

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Historic Figure Dae-hwa Jeong [Cheong] Left This World

Knut Holdhus
December 1, 2023



Dae-hwa Jeong in the 1980s

North-Korean refugee became historic figure as one of the first 3 couples blessed in marriage

Dae-hwa Jeong [Cheong] (1933-2023), an important historic figure of the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#), left this world peacefully on 25th November 2023 in Asan Hospital, Seoul.



[Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#) at the rear with the first 3 couples to receive the [Marriage Blessing](#) 16th April 1960. In front from left [Yeong-hwi Kim](#) and [Dae-hwa Jeong](#) (1933-2023); [Hyo-won Eu](#) (1914-1970) and [Gil-ja Sa](#) (1933-2019); [Weon-pil Kim](#) (1928-2010) and [Dal-ok Jeong](#) (1920-2000)

She was one of the three first couples who received the [Marriage Blessing](#) from [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#) in 1960. Merely five days after the [Holy Wedding](#) of [Sun Myung Moon](#) and [Hak Ja Han](#) on 11th April 1960, Dae-hwa Jeong was blessed in marriage to Yeong-hwi Kim (1928-) at a ceremony in [Cheongpa](#) in Seoul 16th April.

Jeong was born in what is now North Korea in 1933 during the Japanese occupation. After the liberation in 1945, she lived in gradually worsening conditions for her Christian family under the communist regime in North Korea. In her own words, "I know from my own experience how wrong communism is."

In 1948, 15 years old, she fled with her family to South Korea, crossing the 38th parallel.

Six years later, at the end of 1954, she met the [Unification Church](#) while studying at Ehwa Women's University, a Christian university in Seoul.

From the autumn of 1954, the number of members grew rapidly. This growth was noticed by Christian leaders in Seoul. They began to see the [Unification Church](#) as a competitor, to which they were afraid of losing members.

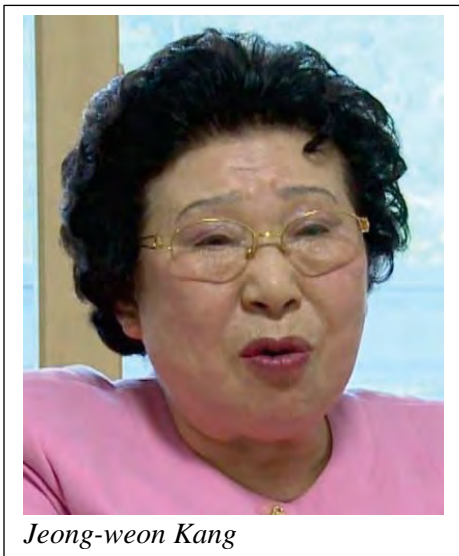


Father Moon, in the middle with hat, with students expelled from Ehwa Women's University and Yonsei University in 1955

Together with Christian politicians, they began a campaign to get rid of the [Unification Church](#). One of the measures was to stop the flow of students from two Christian universities, Ehwa and Yonsei, to [Sun Myung Moon's](#) movement. The university management feared that more and more people would join this new movement, and that the situation would get completely out of control.

The professors and students were told that they had to either choose to continue their work or studies or break all ties with the [Unification Church](#). Five professors and 14 students at Ehwa Women's University refused to bow to this most unjust intrusion into their religious lives. The professors were fired and the students expelled. Five of the students had only a month left until the final exam.

Even more students had become members, but when they now had the choice between their studies and the movement, they were forced by their parents to choose the studies. Yonsei University dismissed a professor and expelled two students. The only reason was that the professors and students had become members of the [Unification Church](#).



Jeong-weon Kang

Early member Jeong-weon Kang writes in her memoirs "The Way of Faith of Grace and Passion",

"This was a time when Ehwa Women's University, which was devastated during the Korean War, greatly depended on funds provided by the missionary boards of the Methodist Church in the United States and Canada, for its operations. They were concerned that if news of this incident reaches those boards, the funding will be stopped. Therefore, they told the students to stop going to that [Seoul Church](#). [...]

However, suddenly on 7th May [1955], five students who had been to the church, were kicked out of their dormitories. [...] Our students said, 'This is a truth we would not exchange for the whole universe. We have learned something that we could not learn while we were studying at Ewha Women's University, and no matter what happens we will continue to attend this church.

Give us a better truth than the one the [Unification Church](#) is.'" (p. 60).

And Dae-hwa Jeong was one of the 14 students expelled from Ehwa University on 11th May 1955, during the third year of her Home Economy studies.



Yeong-hwi Kim and Dae-hwa Jeong in Europe in the 1980's

Over the years, she and her husband Yeong-hwi Kim had many different responsibilities. Kim served as President of the [Unification Church](#) of South Korea from 1970. From 1981 until May 1986, they served as leaders of the Unification Movement of Europe. Since 1996, they were special envoys to the movement in the United Kingdom.

