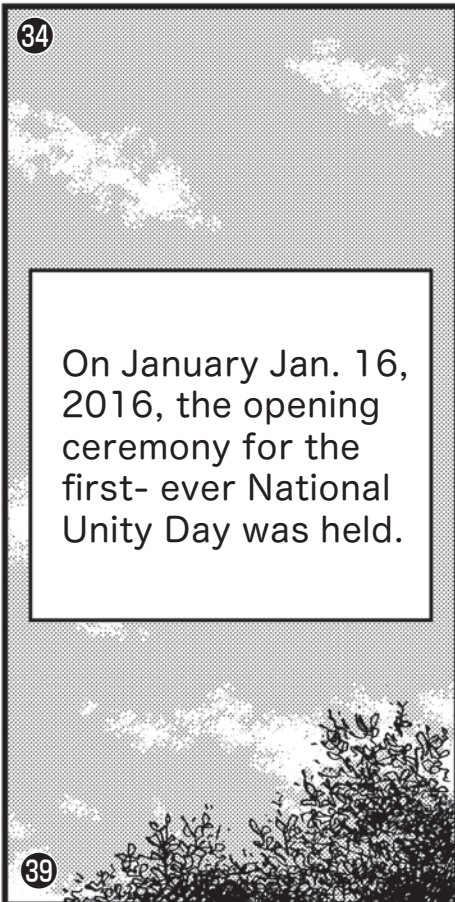
32



Ha ha! You're
sure a serious
guy! You gotta
have more fun!

But...

31



On January Jan. 16,
2016, the opening
ceremony for the
first- ever National
Unity Day was held.

34

39



yeah

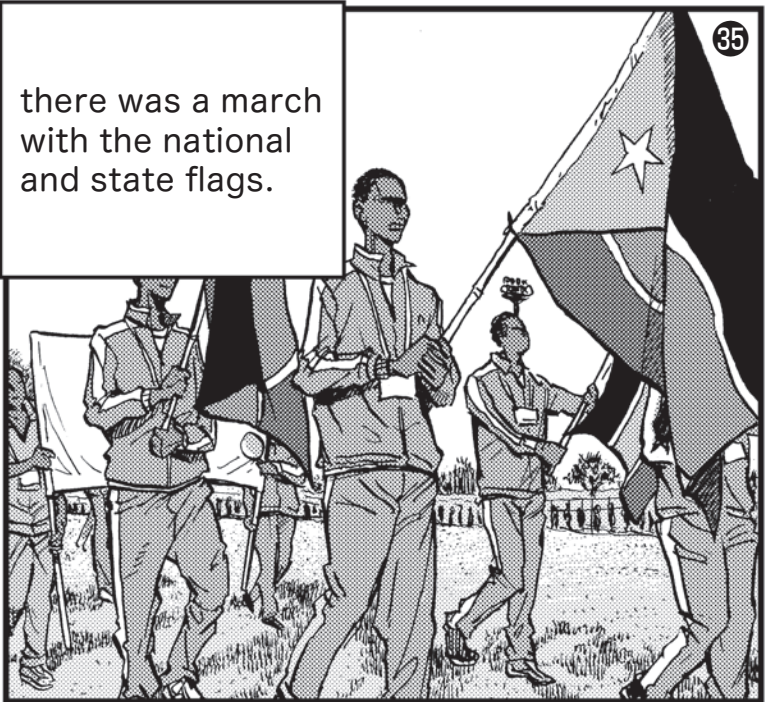
Everyone wants
peace... I know
that now for sure.

And...

