

My memories from when I joined the Unification Church of Japan - Part 1

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Members eat breakfast after the first all-night prayer vigil on the mountain at Tanzawa in 1963 (Rev. Sudo at the center and Mr. Kuboki at the far right).

Introduction:

When I was called to come to the Unification Theological Seminary, I felt that God was allowing me to start anew. God was giving me a second chance to do His Will, as I felt that Rev. Won Pil Kim's quote, "The longer I stayed in the Unification Church, the more burden I gave Father," applied to my life also. I had nothing to be proud of and nothing to testify to as I gave Father much pain and disappointment. I felt, however, that it might be good to leave something written. Otherwise, the story of the beginning stages of the Japanese Church might be lost forever.

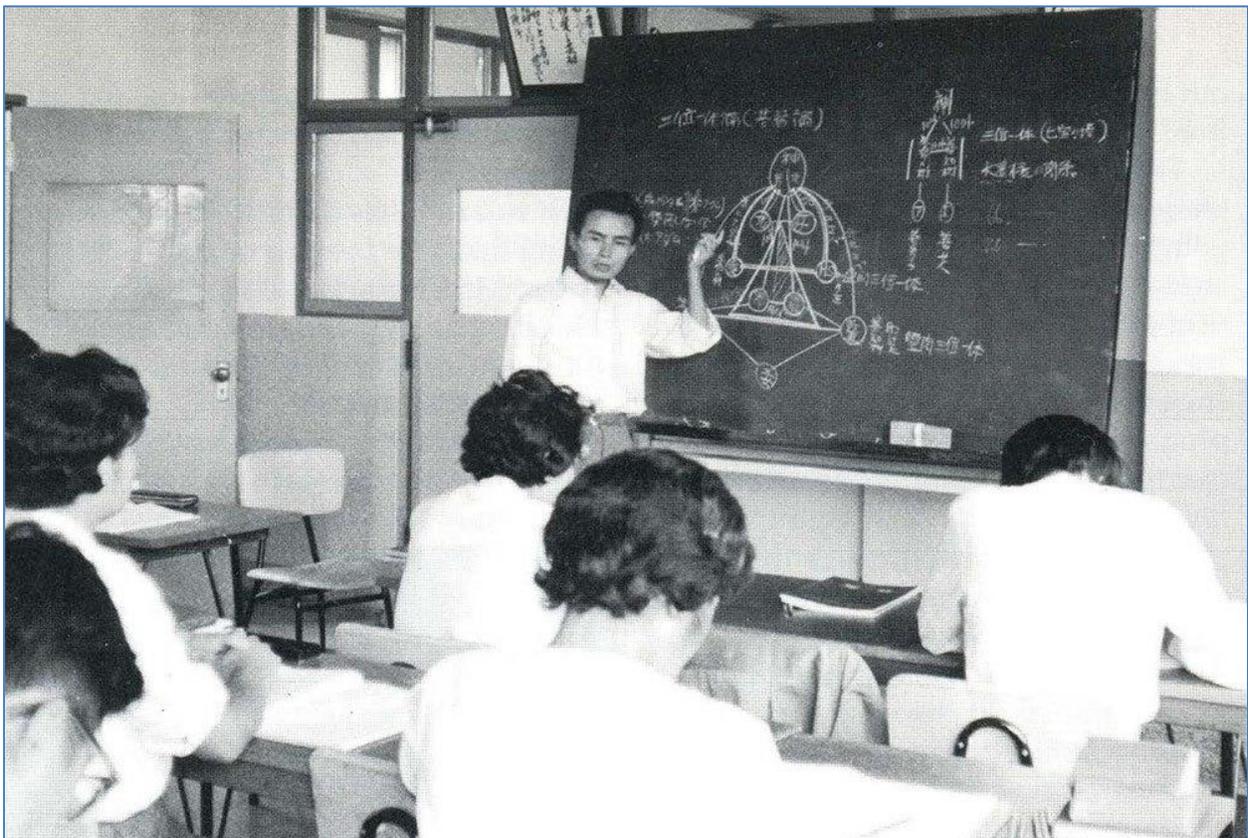
I have focused my writing around the educational dimension of the early movement. I do not mention here all the aspects that were present then, positive as well as negative -- our successes and our failures. I simply want to convey the atmosphere and the founding spirit of the early movement.

I would like to first offer a brief sketch of my school life. During high school, I transferred from school to school. The first of these was Shizu-tani High School. When I first began attending, however, it was a middle school.

