

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

Translation of parts 9–11 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.

“I am very happy to meet you all,” Shin’ichi said, gazing at the faces of the Thai members. “You must feel lonely sometimes with so few members here. But please be assured that in the near future, Thailand, along with Hong Kong, will be an important center of our kosen-rufu movement in Southeast Asia. I will do everything in my power to support you.

“We have to leave soon today, but on our way back from visiting Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Egypt and Pakistan, we will return to Bangkok for an overnight stopover. So let’s hold a discussion meeting at that time.”

The central figure of the Thai women’s division, Anne Miyako Raiz, smiled happily and said: “There are currently 21 households practicing in Bangkok. I’ll contact those who aren’t here today and make sure they attend.”

“There’s no need to pressure everyone into coming,” Shin’ichi said. “Just those who can make it will be fine.”

Noticing that she was wearing a maternity dress, he inquired, “Pardon my asking, but you’re expecting a baby soon, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Please go easy on yourself, too. Make sure that you get plenty of rest so that you can give birth to a happy, healthy baby.

“Let me add that it is absolutely important to avoid placing unreasonable demands on the members or behaving in a manner that offends or causes misunderstanding. Here, in a country where the Gakkai is unknown, people will form impressions about our organization based only on your attitude and behavior. If your speech or conduct lacks courtesy or common sense, people will conclude that this is what the Soka Gakkai and the Daishonin’s Buddhism are all about.

“So it’s important to exercise wisdom and good sense in pursuing your Buddhist practice, taking into account this country’s culture, customs and traditions. If the Soka Gakkai comes to be perceived in this society as extreme or antisocial, it will set our movement here back 10 or 20 years.

“Leaders must act responsibly. It’s only natural that we are enthusiastic in our activities. But if we think that’s enough, then all our efforts will just be self-serving. Before we do something, we have to stop and think. We have to reflect carefully on the meaning and possible consequences of our actions. We have to look ahead. In other words, it’s important to use wisdom. And wisdom arises from a strong sense of responsibility.”

Shin’ichi’s greatest concern was that Japanese members living in foreign countries and holding leadership positions might, through lack of thought or consideration, inadvertently cause friction with their local communities. The ones to suffer most in such a case would be the members living in those countries.

Time flew by quickly as Shin’ichi talked with the local members. “Are we all right with time?” Shin’ichi asked one of the youth division leaders accompanying him.

Akira Kuroki looked at his watch and gasped: “My goodness! I’m sorry. It’s almost departure time.”

“Is it? In that case, let’s all meet again at the discussion meeting on our return trip to

Thailand,” Shin’ichi said, bidding the local members farewell till the next time.

When Shin’ichi and the others got to the boarding gate, they found the waiting area empty. A clock nearby read the exact time that the flight was scheduled to take off. The party hurried across the tarmac toward the plane, perspiring in the sweltering heat.

Walking briskly with the others, Eisuke Akizuki asked, “The plane won’t take off without us, will it?”

“I’m not sure,” Akira Kuroki replied. “They may be very strict about that sort of thing.”

An airport attendant who saw them approaching the plane signaled them to hurry and they all broke into a run.

“I guess we’ll make it after all,” Yusuke Yoshikawa said.

The moment they boarded the plane, the door closed behind them. It took a while before they could get their breath back.

Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki turned to Shin’ichi and said: “I or one of the others should have checked the time sooner. I’m very sorry.”

“These things happen,” Shin’ichi said. He added: “Whenever we go abroad, everyone’s so relaxed that we forget who is supposed to be keeping us organized. I guess we’ll always remember coming to Bangkok and having to run a marathon!”

The others joined Shin’ichi in laughter.

Failing to keep track of the time had been a serious oversight. Had the youth division leaders been oblivious to or completely unfazed by their negligence, Shin’ichi no doubt would have strictly pointed it out to them. But he knew they deeply regretted what had happened, so he tried to make them feel better.

One important responsibility of a leader is to guide people in such a way that they will take care not to repeat their mistakes, that they will work with enthusiasm and enjoy what they are doing.

Approximately two-and-a-half hours later, the plane arrived at its next stopover, Calcutta, India.

After a short stopover in Calcutta, the plane continued on its way. In a little more than three hours, they arrived in Karachi, Pakistan, their fourth stopover. From there it was just a short distance to Tehran, the capital of Iran, the first country they were scheduled to visit.

They arrived in Tehran close to 1:00 a.m., Jan. 30. The time difference between Iran and Japan was five-and-a-half hours, which would make it about 6:30 a.m. in Tokyo. That meant roughly 19-and-a-half hours had passed since they left.

Despite the late hour, two people — Yoriko Ueno, a Gakkai member, and her husband, Hideo — had come to the airport to greet Shin’ichi and the youth division leaders. The couple had moved to the Iranian city because of Hideo’s work. Mr. Ueno was not a Soka Gakkai member, but fully supported his wife’s practice. He happily volunteered to show the visitors around Tehran during their stay.

It was well past 2:00 a.m. when the party finally arrived at their lodging, the Dar Band Hotel. Located on a high plateau at about 3,800 feet above sea level, Tehran at this early morning hour was unexpectedly cold and dry. In the space of a little less than a day since leaving Japan, they had experienced extreme changes in temperature.

When they rose in the morning, they could see a range of snowcapped mountains in the distance. Shin’ichi stepped out onto the hotel terrace.

Here in Tehran U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin had held their first summit over a four-day period beginning Nov. 28, 1943, at the height of World War II.

Various strategies came out of these talks, later known collectively as the Tehran

Conference, including a joint landing by British and American forces in northern France. It was also reconfirmed that the Soviet Union would join the Western Allies in declaring war on Japan after a German surrender had been realized.

The conference was extremely significant in that it largely decided the subsequent direction of the war and the postwar balance of power. Most of the talks were held at the Soviet Embassy, but the Dar Band Hotel was also reportedly used on a number of occasions.

Now, 18 years later, these three countries were divided into two camps. The world was entangled in a new tragedy, the Cold War between East and West in which the United States and the Soviet Union were the key protagonists.

Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin had tried to change the course of world history through military strength. Now, Shin'ichi, through the power of the human spirit, aimed to blaze a trail toward harmonious coexistence, the unity among all people and the realization of lasting peace throughout the world. For this purpose he had come to Tehran, without fanfare or publicity, on the first leg of his Middle Eastern tour.

It was certain to be a long, arduous journey, but this was the road he must travel to fulfill his mission.

(To be continued)