

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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Shin'ichi Yamamoto arrives in New York on his second visit there. He convinces the reluctant Tomio Haruyama to become the New York Chapter leader by saying: 'I have every confidence that you can do the job. We're not expecting anyone to be perfect to begin with.... We're asking you to accept a leadership position based on your potential for the future. Essentially, it all comes down to your resolve to give it your best.'

Emiko Haruyama said: "President Yamamoto, I don't think my husband is capable of doing the job of chapter leader. He's extremely busy with work, and he's never even held a leadership position in the Gakkai before.

"Besides," she added, "he's just barely doing gongyo. There are some really great people among the other candidates for the position who are much more qualified...."

She didn't mention her strongest misgiving — that her husband was unlikely to accept the position of chapter leader if asked.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto had met Tomio Haruyama a couple times. When Emiko and Tomio decided to get married, Shin'ichi and his wife, Mineko, had invited them out to dinner, and the four of them had talked and gotten to know each other. From this and the few other occasions they had met, Shin'ichi had gotten a good feel for Tomio's character and potential.

Shin'ichi said: "I'm thinking of asking your husband to take on not only the chapter responsibility but also the position of young men's division North America General Corps leader. Being his wife, you may think you know your husband best. But just living with someone doesn't necessarily mean that you can see your partner's true potential. I have no doubt that once Tomio awakens fully to his mission for kosen-rufu, he will go on to achieve great things for our movement."

Despite Shin'ichi's words, Emiko was still concerned.

After they finished discussing leadership appointments for New York, they moved on to the Seattle organization, where they also planned to form a chapter. There were no suitable men's division candidates for chapter leader, and Masako Clarke, who had given such a moving experience earlier, was listed as a leading candidate for that position.

"What do you think?" Kiyoshi Jujo asked Shin'ichi.

"Mrs. Clarke has done a great job as Seattle District chief, taking responsibility for activities in that area," Shin'ichi responded. "I know it'll be a challenge for her, since she's just lost her husband and has two small children to look after. But I'm sure she'll be fine in the position of chapter leader. Seeing how seriously she's been working for kosen-rufu, I'm certain she'll create a wonderful Seattle Chapter. The responsibility of chapter leader will also give her a greater sense of purpose, and I think that will be good for her, too."

They continued discussing the details of each organization, the light in the hotel room burning on long into the night.

Early the next day, Jan. 13, they flew from Los Angeles to New York.

Kosen-rufu is a continual departure toward new, hope-filled horizons.

Although the flight across America took only five to six hours, due to the time difference it was close to nightfall when they arrived in New York.

On their arrival at the airport, about 50 members enthusiastically greeted them. Among them was Tomio.

After thanking everyone for their warm welcome, Shin'ichi turned to Tomio and said: "Mr. Haruyama, today we're going to form a New York Chapter, and we'd very much like to have you take on the position of chapter leader. We'd also like you to serve as the young men's division North America General Corps leader."

Startled, Tomio raised a hand to adjust his black-rimmed glasses and gazed intently at Shin'ichi, as if to make sure he was hearing correctly. Tomio then firmly said: "I'm sorry, but I couldn't possibly accept. That kind of responsibility is way beyond me."

Emiko stood next to her husband, hoping rather anxiously that he wouldn't be rude to Shin'ichi.

"I don't think so," Shin'ichi said. "I have every confidence that you can do the job. We're not expecting anyone to be perfect to begin with. For instance, Mr. Ishibashi, the head of Los Angeles Chapter, didn't have any experience either. But by staying in close contact with the Gakkai Headquarters in Japan and gradually learning what he needed to do as he went along, he has developed into a fine chapter leader.

"We're asking you to accept a leadership position based on your potential for the future," he added. "Essentially, it all comes down to your resolve to give it your best."

Looking perplexed, Tomio asked, "What exactly would I have to do?"

"Well, let's see...you could start by driving your wife to meetings and joining her in Gakkai activities on the weekends," Shin'ichi answered. "She'll be having a baby soon, and it'll be difficult for her to get around."

"Ah, so I'll be a driver?" Tomio asked. "I'll be a chauffeur-chapter leader, right?"

Shin'ichi laughed loudly.

"Yes, that's perfectly fine for a start," he answered.

"Well, I think I could manage that," said Tomio.

"Good, it's settled then!" Shin'ichi declared, while the other leaders from Japan still looked at Tomio with apprehensive expressions.

A short meeting to finalize the program and other details for that evening's chapter inauguration was to take place at the home of Koichi Yabe, a men's division member. Yabe, one of the well-wishers at the airport, drove Shin'ichi.

Yabe was 53 and had joined the Soka Gakkai in 1953. The Japanese shipping company he worked for had sent him to the States to head its New York office. He was of a gentlemanly demeanor and was well liked and trusted for his honesty and integrity.

To be continued