

The New Human Revolution, Volume 6, Chapter 1
Treasure Land
BY HO GOKU – ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Translation of parts 6–8 of the ‘Treasure Land’ chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

Shin’ichi Yamamoto spoke earnestly. With a deep wish for the success of this exceptionally talented man who so loved the Arab world he said to Torazo Kawarazaki: “All people are born with a mission. I think your mission is to build a bridge of friendship and culture linking Japan and the Arab nations. Of course, there may be a limit to what an ordinary citizen, a nonpolitician, can do to benefit other countries. But by teaching Arabic to Japanese students and communicating the culture and spirit of that part of the world’s people to the Japanese, you are most definitely opening the way for great exchange to take place in the future.

“It all depends on how passionately committed you are to this. Enthusiasm inspires others; it is contagious. The thing to do is cultivate people who share the same aspiration as you.

“Your wife would be saddened to hear you speak of giving up your dream; you would be letting her down if you did so.”

Large tears glistened in the eyes of this expert on Arab affairs.

“You have an enormous mission to fulfill,” Shin’ichi continued. “To foster the spirit of humanism in people’s hearts, paving the way to peace and building a bridge of cultural exchange is what Buddhism is all about. I will do my best to support you. Let’s devote this precious, irreplaceable lifetime to working for world peace and for a hope-filled future.”

Kawarazaki nodded repeatedly, his eyes moist. He took off his glasses to wipe away the tears and, in a voice filled with fresh resolve, said:

“I am currently compiling an Arabic–Japanese dictionary. No such work yet exists. The publishing companies I’ve contacted have shown no interest in the project, saying it just wouldn’t be profitable. As a result, I’ll probably have to publish it at my own expense. But I will definitely complete this project, and I promise to present you with a copy.”

“Thank you very much. What a truly commendable undertaking! It will definitely be a valuable asset for future generations. However, because so many people today are motivated only by immediate gain or loss, very few may appreciate your painstaking effort. All too often the work of pioneers is ignored or criticized by their contemporaries.

“I am greatly encouraged by your kind words,” said Kawarazaki.

“Incidentally, Mr. Kawarazaki, I am truly struck by your deep affinity for the Arab world. You are probably more an Arab than a real Arab. Maybe you were an Arab in your previous existence.”

“Actually, I’ve thought so, too,” Kawarazaki said with a boisterous, spirited laugh. “I’m honored that you should think so.”

Shin’ichi asked Torazo Kawara zaki about the climate and customs of the various Arab countries and for any travel advice he might have to offer. Their meeting ended with a promise to meet again.

Returning home that day, Kawarazaki immediately sat before the Gohonzon and chanted three daimoku. He then declared to his family, “I’m going to practice with you starting today!”

Through his encounter with Shin’ichi, Kawarazaki, a passionate champion of the Arab

world, became a dedicated champion of kosen-rufu.

During the flight, Shin'ichi recalled his meeting with Kawara zaki and tried to imagine the countries he would be visiting on this trip. The plane arrived in Manila for its first stopover shortly after 2:00 p.m., Jan. 29. They had left Tokyo only a little more than four hours earlier. Continuing passengers, including Shin'ichi and his party, had about a 30- to 40-minute wait ahead of them in an airport transit lounge.

Back in Tokyo, the streets had been icy. Everyone had their overcoat collars turned up to keep out the bitter winter chill.

But in Manila, it was a humid 78.8 degrees. Dressed in winter suits, Shin'ichi and his companions perspired heavily in the heat and gulped cold soft drinks in an effort to stay cool.

“Weren't we supposed to be meeting with a group of Philippine members here?” Shin'ichi asked. A Manila District of the Soka Gakkai had been established in the Philippines the previous May.

“Yes,” Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki replied. “That's what we were told by the Overseas Department.”

Ten minutes and then 20 passed, but still no members arrived.

“I wonder what happened to them?” Shin'ichi said. “Mr. Kuroki, would you mind looking around for them outside?” Akira Kuroki did as he was requested. A short while later he returned and said, “I couldn't see anyone that might be them.”

Shin'ichi had been eagerly looking forward to meeting and talking with the Philippine members for the first time. Admittedly, he would only have had about a half hour to do so. But the briefest words or encounter can either inspire people in faith or cause them to turn their back on it.

The briefest interaction can forge a powerful resolution in people's hearts, giving them the strength and confidence to move forward on their own — or can momentarily undermine their determination, setting them on a downhill course.

Knowing this, Shin'ichi had resolved to pour all his energy into this encounter and wholeheartedly encourage each member.

Presently, they heard the boarding call for their flight. “What a shame we couldn't meet them!” Shin'ichi said as he left the transit lounge.

As they stepped onto the tarmac, they heard someone calling out behind them: “Sensei! Sensei!”

Turning around, Shin'ichi caught sight of several people waving eagerly from the observation deck.

It was the Philippine members; they were calling out and waving to him.

Shin'ichi stopped to wave back and called out loudly: “Hello, everyone! Thank you so much for coming. Please take care! Let's meet again!”

Making his way to the plane, Shin'ichi turned back to wave to the members again and again, wishing to engrave each face forever in his memory.

Looking out the window after taking his seat, Shin'ichi saw that they were still waving with all their might. So he continued to wave back until the plane took off.

A little later, Eisuke Akizuki, who was sitting next to him, said, “I think they were all set to meet us as arranged, but probably weren't allowed to enter the transit lounge.”

“That must be the case,” Shin'ichi agreed, adding, “I feel really bad about disappointing them.”

There was only a small number of members in the Philippines. They had no doubt been bravely supporting and encouraging one another to advance in faith while striving in their

activities. How eagerly they must have looked forward to meeting him.

They had probably been waiting at the airport for several hours for his flight to arrive, some having taken time off work. Shin'ichi was bitterly disappointed and filled with regret that they hadn't gotten together.

Recalling each member's face, Shin'ichi chanted dai moku in his heart for their good health and success.

About three hours after leaving Manila, the plane arrived at its next stopover, Bangkok, Thailand. A district had also been established in Bangkok the previous May. Shin'ichi had made plans during this stopover, too, to meet with local members.

As the group stepped from the plane, they were immediately assaulted by the hot humid air. The temperature was 89.6 degrees.

A dozen-or-so members met Shin'ichi in the airport lobby. Together they moved to one of the airport's restaurants to chat.

Three of the local members had only recently started practicing Buddhism, one man having joined just the day before. Also present were five young women's division members. It was clear that the members here had been developing steadily in the year since Shin'ichi's first visit.

(To be continued)