

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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'The beauty and strength of the Soka Gakkai,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells members in Switzerland, 'are to be found in the way seniors in faith treasure and care for younger or newer members, devoting themselves wholeheartedly to supporting, encouraging and nurturing them with utmost sincerity.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued: "I came to Switzerland especially to see you two, Mrs. Motosugi and Mrs. Takayama—I mean, Mrs. Bruno. I am so happy to see that both of you and your families are well. Let's not talk about difficult issues today. Just tell me how you're doing."

Sachi Bruno happily told Shin'ichi about the events leading up to her wedding: "After you gave me advice the last time you were here, I seriously chanted daimoku. I also wrote a letter to my son in Japan, telling him honestly about my feelings. Fortunately, he readily agreed to my marrying again. We are planning on eventually bringing him to Switzerland to live with us.

"I am so moved that you have made this effort to come all this way, and in this cold, to visit us in Switzerland. I don't know how to express my gratitude...."

"Thank you," replied Shin'ichi, "but I am only doing what a Soka Gakkai leader should. To willingly go anywhere to visit and encourage even one fellow member should be the spirit of the Soka Gakkai president and all Gakkai leaders. And this is all the more so when members are working hard under trying circumstances in areas where our membership is still small.

"I'm sure that it won't be long before we see a progressive increase in our membership in Switzerland. When that day comes, I hope you two will do your best to visit and encourage the members with the same spirit and commitment as myself.

"The beauty and strength of the Soka Gakkai are to be found in the way seniors in faith treasure and care for younger or newer members, devoting themselves wholeheartedly to supporting, encouraging and nurturing them with utmost sincerity.

"If I can communicate that to you, then my trip here will have been more than worthwhile—then there will be two more people who share that spirit with me."

The number of those attending the Geneva discussion meeting may have been small, but—in contrast to the freezing weather outside—the atmosphere was warm and convivial. It was as if spring had come early.

After staying overnight in Geneva, the group flew to Rome. From the plane, Switzerland was a sea of snowy mountain peaks, but when they entered Italy, the green earth spread beneath them. Several members met them at the airport in Rome and accompanied them to their hotel. And soon after they arrived, a Study Department exam for the Italian members was held. When that was finished, the group went to the home of Masao Yamagishi, the Soka Gakkai contact person for Italy.

After doing gongyo with Mr. Yamagishi's family and a small gathering of Italian members, Shin'ichi announced the formation of Rome District. He appointed Mr. Yamagishi the new district leader, and his wife, Kimie, the district women's division leader. Shin'ichi also appointed Sumiko Kojima, a young Japanese woman studying painting at an Italian

art college, as a staff member of the young women's division in Europe.

The previous August, after finalizing her plans to study abroad, Ms. Kojima had visited Shin'ichi at the offices of the *Seikyo Shimbun* in Tokyo. Matsuko Takaishi (the ear, nose and throat doctor, who would be studying in Germany), accompanied her. To celebrate the young women's departure overseas, Shin'ichi had given them each a copy of the Gosho.

Shin'ichi had worried how Ms. Kojima would fare abroad. To stand on one's own feet and live in a foreign country requires a certain toughness, like that of a weed which needs to sink deep roots and hold to the earth with a tenacious grip. But he didn't sense that toughness in Ms. Kojima. Now he was seeing her for the first time in five months.

"So, have you learned any Italian yet?" Shin'ichi asked her.

"Yes, a little. Enough to get by, anyway," she responded.

"I see. Please make gaining a thorough grasp of the language your first priority. You're a graduate of the student division, so I hope you'll become so fluent that your name becomes synonymous with being fully bilingual in Japanese and Italian. You have come to Italy because you have a mission here, and mastery of the language is indispensable to achieving that mission. If you put sincere effort into learning it now, it will definitely stand you in good stead in the future.

"By the way, tomorrow I'm planning to visit the ruins at Pompeii. As you know, the city of Pompeii was destroyed by a volcanic eruption some 1,900 years ago. The historical novel *The Last Days of Pompeii*, which describes the tragedy, was one of Mr. Toda's favorite books. He used it as a text for the young women's division training group, the Flower-Sun Society. Why don't you come with us to Pompeii tomorrow? You could be my interpreter."

Mr. and Mrs. Yamagishi, who also spoke Italian, would be accompanying Shin'ichi to Pompeii, but he wanted to provide Ms. Kojima with an opportunity to improve and polish her newly acquired language skills.

At 9:00 the next morning, Shin'ichi and his party left Rome by train, arriving in Naples before noon. It was a beautiful city, well deserving of the famous slogan "See Naples and Die." The group headed for Pompeii in two taxis, driving south along the coast with scenic views of the Bay of Naples to their right.