

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
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'Yes, Amami is far from Tokyo, but the hearts of our Amami members are closest to mine. They are with me,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto says. 'There are leaders who work at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, but whose hearts are very distant from mine.'

Even on the ship, there was no time for Shin'ichi Yamamoto to rest. After greeting the ship's captain and taking a brief tour of the engine room, he met with the local leaders on board and discussed plans for expanding kosen-rufu on the Amami Islands.

The twilight hue of the sea was soon overtaken by the veil of night, and stars filled the sky. The faint outline of an island became visible far in the distance. It was Amami Oshima. It would be another two hours, though, before they docked at Naze, the island's main city.

Shin'ichi turned to the leaders accompanying him from Tokyo and said: "Has your seasickness subsided? I hope so, because there's no getting off the ship just yet! Actually, the same can be said of kosen-rufu and of faith. Once we've set sail, no matter what storm may hit, there's no turning back." He spoke these words casually, but he felt them deeply.

The *Akebonomaru* landed at Naze around 10:00 p.m. The dock was crowded with members waiting to greet Shin'ichi. When he stepped onto the deck and waved, a great welcoming roar erupted from the crowd. Even though the members had heard that President Yamamoto would be visiting the island, many did not actually believe it until they saw him with their own eyes.

Just prior to Shin'ichi's departure from Kagoshima, the sea had been rough due to the effects of Typhoon No. 4, and the regular passenger ships scheduled from Kagoshima had been canceled. There was concern that airline flights would also be delayed or canceled. When they saw that President Yamamoto had really come, the members could not contain their joy.

"Thank you, everyone, thank you!" Shin'ichi shouted again and again, responding to the warm welcome.

Shin'ichi and his party were driven to the newly completed Amami Oshima Community Center. It was a chalk-white, two-story building made of reinforced concrete, with a large, 70-tatami mat meeting room on the ground floor, and was the first Soka Gakkai center in the Amami group of islands. The completion ceremony for the new building was scheduled for the following day.

After arriving at the center and chanting daimoku three times, the leaders traveling with Shin'ichi stretched out their legs and made themselves comfortable. The journey had worn them out.

General Director Koichi Harayama muttered, "Amami is so far! And the rocking of the ship really got to me." Hearing this, Shin'ichi quickly remarked: "We've finally made it to Amami. Having come this far, I'm determined to really accomplish something. While we're here, let's put out five years worth of effort to secure the development of our movement in Amami!"

Shin'ichi's rousing words transformed the spirits of the leaders accompanying him. Vice

General Director Yukio Ishikawa said: “It certainly would be a waste if we made the long trip here to Amami and didn’t put out our best effort. I’m going to pour my life into giving guidance on faith to our members here.”

Shin’ichi smiled and replied: “Ishikawa, let’s not think of it as giving guidance; instead let’s learn all we can about faith from the members here in Amami. Every month, the local chapter men’s and women’s division leaders travel all the way to Tokyo from these remote islands to attend the Headquarters leaders meeting. The entire trip takes them a whole week. During that time, they have to put their work on hold, and their absence must be hard on their families.

“They also travel from island to island to encourage and support their fellow members, giving their all to forge a way for the spread of Buddhism. They could not have accomplished what they have without making sacrifices in their private lives. Each and every one of them has made tremendous contributions to our movement.

“Just because one leader has a higher position within the organization than another doesn’t mean his faith is necessarily stronger or that he is more important. I’m sure you are all better at talking and you probably know more about Buddhist principles, but that in itself doesn’t amount to faith.

“What matters is what you have actually done for the sake of kosen-rufu. How many people have you enabled to practice, how much have you inspired your fellow members to take action, to what extent have you taken action yourself and how much blood, sweat and tears have you put into your efforts?

“Yes, Amami is far from Tokyo, but the hearts of our Amami members are closest to mine. They are with me. There are leaders who work at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, but whose hearts are very distant from mine. When it comes to the heart, it’s not where you are that counts.

“I brought you all here to Amami because I wanted you to have contact with our Amami members and see what true faith, true struggle and true effort are.”

Looking around the room at each of his companions, Shin’ichi continued: “I would like to propose that we establish a general chapter here in the Amami Islands. “Amami is a place with a painful past. It has suffered various kinds of cruel oppression. During the Edo Period, it was subject to the harsh rule of the Satsuma clan. After the war, it endured a period of U.S. military rule. To transform that bitter karma, to make Amami strong and independent, I want to establish a general chapter here, even though the membership is still quite small. This is the conclusion I have reached after long, hard consideration. Let’s talk about ideas for the organization and leadership of the general chapter.”

The discussions began, with Shin’ichi taking the lead. It was nearly 11:00 at night, but Shin’ichi’s internal “engine” for advancing kosen-rufu in Amami had begun to roar.

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the
novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto.
The events take place in 1963.