

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'
VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 35–36**

'If there is a sun shining in our hearts, we can dispel all inner darkness and without fail arrive at a glorious morning of victory,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto reflects. 'If we want to transform the community in which we live, we must ask ourselves: Do our hearts burn with a fighting spirit and are we truly committed to spreading Nichiren Daishonin's teachings?'

After being appointed as the women's leader of Amami Oshima Chapter, Haru Fujisawa traveled from island to island igniting the flame of the Mystic Law.

Her journeys didn't always go smoothly. If a storm hit, the beautiful blue sea would turn into a swarm of angry waves, and her way would be blocked. She once found herself stranded offshore for seven hours, her boat unable to dock due to the high swells. On another occasion, she slipped and fell while transferring from a ferry to a small boat that would take her to shore. On the islands, she often spent two or three hours each night walking from place to place visiting members, but this exposed her to the danger of being bitten by the poisonous *habu* snake.

Sometimes people even threw salt at her and her fellow members who had come to talk with them about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. [In Japan, it was traditionally believed that salt had purifying qualities; it was thrown as a form of protection against impurity.] Watching the salt scatter around her like falling snow, Haru consistently vowed to herself: "I won't give up! Whatever happens, I will spread the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the Amami Islands faster than any other part of Japan and make this the happiest place in the entire country!"

Takashi Nogawa, the Amami Oshima Chapter leader, shared this conviction with Haru, as did all the Amami members.

Folk religion was still deeply rooted in the Amami Islands, and people worshipped the female priests who conducted local shaman rituals as well as those believed to be faith healers who could communicate with and speak for the gods. Anyone who opposed such traditions was thought to be cursed.

Amid these circumstances, the Soka Gakkai members proudly strove to teach people about Buddhism. They broke ties with the old customs and proclaimed to others the difference between correct and false teachings. This caused great anxiety among the islanders, and their reactions to the Soka Gakkai members' efforts were often quite severe.

For example, Saburo Shigehara began sharing Buddhism with people on his home island of Kakeromajima. Some twenty local households out of the nearly one hundred in his area decided to join the Soka Gakkai, but just around that time, Saburo's 85-year-old grandmother died. Then, in a three-month period, his cousin, aunt, younger brother and father also died.

A rumor spread that anyone who joined the Soka Gakkai would die. It was a curse, people said. Criticism of the Soka Gakkai flared violently, and even members began to have doubts.

It was true that Shigehara's family members had died after taking faith, but this did not shake him at all. He had seen their faces at the time of their deaths, and each had looked completely different than any he had seen before. Their complexions were rosy and they

seemed to be smiling. They looked totally at peace. This fact served to convince Shigehara even further that he was practicing a correct religion.

Shigehara told fellow members: "If I, a member of the Shigehara family, am not disturbed by these deaths, why should anyone else be? This faith is tremendous!" His firm conviction allayed the members' fears.

The sun rose high above the vast ocean. The long-awaited morning of a new birth had arrived.

Early on June 22, Shin'ichi stepped out into the garden of the Amami Oshima Community Center and looked at the sun rising in the sky. The night's blackness had vanished like a dream, and a brilliant, beautiful world of light enveloped him. It was a wonderful and majestic morning, a golden dawn. Green papaya trees, banana trees, date palms, and cycads growing in the center's garden glistened in the sunlight under a cloudless sky.

"If there is a sun shining in our hearts," thought Shin'ichi, "we can dispel all inner darkness and without fail arrive at a glorious morning of victory. If we want to transform the community in which we live, we must ask ourselves: Do our hearts burn with a fighting spirit and are we truly committed to spreading the Daishonin's teachings?"

A majestic sun of fighting spirit burned brightly in Shin'ichi's heart. For him, each day was supremely important. He lived each moment of his life as if it were the last. Such is the determination of one who strives to create a new history.

The eagerly anticipated completion ceremony for the Amami Oshima Community Center began just before 10:00 a.m. Some 500 members packed the building, with many overflowing into the grounds. Their joy-filled faces turned the center into a garden of smiles. Seeing the members so happy wiped away Shin'ichi's fatigue from his long journey.

After gongyo, there was a progress report and words from a number of leaders, and then Shin'ichi spoke of the tremendous power of the Gohonzon. He hoped that the members of the Amami Islands would enjoy wonderful benefit from their practice.

"The Gohonzon is a mandala, which means 'cluster of blessings' and 'perfectly endowed,'" he said. "In other words, it contains the benefits of all Buddhas and all teachings or laws without exception. The strength of our faith and the strength of our practice are what draw forth the power of the Buddha and the Law from the Gohonzon. At the same time, our strong faith and practice manifest themselves as the powers of the Buddha and the Law."

Shin'ichi spoke next of the importance of chanting daimoku, and finished by saying: "This community center is a castle of the Law for all of you to use freely for spreading the Daishonin's teachings. I hope that your unity and courage will give rise to a great surge of propagation that will flow from this castle, which is the southernmost of our community centers in Japan. I am counting on you to achieve kosen-rufu here in the Amami Islands in my stead."

The Amami members listened deeply, absorbing each of Shin'ichi's words.

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