

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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Two coal miners from Japan get the kosen-rufu movement in Germany going, encouraged by President Shin'ichi Yamamoto.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto was pleased by the youthful enthusiasm of Koichiro Sada, who sought to go to West Germany to help propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in Europe. Shin'ichi made a promise to the young man: "Should the membership in West Germany reach 10 households, we'll establish a district. And should it reach 30 households, we'll form a chapter."

Sada, then 28 years old, took this as a personal goal that President Yamamoto had set for him.

He left Japan on Nov. 1, 1963. Arriving in Düsseldorf, Sada went to see the hotel where Shin'ichi Yamamoto had stayed during his first visit to Europe.

He vowed silently as he stood in front of the building: "In this hotel, Sensei pondered achieving kosen-rufu in West Germany. It is saturated with Sensei's daimoku. I will also do my best!"

Sada got in touch with Eiji Kawasaki, the Gakkai's contact person for Europe. He began his activities by supporting and encouraging three other families who were Soka Gakkai members in West Germany. He also talked to his Japanese coworkers at the mine about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

The central figure for the Japanese Soka Gakkai members working at the coal mine in Gelsenkirchen, meanwhile, was a 23-year-old named Michiya Moro'oka. Also hailing from Hokkaido, he had started practicing Buddhism in 1956 at age 17. At 18, he became a coal miner and began engaging energetically in Gakkai activities as a young men's division member.

Opening the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, he would read guidance by President Toda speaking of kosen-rufu in Asia and, later on, by the new president, Shin'ichi, sharing his cherished vision of worldwide kosen-rufu. Moro'oka thus developed a strong desire to play a role in actualizing these grand objectives. Like Sada, he felt that there was little chance of fulfilling these dreams. But then he learned that West German coal mines were recruiting Japanese miners, and he quickly signed on.

Being the main breadwinner in his family, however, Moro'oka faced a dilemma. One day, he summoned the courage to tell his parents of his dream. When his father, who had embraced faith before him and was practicing Buddhism sincerely, learned of his son's strong wish, he told him without hesitating: "I understand. Please go, and don't worry about us. Go and do your best for kosen-rufu!"

His going to work in West Germany thus settled, Sada left Japan in March 1962. In January 1962, shortly before his departure, he met President Yamamoto when he was visiting Sapporo, Hokkaido, and told him of his imminent move to West Germany. Before leaving Japan, he also visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo and received some parting encouragement from Shin'ichi.

Both Sada and Moro'oka had made their way to West Germany with high hopes and great expectations, but their work in the coal mines was far from easy. Their inability to speak

German made it difficult to communicate with their German coworkers. Their daily work quotas were also quite strict.

Especially for the slightly built Moro'oka, who weighed less than 132 pounds, working alongside the much taller and heavier German miners was much tougher and more demanding than he had imagined. He had to get up each morning at 4:30 and begin work at 6:00. Though he felt at the end of his physical limits, he pushed himself relentlessly each day.

Reminding himself that he had come to West Germany after vowing to work for kosen-rufu there, and that the Gakkai members of his district in Japan had warmly sent him off, he realized he had no right to complain about his situation.

To continue this punishing work routine, Moro'oka had to eat twice the normal amount and build up his body. Having been raised on Japanese fare, however, he found it difficult to eat typical German food such as black bread with cheese or sausage. He had a real aversion to it. He would force himself to swallow the black bread by washing it down with water, fighting back tears as he did so. His perseverance gradually began to pay off, and his physical build and strength improved, allowing him to work harder than the average miner.

As he continued to show such real proof of his faith and determination, he became more and more trusted at work. And this resulted directly in all the Japanese miners being regarded in a more favorable light.

Moro'oka began his life in West Germany staying in the mining company's dormitory, but he wanted to become fluent in German as soon as possible, so that he could share the Daishonin's Buddhism with others.

So he decided to move out of the dorm and board with a German family. Using the German he managed to pick up, he eventually introduced the head of the family to the practice.

Through the efforts of Sada and Moro'oka, the membership began to gradually increase. They held discussion meetings and spoke of their shared dream of realizing kosen-rufu in Germany.

There were other members in Germany who did not work in the coal mines and were scattered across the country, some several hundred kilometers from where Sada and Moro'oka lived. To go encourage these members and carry out propagation activities in those areas, a car was absolutely essential.

Sada thus made the big decision to take out a loan and buy a used car. To make the payments, he had to economize, scrimping on food and clothing. The car was a Volkswagen.

Sada was happy to own a car that was regarded in Japan as an unobtainable luxury item. He dubbed it *The Young Lion* and began to drive it all over West Germany.