

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'
VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 25–26**

'Japan is still a male-dominated society – but Japan, too, will have to change eventually,' says Shin'ichi Yamamoto at a young women's meeting. 'It will be up to women to make that happen by refusing to accept the traditional role that Japanese society has assigned to them.'

Immediate difficulties often severely diminish a person's dreams. But Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova refused to give up. She spent even her free time studying, staying up late night after night. She would persistently question her instructors and seniors in the program about points she did not understand until she grasped them to her satisfaction. Without uttering a complaint, she tenaciously kept pace with the strict cosmonaut training. Even Major Gagarin, who had made that first historic flight into space aboard *Vostok 1*, was impressed and moved by her diligence.

Valentina was a thoughtful and loving person who, despite her demanding routine, managed to send money and letters to her mother on a regular basis. Her kindness and flexibility were accompanied by an iron will.

Just as a flower blossoms after enduring the bitter cold of winter, a dream can only be realized if one is willing to endure the accompanying trials and put forth the necessary effort. The bright smile that Valentina showed the world from inside the cabin of *Vostok 6* surely expressed her genuine satisfaction at having given her all to achieving her chosen goal.

Valentina was a subject of great interest among the young women's division members of the Soka Gakkai. At a meeting between Shin'ichi Yamamoto and leaders of the young women's division at the Seikyo Shimbun offices, the conversation turned to the first female cosmonaut.

"Ms. Tereshkova has shown the women of the world that a woman is capable of piloting a spacecraft," said Shin'ichi. "She has helped usher in a new age in which women will play the leading roles in society.

"Japan is still a male-dominated society—but Japan, too, will have to change eventually. It will be up to women to make that happen by refusing to accept the traditional role that Japanese society has assigned to them.

"Indeed, there are many problems with the way men treat women, but I believe that if women wish to improve their status in society, they must be prepared to do their absolute best at any given job, working even harder than the men.

"Toward this end, it is crucial to have a solid perspective on life, a firm philosophy about how to live."

To this, Michiyo Watari, leader of the young women's division, responded: "Sensei, I hope you will consider establishing a set of guidelines for the YWD in this regard. Until now, we have used the youth division guidelines set forth by President Toda, 'Precepts for Youth' and 'Youth, Be Patriotic!' Of course, the fundamental spirit of these is the same for both men and women, but I think guidelines that specifically address the way young women should live would be very useful."

"I see," Shin'ichi said. "I agree; such guidelines are needed. Let me think about it. I will introduce something new when the time is right."

Two months later, the September *Daibyakurenge* magazine carried an editorial Shin'ichi had written titled "To the Young Women's Division," outlining the sort of guidelines that Watari had suggested.

On June 20, Shin'ichi Yamamoto flew to Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefectures in Kyushu to encourage the members there. That afternoon he attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the Kagoshima Community Center, to be built in the Kamoike-cho district of Kagoshima City. At 7:00 p.m., he attended the Kagoshima General Chapter Leaders Meeting held at the Municipal Central Public Hall. The next day, June 21, he headed for the island Amami Oshima. His main goal on this trip to Kyushu was to encourage the members living in the Amami group of islands.

Shin'ichi was very concerned for his fellow members who were striving to practice Buddhism in this isolated archipelago. Not only were their means of transportation limited but some of the islands were without medical care, or even electricity. Their livelihoods were also at the mercy of the weather; typhoons or other storms could cut them off from life's essentials. Long spells of dry heat would leave many of the islands without drinking water.

Old customs and traditions were also strongly rooted there. Trying to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism under these circumstances proved to be quite a challenge.

Shin'ichi had wanted to visit and encourage members who were living on remote islands since becoming president. He firmly believed that it was his mission to offer the most encouragement, support and praise to the members who had suffered the most. However, there were many things he had to take care of, and as the days and months passed he only became busier. Still, he managed to squeeze some time out of his schedule and plan a trip to Amami Oshima.

Outside of the large main Islands of the Japanese archipelago, Amami Oshima was the third largest Japanese island, after the islands of Okinawa and Sado. It was also the largest in the Amami island chain. In Japan's medieval period, the Amami Islands were part of the Ryukyu Kingdom, but at the beginning of the seventeenth century, after the defeat of the Ryukyus by Shimazu Iehisa, they fell under the control of the Satsuma domain.

Toward the end of the Edo Period, in particular, these islands were subject to severe oppression under feudal rule, and their inhabitants were forced to grow sugar cane and process sugar as tribute. The heavy taxes and hard labor caused them to suffer terribly.

During the Pacific War, Amami Oshima was the target of intense bombings by U.S. forces, and some ninety percent of the island's capital of Naze was reduced to ashes. After Japan's defeat, Amami Oshima came under U.S. military rule. Okinawa, also under U.S. rule, had become a U.S. protectorate and military bases covering vast areas of land were built there because of its strategic location. Amami Oshima, however, was left on its own, lacking sufficient investment to aid in its post-war reconstruction.

With its trade severely stifled, the production of local products such as sugar and Oshima *tsumugi* (pongee, a soft thin cloth woven from raw silk) declined, and the island's economy fell into a severe recession. It was against this backdrop that a movement to return the islands to Japan began to grow among the residents.

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