

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION  
'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'  
VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 37–38**

After the completion ceremony for the Amami Oshima Community Center, interviews were conducted with the proposed leaders of Amami Oshima General Chapter on the second floor of the new building.

This was the first that any of the members had heard about the formation of a general chapter, and they were very surprised. Takashi Nogawa, who was a candidate for the post of general chapter leader, was thinking of turning down the position. He felt that he had been unable to fully carry out his duties as chapter leader, and that he would not be able to handle the even heavier responsibilities of general chapter leader.

When time for his interview came, he expressed this concern to Shin'ichi Yamamoto, who said: "It is true that the Amami Oshima General Chapter will cover a lot of territory and the responsibilities of that leader will be great. But that doesn't mean you cannot do it.

"At the age of 32, I took on the entire world. The Amami Islands may be spread out, but they're not that wide!"

Nogawa could say nothing in response to this. He thought of the personal vow he had made to devote himself to working for kosen-rufu alongside President Yamamoto, and decided to challenge himself to the very end.

At about this time, members were gathering at Shiohama Beach, an area of reclaimed land that faced Naze Harbor, where a large meeting was to be held that day. A covered stage had been set up against the mountain backdrop, and a banner with "Soka Gakkai Amami Oshima Chapter Meeting" written in bold strokes stretched across the stage. At the last minute, the meeting had been changed to an inaugural meeting for Amami Oshima General Chapter, but there had been no time to redo the banner.

Six thousand members filled the beach by 11:00 a.m. They sat on straw mats and ate picnic lunches as they waited for the meeting to start at 1:00. At 12:45, when President Yamamoto and the other leaders stepped onto the stage, a roar of applause erupted, and the meeting began.

After a chorus of Soka Gakkai songs, Vice General Director Kiyoshi Jujo announced the formation of Amami Oshima General Chapter and introduced the new leadership. This was greeted by a wave of joyous applause that seemed to go on forever.

Next, the new general chapter leader, Nogawa, took the podium and shared his determination with the audience. "Today," he said, "Amami Oshima General Chapter has been established. It is a new beginning for all of us. Seven or eight years ago, there were almost no members in the Amami Islands. I believe that the establishment of this general chapter is a sign of the triumph of our faith and proof that we really can achieve kosen-rufu."

Nogawa called out at the top of his voice: "The karma of the Amami Islands is deep. Not only do we have a painful past, but also each year typhoons inflict great damage, causing our fellow citizens terrible hardship.

"We are the ones who can change all that. I am determined to devote every ounce of my strength to turning these islands into a Buddha land. President Yamamoto has said that the more a region suffers and the more misfortune it encounters, the stronger our organization

will grow there. Let's work together and make our general chapter the best in all Japan! Let's stand up together once again!"

The members signaled their agreement by raising their fists high into the air. Their response was immediate and came with a force that seemed to shake the heavens.

After Nogawa, young women's leader Michiyo Watari, director Ryoichi Sawada, and vice general directors Yukio Ishikawa, Katsu Kiyohara and Eisuke Akizuki each delivered greetings, followed by General Director Koichi Harayama. Finally, Shin'ichi expressed his deep appreciation to the members for their hard work, and began his speech with a bright smile on his now-suntanned face.

Declaring that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the ultimate teaching from both a documentary and theoretical perspective, Shin'ichi stated that the benefits gained from its practice are primarily "inconspicuous" in the way they are manifested. "There are two kinds of benefits from our prayers," he said, "those that are immediately apparent, or 'conspicuous,' and those that we cannot see right away, or 'inconspicuous.' Inconspicuous benefit is the focus of the Daishonin's Buddhism, for it is what brings real happiness.

"There are cases in which a person's illness is cured soon after taking faith, but true benefit does not appear in this manner—nor is it anything like beginning to practice and coming into a large sum of money. If the real benefits of faith came in the form of unexpected windfalls without any effort on our part, we'd become lazy and spoiled.

"So what is inconspicuous benefit? It can be likened to the growth of a tree. You can spend day after day watching a tree, and nothing will seem to change. But if you observe it after five, 10, 20 years have passed, you will see that it has grown large and tall. In the same way, if you keep practicing this faith for five, 10 or 20 years, your negative karma will disappear and you will change your destiny, accumulate good fortune and gain tremendous benefit. This is what is meant by inconspicuous benefit, and it is the true benefit of the Daishonin's Buddhism."

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