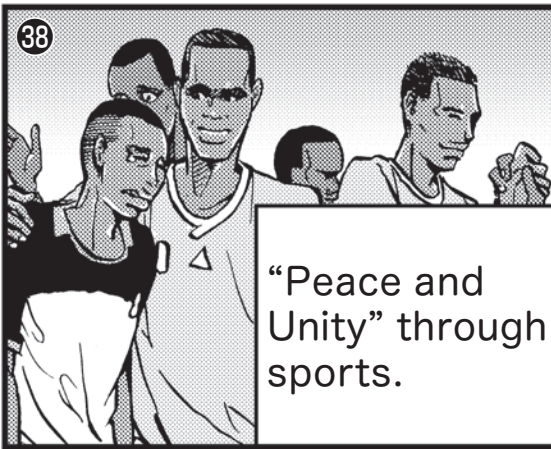
33



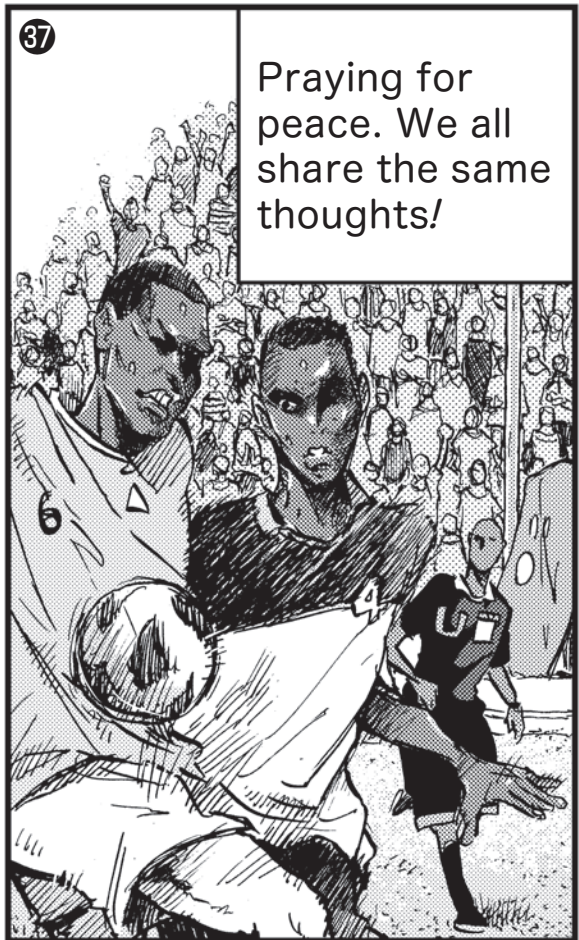
There were people watching and crying.



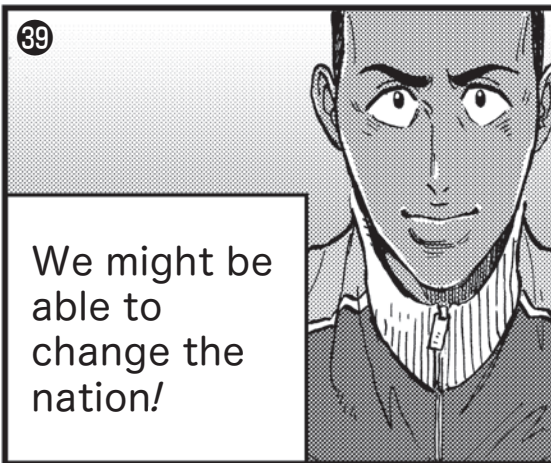
there was a march with the national and state flags.



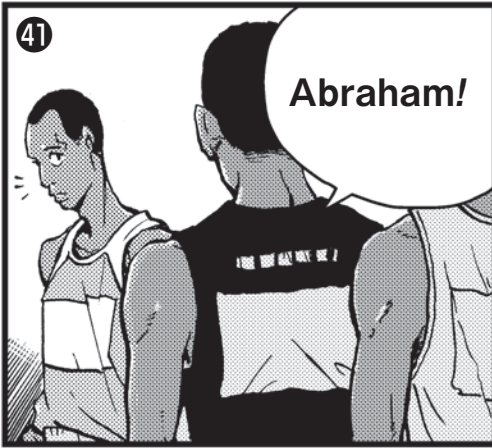
“Peace and Unity” through sports.



Praying for peace. We all share the same thoughts!



We might be able to change the nation!



41

Abraham!



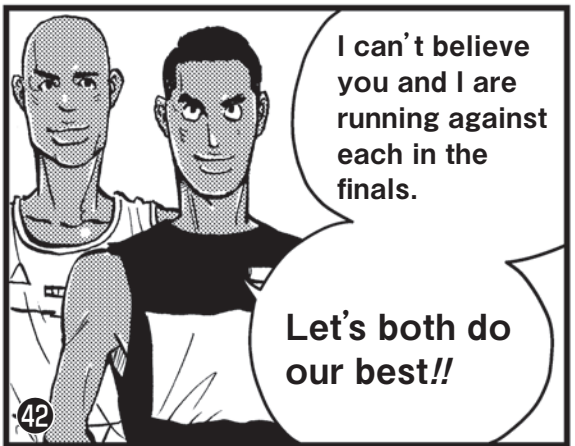
40

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.