Shizu-tani School was not only aesthetically pleasing, being surrounded by wooded mountains and hills, but had also been designated as a national treasure. It was founded by [Ikeda Mitsumasa](#), who dedicated it to the education of the common people's children. At that time, the building was approximately 300 years old. The famous central auditorium and stone fence were also built at that time. During those years, I would wake up at 4:30 a.m. six days a week to commute. Our principal was a Confucian and once a week taught us Confucianism. He taught one of the most dignified and solemn classes -- yet I never really understood. Nevertheless, the voice of his teaching still remains within me.

Due to an illness, my stay at Shizutani was cut short. I was forced to leave school for several months and resume my education at another high school. Later I entered Osaka University with the desire to major in science. During my second year I took a course in chemical analysis and received unexpectedly good marks. I then elected to major in pharmaceutical biochemistry as I found chemistry to be an enthralling subject. During my third year, I often separated myself from other people. I would sit down by a nearby pond and meditate or dream about some unknown world. But I never imagined what kind of turning point my life was approaching.

I had a good friend who was Christian and whom I would often tease about his belief. "If only you wouldn't talk about God, you would be the best under the sun," I used to joke. One day he came to sincerely invite me to attend his church. I said, "Okay. But before I go, let me see God. Then I'll go with you." He was speechless and I felt victorious. I did not know then what kind of course I would have to endure afterwards.



Rev. Sudo lectures at the Toda Training Center in the summer of 1963.

Within several months, I became seriously ill with a kidney disease which confined me to my bed for

more than a year. I felt that I might die and that there was practically no hope. Unable to move, I envied the dogs that were running on the hill and the birds flying so freely in the sky. My friends were gone and there were few neighbors to console me.

Painful doubt

I had never experienced such loneliness in my life. I felt like crying out to someone, but I had no one to hear me. One day, I received a book of divine healing from Seicho-no-ie, a relatively new Shinto denomination that was awaiting the second advent of Christ. I could not believe such healing could exist, but I began to read in spite of my disbelief. There were so many testimonies of miracles. One person was healed of tuberculosis, and another of spiritual pain from family troubles. When I read through the book, all of the sudden something dawned on me: in every testimony, repentance preceded the miracle. I began to examine my past and recognized so many iniquities and impurities within myself.

"What an impure person I am!" I thought, "and what a miserable person I will be if I die with such impurities!" Then I realized I had never loved anyone. Not once had I loved even a single person in the real sense. Therefore, no one had loved me in a true sense. My next realization was even more painful for I understood how desolate my situation was. This solitude was deep and agonizing. I thought again: "What a miserable person I would be if I were to die so impure and alone!" I could neither physically nor spiritually stand on my feet.

Tears of repentance began to run down my cheeks and onto my pillow. Seven days and seven nights my bed and pillow were drenched. During this time, I felt that my impurities and iniquities were being washed away by my tears of repentance. I had never felt such peace and purity in my life before.

On the eighth day I received another book, the core message of that persuasion which was called "Kauronohou" ("Sweat Drops of Heaven"). I devoured the book. Its content was much deeper than anything I had read before and I was deeply moved.

That evening while alone in my house and laying on my bed, I felt that there must be some Divine Being controlling the universe. And although I did not know God yet, I prayed for the first time in my life. The next moment, as if I had been given a spiritual cold shower, I felt goose bumps. Suddenly, I was struck by a golden-platinum colored light from high above the right side; it was followed by a beam of red light that broke through my whole existence. Overwhelmed by awe, I quivered. Soon I realized I felt a vibration around my kidney. By the next day, I was fully recovered from my illness.

I came to understand that God exists, that He is love and I can communicate with Him. I admonished myself for denying Him and for forsaking Him. God, however, did not do this to me. Instead, He allowed me to go through a suffering course until my arrogance was smashed and waited for me to call Him. After the purification of repentance, He sent the Holy Spirit and embraced me.

I understood finally that the reason I had been unable to perceive God was not because He did not exist, but because I was so impure. Repentance with tears is the shortest course to knowing God.

My heart was filled with joy. Recovering from the illness was only a part of my joy. Now I knew that God did exist. He is alive and He is love. What great joy filled my heart! God was embracing me in tears and joy caused by our reunion. The blue sky and the green leaves on the trees were dancing in the wind just for me. And the sun was shining for me as well. What bliss! I had never experienced such reverberating joy before. I was at the center of celestial bliss. I felt like shouting to the world, "God exists! He is alive! He is love!" This experience changed my life 180 degrees. The only sadness I felt was from the knowledge that my family, my father and stepmother might never understand.