

## Testimony of Japanese Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries to Argentina

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I became aware of the existence of Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries in the spring of 2013, right after I became a senior in high school. One day, my mother suddenly asked me, "Don't you want to go out as a missionary?" Back then, I turned down her suggestion because I thought I was too immature for any sort of activities, but since then, I was unable to get the word "missionary" out of my mind. That was why I started to pray about it every day. Eventually, I felt that God wanted me to go. In October of that year, True Mother came to Japan and revealed her wish for young people. On hearing what she said, I wanted to console her heart, even if only slightly, which is why I decided to take up a mission. I applied for the second Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries as soon as I graduated from high school.

### **I am not alone**

I served in Argentina from June 2014 to June 2016 as a member of the second and third Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries. When I drew Argentina as my mission country in the lottery, I wondered with continuing interest what language they spoke, where it was located in South America and whether

by any chance it might be a jungle. I was deeply grateful to God for giving me a mission. Before departing for Argentina, I dreamed of True Mother. In the dream, she and I went shopping to prepare things for missionary activities. With a big smile, True Mother said, "You can choose anything you want. I will buy it for you." I felt that I was not alone and that True Parents were guiding me spiritually.

### **An awkward beginning**

During my first year in Argentina, the youth missionaries witnessed or attended special training with the local Special Task Force (STF) members. I went through many difficulties, not only because I had few such experiences back in Japan but also because I was confounded by the language barrier and cultural differences. Furthermore, since we worked around the local members' schedules, we encountered periods when we could not go witnessing. In the second year, we gained the local leader's trust and he allowed Japanese missionaries to go witnessing on our own. Being able to spend more time witnessing was a great step forward for us. As I improved my Spanish language skills and learned to communicate with local people, I started to enjoy witnessing from the depths of my heart. The CARP center opened this year, and we held Japanese culture classes on a regular basis. More guests connected to the Divine Principle course through this class. To welcome into the course guests we had witnessed to in our poor, bungling Spanish was encouraging.

### **God told me not to stop loving**

People in Latin America tend to be careless about time; countless times guests would not show up at the appointed time. For the local people, this may be usual, but from my standpoint, it was so shocking that I felt like crying after all the preparation I had made to welcome them. When this happened repeatedly, I would find it tough to go witnessing, so I prayed to God. Then, God would always answer me and say, "Nonetheless, you should never stop loving with a mother's heart." I would then make a fresh start with that answer in mind. Three members were dispatched to Argentina through the third Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries. The two other sisters were fast at improving their Spanish skills, and we supported one another in witnessing. During the last three months, I served as a leader despite my faults. At times, I wanted to give up, but the members always accepted me with love and served as examples of faith. I felt that God had sent them to me.

### **Focus on the guests' hearts**

When we started witnessing in an area called Lanus in Buenos Aires, I was questioning myself, Why isn't

witnessing in Argentina bearing fruit when the number of Divine Principle course takers and spiritual children is increasing in other nations? One day, the local leader asked us how deep a relationship of heart we had established with our guests. He said, "Witnessing is not merely about having people answer questionnaires, getting their contact information or having them listen to Divine Principle lectures. The cultures in Japan and in Latin America are different. You have to understand the heart of the local people in order to witness to them." I thought about the differences between Japan and Latin America. For example, when there is an event of some sort, Japanese people generally come for the event itself, but in Latin America, people tend to come to meet the other people who have come. Since they value social ties, for me to maintain interest in my guests and relate to them was important. I realized something important through what the leader had said: Appreciate heart-to-heart relationships. In other words, I should have been making more effort to develop a relationship with my guests and to love them with a mother's heart from the moment I had first met them. God had told me to love with a mother's heart, but I had failed to practice it. This fully answered my question about our success in Argentina relative to that in other countries. Since then, I appreciated every interaction with my guests from the first encounter. Gradually, the number of Divine Principle course takers increased. Furthermore, I stopped forcing my plans or ideal on my guests, such as wanting one to listen to a particular lecture on a particular day. Guests may simply want to have a fun conversation with us. If we force them to adhere to our plans or ideal, they tend to tire of us and stop coming. I also tried to "give first." I thought I could build good relationships with my guests by maintaining my interest in and responsibility toward them and by understanding and respecting them. I sometimes went through inner struggles, but I gained spiritual power every time I saw my guests' faces light up through the Divine Principle course and whenever they said they wanted to come again. I strongly felt that God has entrusted them to me and that my responsibility is to connect them to God and True Parents.

### **True Father's autobiography**

Among my guests was a woman whom I hoped would listen to the Divine Principle thoroughly before I returned to Japan. She lived far away from our church, but she came to lectures on a regular basis. When she finally came for the last lecture, in which we reveal the Messiah, I felt all sorts of emotions -- tension, worries, joy -- as I watched her listen. I was near to tears thinking that I was witnessing the moment for which God has longed for thousands of years. I felt God's heart longing to save her more than I did. When the lecturer showed True Father's photograph, she seemed calm as always. She gazed at the picture with an earnest look and listened to the rest of the lecture. When I handed her *As a Peace Loving Global Citizen* after the lecture, she more willingly accepted it than any other gift I had given her. What a moving moment when a spiritual life is born! That day, I pledged to God that even after I return to Japan and cannot do anything for her directly, I will protect her as a spiritual parent for the rest of my life. She is now planning to learn the Divine Principle in depth.

### **Support True Parents daily**

During my experience as a missionary, I "tasted" portions of True Parents' hearts; thus, my view of True Parents and of faith, or my sense of the value of witnessing, largely changed. True Father said, "You must think about world issues as if they were your own." I finally came to understand the meaning of this a little bit through my experiences in Argentina. I realized that True Parents have made their marks and have carried the providence forward even in places far from Japan. I have also grasped that various problems, different from those in Japan, exist in other parts of the world and yet God wants to save everyone. Sometimes we get sick of everything and want to abandon our faith, but God, who could not turn a blind eye to this miserable world, is carrying forward the providence in sorrow. The Divine Principle teaches us that the fulfillment of Heaven's providence can only occur when both God and humans have fulfilled their responsibilities. I think fulfilling Heaven's providence by witnessing in my daily life is my responsibility.

### **My next mission field**

I have finished my mission in Argentina and my next mission country is Japan. I would like to promote tribal witnessing with my family and put effort into witnessing to my friends. I strongly believe that the time I spent as a member of the Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries is the foundation of my faith. I want to continue supporting True Parents for the victory in Vision 2020.