Kim was an eminent lecturer on the teachings of the [Family Federation](#). His book "Divine Principle Study Guide" was published in two volumes, part 1 in 1973, part 2 in 1975. A 3-volume collection of speeches given by Kim in Europe was published by HSA-UWC in 1984-1986 titled "Guidance for Heavenly Tradition".

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Bong-choon Choi, aka. Sang-ik Choi (1936-2023), historical hero passed away

One of the key persons of the early days of the Unification Movement, Bong-choon Choi (pronounced Chè), a true hero passed away on 24th February 2023. He died peacefully in his home in San Francisco, USA, 87 years old.



In unimaginably difficult circumstances he succeeded to establish the movement in Japan in 1958-59. He risked his life by

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North and South Korea and Japan. *Public domain image. Cropped*

arriving as a stowaway on a South Korean boat under cover of darkness and was tortured severely by the Japanese police when discovered. Only on the third such attempt did he succeed.

Father Moon describes in his autobiography why such an entry into the neighbouring country became necessary,

“Travel to Japan was not allowed for most Koreans. His only option was to try to enter Japan even without a visa. He would need to endure many things. [...] Following the collapse of Japanese colonial rule and the liberation of Korea in 1945, the two countries had not established diplomatic relations. Japan had not recognized the government in Seoul, and Korea considered Japan an enemy country. [...] A number of attempts were made to send a missionary to Japan, but these were unsuccessful.”

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Choi’s advantage was that he had grown up in Japan, spending 15 years there from the age of two. His Japanese name was Masaru Nishikawa. Koreans were forced to take Japanese names during the occupation until 1945. He was born in Busan, Korea in 1936 as Sang-ik Choi, but his father changed the name to Bong-choon.

He himself asked **Father Moon** to send him to Japan to set up the movement there, when he was 23 years old. Choi had joined the **Unification Church** in 1957, and soon after he was introduced to the **Unification Principles**, he thought, “I would like to bring these words to Japan.”

Choi had actually smuggled himself into Japan on a previous occasion, when he went there as a teenager to attend a Christian theological school after converting to Christianity.

His father was a local leader of Tenrikyo, an influential new religious movement, springing out of the national Japanese religion of Shintoism. The father spent all his money on his faith. From an early age, Bong-choon Choi was forced, as the oldest son, to support his family financially when they became poor. This made him feel distrustful towards religion. He became an atheist and started drinking under the strain.

After arriving in Japan in 1958, for six years until 1964, he built a strong foundation for the **Unification Church** in Japan. After six arduous initial months in Tokyo, he got a job as a salesman for a watch shop in the commercial district of Shinjuku. He was busy with his job during the morning, and would evangelise in the afternoon. He began holding small meetings in a room above the shop once a week.



Bong-choon Choi

The first Sunday service was held on 2nd October 1959, and that became the day that the **Unification Church** of Japan now commemorates as its founding day.

In April 1960, he met Michiko Matsumoto. In spite of her Japanese name, she was a Korean Christian. She became a devoted follower, introducing Setsuko Ogawa, a university student, who also joined. From then on, the number of members grew steadily. To reach that point had been extremely difficult. Matsumoto explained,

“Nobody listened to him. He was always refused. He had no money, no food, no clothes, and was so exhausted as to cough out blood from tuberculosis from which he had suffered in his youth. But he went on mission. He slept in parks or playgrounds of

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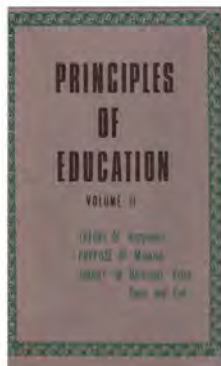
schools fearing to be in the crowds. When he looked at himself on the glass window, he was shocked to see such a miserable figure [...] with long hair, a pale face, and a skinny body. Not many came. Still, he wanted to start a church [...]."



According to Ken Sudo (the 29th person to join in Japan) in a speech titled *A Memoir from the Early Period of the Unification Church of Japan*, in the Spring of 1962, Komiyama, a young member of the Risho Kosei-kai, a large Buddhist new religious movement, was introduced to the **Unification Church** by Hideo Sawaura in Tokyo. Komiyama introduced it to Osami Kuboki, a youth leader of that Buddhist group and secretary for its president Nikkyo Niwano. Kuboki joined the small **Unification Church** in August 1962 and brought with him many other Buddhists.

He became its first chairman when it was registered as a religious organization in July 1964. At that time, the headquarters was established in Shibuya, Tokyo. Before then, in the Summer of 1962, a wealthy lady and her two daughters became members and donated their property so that a large training center could be constructed, called Rittai Cultural Center.

In November 1965 Choi was reassigned as a missionary to the USA. He worked in the San Francisco area and employed those things he had learnt from building a movement in Japan very successfully in California. He emphasized character education. In 1969 he published the book *Principles of Education*, written based on the **Unification Principles** for a secular audience.



Bong-choon Choi was blessed in marriage to Mi-shik Shin in a ceremony for 33 couples in Seoul on 15th May 1961.

Featured image above: Sun Myung Moon and Bong-choon Choi in 1958 in South Korea. Photo: FFWPU

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