

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION**  
**'EARLY SPRING'**  
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***Members in Taiwan pray that Shin'ichi Yamamoto will stop by on his way back to Japan from Hong Kong.***

Twenty or 30 members had gathered at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport to see President Shin'ichi Yamamoto off. Among them was Chow Chi Kong's son, the boy who had been assisting the event staff at the Hong Kong Chapter meeting.

"One day I'm going to found a university," Shin'ichi told the boy, "so when you get bigger, please come to Japan. For now, study hard!"

The boy looked at Shin'ichi with a puzzled expression. He couldn't understand a word of Japanese. His father, standing behind him, hurriedly translated what Shin'ichi had said. Once he understood, the boy smiled brightly and nodded in the affirmative.

Shin'ichi encouraged the Hong Kong members until the last moment. Finally, sent off by their smiling faces, he boarded the plane.

At about the same time, in Taipei, Taiwan, the Taipei Chapter leader and several district leaders were holding a meeting. Taipei Chapter had been established in August 1962, the previous year, with Zhu Qianxun appointed as its leader. Zhu was born in 1923 in Jiangsu Province on mainland China, and had gone to Taiwan when he was 23. During the war, he studied at Waseda University in Tokyo, and he was fluent in Japanese.

In 1960, his company sent him to Japan to observe Japanese business practices. During that visit, he heard about the Soka Gakkai from a Japanese friend. Zhu was astonished at Japan's rapid recovery after the war, and he figured it must be attributed to a philosophy or religion that had brought out the power of the people. As he heard more about the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, he came to believe that this religion, rooted in the lives of the people, must have been a great source of strength in rebuilding Japanese society. He decided to join.

After returning to Taiwan, he avidly read copies of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, sent to him from Japan, using what he learned from the newspaper to support his Buddhist practice. He also contacted the Soka Gakkai Headquarters and began to visit other members to encourage them in faith.

In May 1961, when Kazumasa Morikawa and other Soka Gakkai leaders visited Taiwan, five districts were formed, including Taipei and Kaohsiung districts, and Zhu was appointed a district leader. When Taipei Chapter was established in August 1962, he was appointed chapter leader.

But from about that time, Taiwan's Police General Headquarters began to keep a close watch on the Soka Gakkai's activities in the territory. Zhu was tailed by police and called in for questioning. There was also considerable tension between those born in Taiwan and the Chinese who had arrived from the mainland. Against this backdrop, the Republic of China's government, which was planning a counterattack on mainland China, instituted martial law and severely restricted the freedom of speech and assembly.

Just after New Year's 1963, Zhu read a copy of the Jan. 1 *Seikyo Shimbun*. An article announced the itinerary for President Yamamoto's overseas trip, which was to begin Jan. 8. A visit to Taiwan was not included on that itinerary.

But Zhu had heard from Southeast Asia General Chapter Leader Kazumasa Morikawa that President Yamamoto was concerned about the Soka Gakkai members in Taiwan, and Zhu felt certain that President Yamamoto would come to see them. He said to the Taiwan members: “President Yamamoto will begin an overseas guidance tour on Jan. 8, and on Jan. 27 he will fly back to Japan from Hong Kong. Let’s pray wholeheartedly that on the way home, he will stop and visit us in Taiwan. Let’s gather at Sungshan Airport that afternoon. Even if President Yamamoto can’t stop here, he will be flying over Taiwan. We can look up at the sky and think of him, and pledge to propagate the Daishonin’s Buddhism.”

From that moment on, Zhu chanted daimoku earnestly that President Yamamoto would somehow visit Taiwan.

Around noon on Jan. 27, after a district leaders meeting, Zhu asked everyone to wait while he rushed home on his bicycle to get some salted fish, which he wanted to share. A short distance from his home, a taxi pulled up beside him, and a man called from the car: “Mr. Zhu! President Yamamoto, President Yamamoto is at the airport! And he’s asking for you!”

The man in the taxi was a men’s division member from Kaohsiung. He and other Kaohsiung members had come to Taipei by overnight train, and they had been waiting at the airport since early morning. Zhu asked him to tell the members at the meeting place to come to the airport immediately, and he hurried there himself by taxi.

When he arrived at the airport, several members from Kaohsiung were standing in front of a wire fence. Beyond the fence, he could see President Yamamoto. “President Yamamoto!” shouted Zhu as loud as he could, and he ran full speed to the fence, waving his arms. By the time he reached Shin’ichi, he was out of breath and could only gasp, “Sensei....”

“You must be the chapter leader, Mr. Zhu,” Shin’ichi said. “Thank you for all your efforts!” Shin’ichi extended his hand, but the wire fence separated them. Shin’ichi stretched his fingers through one of the openings; only two would fit. But Zhu grasped those two fingers in his own and shook them as best he could. Tears filled his eyes.

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