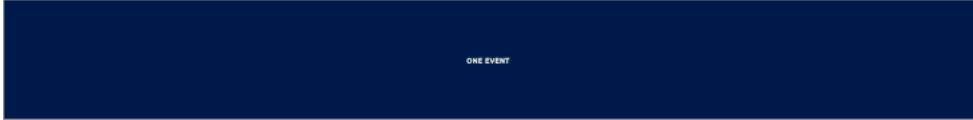


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## #trending: South Korean grandma who took 960 tries to get driver's licence goes viral again, holds World Record for most theory tests taken



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Cha Sa Soon (pictured) from Jeonju in South Korea went viral for taking 960 attempts in total to obtain a driving license.

- A South Korean woman who made international headlines in 2010 for obtaining her driving licence on the 960th attempt has gone viral again more than a decade later
- Madam Cha Sa Soon was 69 at the time and reportedly spent an estimated S\$5,125 on all her tests
- The grandmother's story of tenacity resurfaced recently on a Reddit thread, inspiring people all over the world once again
- However, some netizens raised safety concerns over having a driver like Madam Cha on the roads

JEONJU, SOUTH KOREA — A South Korean woman who finally obtained her driving licence after spending thousands of dollars and flunking various tests around 960 times has gone viral more than a decade later.

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She was 69 at the time.

Madam Cha's story of tenacity is inspiring people all over the world again after it recently resurfaced on a Reddit discussion thread.

The woman decided to pursue a driver's licence in April 2005 as transportation in her village in the mountainous region of Sinchon was "frustrating".

According to the New York Times, the only way to get to and from the village was by way of a bus that operated once every two hours. The extremely narrow roads only allowed for one vehicle to travel at a time.

Madam Cha, who sold homegrown vegetables for a living, wanted to learn how to drive in order to maintain her business. The mother of four also told the Times that she wanted to be able to take her grandchildren to the zoo.

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### 'WE DIDN'T HAVE THE GUTS TO TELL HER TO QUIT'

During the first three years, Madam Cha took the theory test once a day, five days a week.

She eventually reduced her attempts to twice a week and continued until she finally scored the 60 out of 100 points needed to move on to the driving test.

"I didn't mind," Madam Cha said at the time. "To me, commuting every day to take the test was like going to school. I always missed school."

Born to a low-income farmer family of seven children, Madam Cha had to work at her family's field from a young age and eventually dropped out of middle school.

The woman reportedly spent about S\$7.69 every time she took a test. In the end, Madam Cha forked out an estimated 5 million won (S\$5,125) for her driving licence.

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"When she finally got her licence, we all went out in cheers and hugged her, giving her flowers. It felt like a huge burden falling off our back. We didn't have the guts to tell her to quit because she kept showing up," Ms Park Su Yeon, an instructor at Jeonbuk Driving School, told the Times in 2010.

"It drove you crazy to teach her, but we could not get mad at her," Mr Lee Chang Su, another teacher at the school, added. "She was always cheerful. She still had the little girl in her."

Madam Cha's inspiring story even caught the attention of leading car manufacturer Hyundai, which gifted her a brand new car worth about S\$21,200.

She even starred in a popular commercial for the automotive company.

In November 2020, the Guinness World Records celebrated the South Korean woman's achievement in a tweet noting that she had set the record for "most driving theory tests taken", Asian American news site NextShark reported.

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**#OTD** in 2009, 68-year-old Cha Sa-soon passed her theoretical driving test on the 950th attempt - setting the record for 'most driving theory tests taken'.

The estimated cost of all the tests was thought to be around \$4,200.

12:16 AM · Nov 7, 2020

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### WHAT NETIZENS SAY

Now that Madam Cha's record-breaking attempt in getting a licence has gone viral again, many online users congratulated her on her long-awaited success and praised her persevering attitude.

Several other netizens, however, raised concerns over the elderly woman’s actual driving ability given the number of attempts she needed to pass.

One Facebook comment read: “This shows that she is really not safe, suitable (sic) to hold a driving license.”

Another user said: “I don’t think this is funny. (It) took her so much time to complete the course, probably will endanger others on the road.”

A Redditor wrote: “At that point you have to wonder whether she passed because she understands the material or because of a fluke.”

To this, another Redditor replied: “I believe if you take a test nearly 1,000 times, you might have the whole thing committed to memory at that point.”

Their concerns may be valid.

In May 2011, South Korea’s Yonhap News reported that Madam Cha had gotten into at least four road accidents — all with stationary objects — within a year of being granted the licence. Fortunately, no casualties were involved.

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