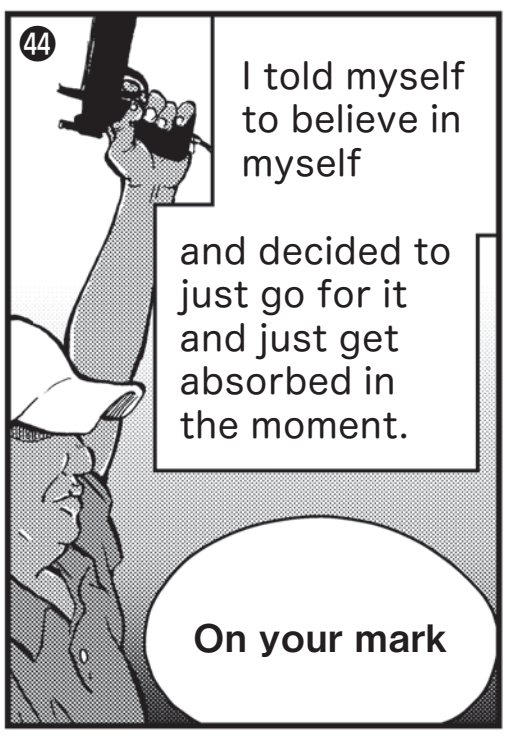
Let's both do our best!!



45

Paw!

WAAAAA

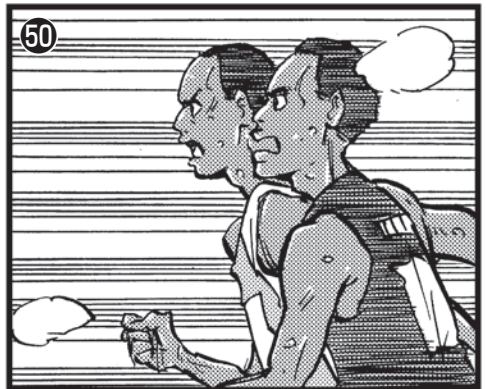
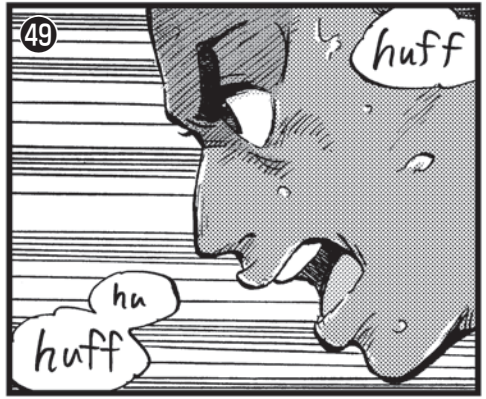
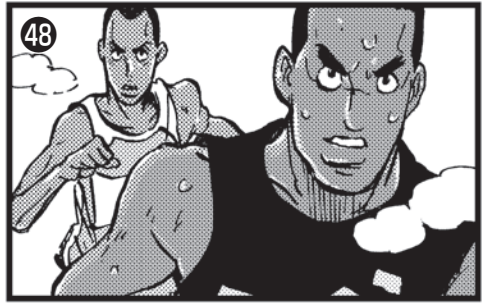
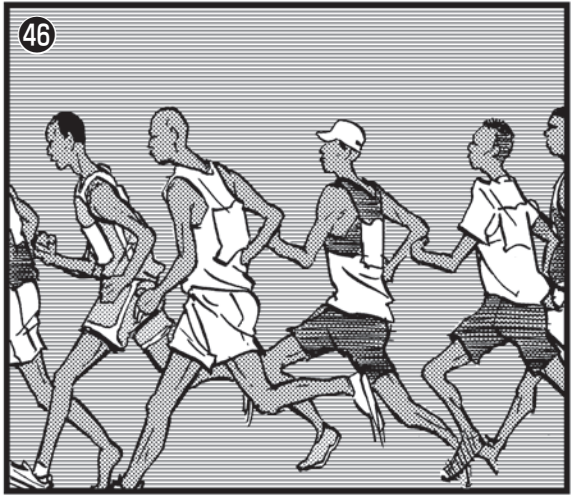
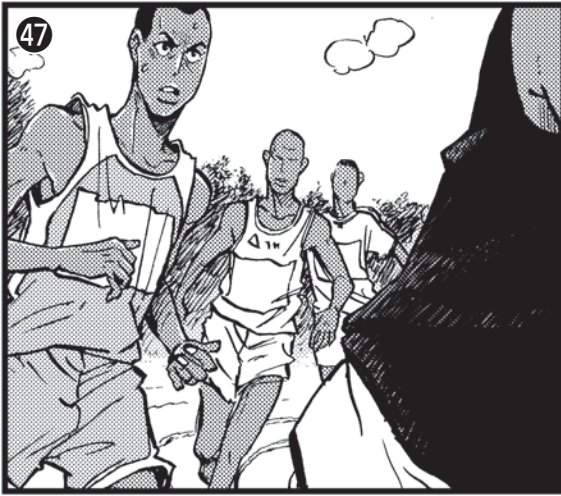


