

Some Spiritual Guidelines for Child-Rearing from Mrs. Haruko Kanari

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This summer Mrs. Haruko Kanari shared with blessed wives in the New York area invaluable wisdom on attitudes in the raising of blessed children. Mrs. Kanari, a senior Japanese member, is presently in charge of Father's kitchen in the World Mission Center. In such a capacity, she has learned to do everything with a prayerful heart. In her talk she stressed the importance of maintaining a prayerful attitude towards our children. "Everything we do for our children must be done in prayer," she said, "because our children are not our children but belong to God."

First, Mrs. Kanari explained that our life before the blessing is so important to our children, so all those who are engaged should be preparing themselves to be parents. Everyone, she said, should pray for three years that they can lead a life of faith that will influence their future children to be closer to God and True Parents.

In her own life she can see that the teaching of her parents was a foundation for the raising of her own children. She remembers three very important concepts: be pure, be righteous and be strong. Her father taught her one other important attitude: to keep an open mind to everyone you meet. She has taught the same to her own children. After Mrs. Kanari joined the church she realized that they had a very deep meaning in light of the Divine Principle. So even though neither she nor her father knew the Divine Principle, it has been spoken and taught for hundreds of years. Mrs. Kanari spoke of the three major elements of a righteous life.

The most important is prayer. We must begin our prayer life, she said, by thinking about the grief of God after the fall and His subsequent historical course. After we have prayed in this way we should experience deep gratitude to Heavenly Father, a feeling which will subsequently turn into love. Although there may be many elements in our environment to cause us to complain, with this feeling of gratitude and love we will only see how everything is an expression of God and every circumstance is created so that we may share in His love.

Our next desire should be to express our gratitude to Heavenly Father through sacrifice and service. When Mrs. Kanari devoted her life to the church she could have confidence that the children and husband she had to leave behind would be taken care of by God. And she could have that kind of confidence because her Buddhist faith had taught her that once you dedicate your life to preach and counsel you could leave your family in God's hands.

Mrs. Kanari emphasized the importance of the great dedication and sacrifice of the Korean blessed families. Through their indemnity they spared us from the difficulties of their own course. Therefore we should not have any kind of complaint about our own circumstances.

And we should never point out any weak point that we think we might see in another but instead find out what that individual went through before he joined the church. Mrs. Kanari explained that there were times when she had no food and no money. She used those circumstances to strengthen her faith and to

understand the heart of God. At these times she really checked her own feelings and thinking. So also we should check ourselves in times of difficulty. We should ask ourselves: "Is this a mother's faith? Are these feelings from God's point of view?"

Mrs. Kanari emphasized that our feelings will inevitably have impact upon our environment. She told several stories to emphasize this point. On attending a public talk given by a physics professor Mrs. Kanari was impressed by a demonstration he used to explain how feelings and vibrations do influence matter. The professor had a very angry man breathe into a beaker of specially prepared liquid and it became red. Another man who was very prayerful and peaceful blew his breath into another beaker and the same liquid became a beautiful blue. This reinforced the understanding that internal heart reflects in our environment and that we need strong faith in order to keep a pure life.

A friend shared another interesting story about the effect of one's attitude with her. Her friend had married the second son of one family. There were only two sons.

The second was intelligent in many ways and his mother loved him the most, to the point where she gave all of her heart to him. When he married, his mother could feel that only half of his love was coming to her and the other half was going to his wife. She was unable to accept this. At this time she had been living with the second son. But she could bear the situation no longer so she moved in with the first son. Still loving the second son very much, she prepared meals and presents for his family. But while doing this her feelings were that they should be only for her son. Every time she sent a beautiful meal, his family got sick. After a while the son realized that something was very wrong so he gave all the food to his dog. Eventually the dog got sick and died. Mrs. Kanari could not emphasize enough the importance of our internal attitude. We must therefore check ourselves at all times.

Our feelings affect everything, especially our little blessed children, who are very sensitive to spiritual things. Mrs. Kanari told us of one mother who was having negative give and take with someone as she was nursing her baby. The baby started to cry and would not stop. At this point the mother could realize how her own feelings affected the quality of her milk and disturbed her child's peacefulness. Negative feelings can also affect the baby who is being fed by bottle, so feelings can be conveyed through a material thing. We must check ourselves so that Satan cannot invade through our feelings.

Mrs. Kanari stressed that as parents we must make every effort so that we do not pass on indemnity conditions to our blessed children. We should live a life of sacrifice and we must always divide good and evil within ourselves. We have to teach our children what's right and what is wrong. How we do it is very important. We should be sorry whenever we have to correct the child, sorry that his actions are against Heavenly Father. Our attitude should always be: "I am sorry that this child has caused grief to Heavenly Father and that is why I have to correct him." We should never reprimand because of our own anger. If we pray with our whole heart to understand how we can raise our children, then our prayers will be answered and Heavenly Father will help us.

Mrs. Kanari suggested that we teach the Divine Principle lecture on the heart of God to our children while they sleep so that their spirits can grow while they are sleeping. She stressed the importance of praying with our children, because they will remember our prayers and will also want to learn to pray like their mothers. Our prayers will influence the spirits of our children. Also, she said, we cannot think only of our own children; we have to look after the children of other blessed couples. We should look at other blessed children like they are our own. There should be cooperation among families in taking care of children.

One mother candidly asked Mrs. Kanari: "What do you do when you are completely exhausted and you have three demanding children, no extra help and little patience? In our life of faith, she explained, we have to do many things-go without sleep, etc. In order to live this way you have to put your whole heart into each single thing. If we find we cannot go on and we lose energy, it is because we have reached a limitation. Usually it means that we have lost the proper attitude. If we do everything centered on God, He has to give us the energy to go on.

Even though our children are blessed, we still have to leave a strong foundation of victory on which they can stand, Mrs. Kanari concluded. We must strive to pass on goodness to our children. As parents we have to realize deeply our responsibility to God, True Parents and mankind. Through deep prayer we can find the way, she assured us.