

**THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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How the first chapter in Europe was formed in 1963.

In September 1962, following the arrival in West Germany of young men's division members Koichiro Sada and Michiya Moro'oka, a young women's division member named Matsuko Takaishi—an ear, nose and throat physician—came to live in West Germany.

Takaishi had realized her long-cherished dream of becoming a doctor, graduating from the Department of Medicine of the highly regarded University of Chiba in Japan. Yet she found herself having difficulties in her relationships with friends, and her confidence in her abilities as a doctor was beginning to wane.

She joined the Soka Gakkai in 1958 at the encouragement of her sister-in-law who, through faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, had managed to recover from an illness that the most advanced medical science had failed to cure. As she engaged herself wholeheartedly in her Buddhist practice and Gakkai activities, Takaishi was able to secure a position as a research assistant at her alma mater, Chiba University. Getting the job came as a great surprise to her and served to convince her further of the power of faith.

Shortly thereafter, Shin'ichi Yamamoto was appointed Soka Gakkai president, and the term worldwide kosen-rufu became increasingly familiar to the members.

Inspired by this, Takaishi decided to go abroad to study in West Germany. She even dreamed of welcoming President Yamamoto there one day.

But when she took the exam in Japan to qualify as an exchange student, she failed. This was a terrible shock to Takaishi, who since childhood had been praised as an exceptional student and had never failed a school exam.

She began to feel that perhaps it was not her mission to work for kosen-rufu on the global stage. Worse, she began to have doubts about faith and the validity of the claim that no prayer goes unanswered. Though participating in Gakkai activities, she felt unhappy and distressed. She wished that she could receive personal guidance from President Yamamoto.

Toward the end of 1961, Takaishi went with one of her seniors in faith, a fellow doctor, to see Shin'ichi at the Seikyo Shimbun offices in Tokyo. After inquiring about her family, Shin'ichi asked Takaishi, "What level are you in the Study Department?"

"I'm not a member of the Study Department yet," she replied.

Takaishi had failed the Entrance Exam that would qualify her as a Study Department member, not having bothered to study for it seriously. While failing the exam to become an exchange student came as an incredible shock to her, failing the Entrance Exam hadn't caused her the least concern. This reflected her tendency to place a high priority on social position and title while taking the world of faith lightly.

"So you're saying that even though you've graduated from university, you're incapable of studying Buddhism?" Shin'ichi asked.

These words pierced Takaishi's heart like a knife. They were clear-cut guidance to help her correct her attitude in faith. Takaishi suddenly realized that, although she had thought she was striving earnestly in her Buddhist practice, somewhere in her heart she had been treating Buddhism lightly. With such an attitude, she thought, it was understandable that her prayers hadn't been answered.

In January 1962, Takaishi prepared to take the Entrance Exam once again, determined this time to start all over in her Buddhist practice from the very basics. She applied herself with a fresh resolve, sincerely and humbly studying Buddhist principles and theory, and earnestly chanting daimoku.

As she did, she developed a keen awareness of the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism. This time she passed the exam. For her, this meant that her faith had received a passing grade.

A short time later, Takaishi realized her dream of studying abroad, gaining the opportunity to study as an intern in the Otolaryngology Department of a hospital attached to the medical school of the University of Heidelberg in West Germany.

Alighting joyfully on West German soil, Takaishi worked with the YMD members already there—the coal miners Sada and Moro'oka—becoming with them a core member in that country. Their youthful energy gave powerful momentum to the development of the kosen-rufu movement in West Germany.

By January 1963, the membership in West Germany had grown to more than 50 households, far exceeding the original target of 30 that Shin'ichi had set for Sada, promising him that, if that figure were reached, a chapter would be established.

The morning of Jan. 12, 1963, Eisuke Akizuki and the other Soka Gakkai leaders from Japan held Study Department exams at their hotel for the local members. The grading of the exams was to be conducted at a special meeting with President Yamamoto when they met up with him in Paris.

In the afternoon, the inaugural meeting marking the formation of the chapter in West Germany was held in a small conference room they had booked at another hotel for the occasion. More than 30 members attended.

Eiji Kawasaki, the central contact person for Europe, delivered the opening speech, and a number of members shared their experiences in faith. Eisuke Akizuki, Soka Gakkai vice general director, then spoke: "Some time ago, President Yamamoto set a goal of establishing a chapter here, when the membership surpassed 30 households.

"Today, West Germany has a membership of more than 50 households. This is solely due to your hard work and devoted efforts, day in and day out. Thank you all very much.

"President Yamamoto is currently in the United States. Before his departure from Japan, he told us, 'The time has come at last for us to establish a chapter in West Germany. I want you to go there and create a chapter.'

"Since then, while keeping in close touch with President Yamamoto in the United States, we have been making preparations for the chapter's formation. And today, at last, the time has arrived for us to establish in West Germany our first European chapter. My sincerest congratulations!"

Smiles lit the participants' faces, and there was loud applause. Tears glistened in Sada's eyes.