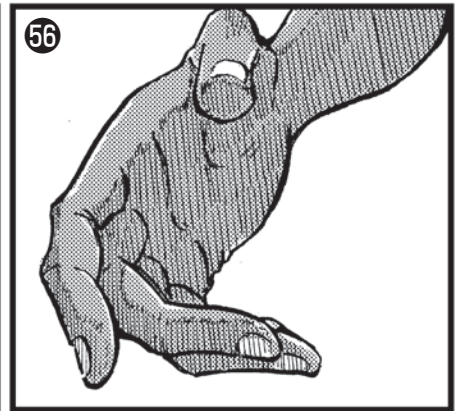
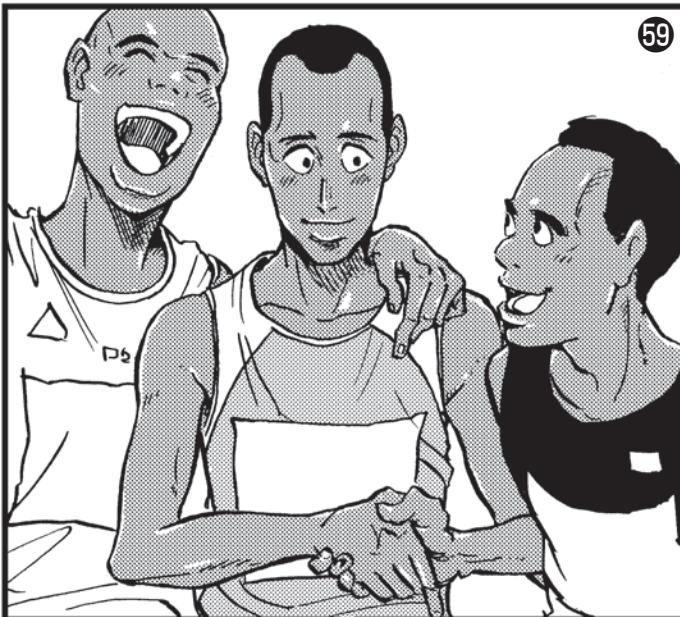
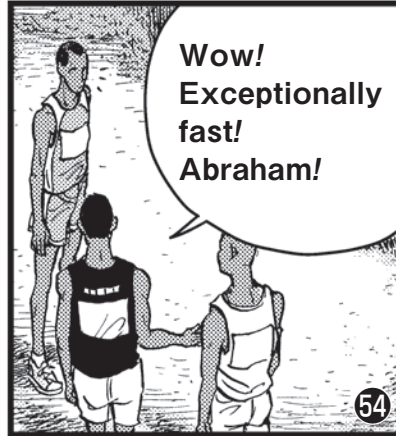
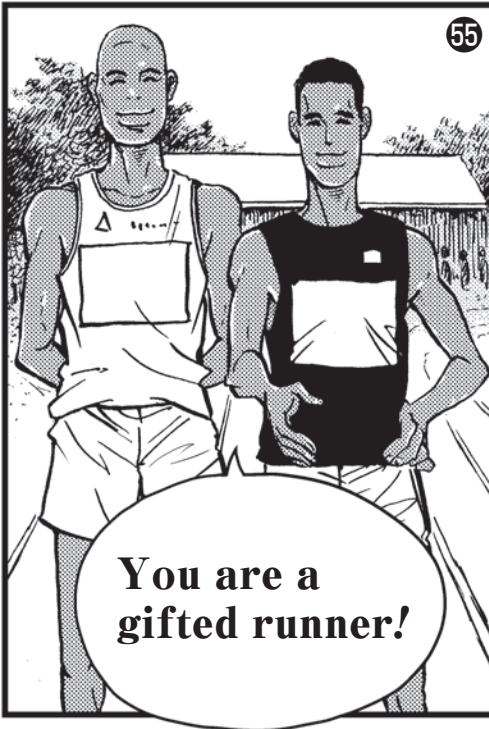
44

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...