

True Mother's Influence and the Growth of the Nagano Church

Hajime Yoshizawa

June 2014

Head of the Witnessing and Education Department, North Nagano District
Japan Region Four



Nagano members began a Hoon Dok Hae condition on November 29, 2013. They should reach a thousand days on August 25, 2014.

After speaking in Nagano, Japan, in 1999, Mother called Father to tell him how much the city, covered with fresh snowfall. This reminded Mother of her childhood. This article covers the expansion in membership that True Mother's love has ignited in this city of 385,000 on Northwest Honshu (Japan's main island).

Two hundred days have already passed since we welcomed the True Parents of Heaven and Earth to the Nagano church on October 20, 2013. Even now, I am filled with joy when I enter the guestroom or chapel where True Mother stayed. The time we attended her was like a dream to us.

I see it as more as having lived for three days with True Mother than as just holding a big event. To have been able to welcome True Mother to our church was a precious experience that we would not ever exchange for anything else. Even though the time was brief, we actually had eight years to prepare, which is why felt as if we were living with True Mother during her recent visit.

The church mother figure had an intuition in August, when the event had not yet been officially confirmed, that True Mother might come in October. She started preparing immediately because she knew that waiting for official confirmation would cause too great a delay.

The first preparation to be made was to set spiritual conditions. The church district leader instructed the churches in the district to increase the number of Hoon Dok participants each day to a hundred and twenty and to maintain that number at morning Hoon Dok Hae meetings, which we had begun conducting more than nine hundred days earlier.

While setting up more spiritual foundations than ever, we also embarked on external preparations. The chapel can hold a thousand people. With tents in the parking lot, which can connect to the chapel, we reckoned we could invite two thousand people on that day. We prepared everything, hoping to give an opportunity for everyone to see True Mother. By redecorating it with flowered wallpaper, we transformed the hallway that leads to the chapel into a beautiful walkway for her.

Mother's Visits in 1999 and 2005

We devoted ourselves in this way in preparing to welcome True Mother based on our having welcomed her after a hundred and twenty days of conditions on March 1, 1999. At that time, the church mother figure cried, saying, "True Mother is coming, but we don't have a house for God." She strongly felt that we should have a house for God and a house where we can live with True Parents.

Subsequently, we were able to dedicate a new church building in Nagano, under God's guidance, on July 21, 2005. Having done that, we were able to invite True Mother for an event that took place on October 12 that year. Right before the event, I told myself how happy I was that we had a new church building,

True Parents' house, even though the event was being held at a hotel. As I was thinking that, we received word that True Mother would visit the church building after the event. We had time for some entertainment with her. During that time, True Mother instructed us to increase our congregation by five times and gave us a blessing by promising to come again with True Father in the winter when snow falls abundantly.

Mother's Grace Returns to Nagano

Eight years later, on the morning on October 20, 2013, True Mother was staying in a hotel in Karuizawa, the fourth location on her Japanese tour. At the hotel, she suddenly told her entourage to depart for the Nagano church an hour earlier than her scheduled visit saying that she wanted to go quickly because it was her "house" and being her house she didn't mind wearing casual slacks there.

True Mother is aware of everything; she had remembered the conditions and years of dedication we had invested. At the Nagano church, True Mother cried ceaselessly at the podium. Watching her in tears, I realized that only True Parents are aware of the endless tears God shed throughout history. True Parents wiped God's tears, which have been falling since soon after the Fall. True Parents' life courses have indeed been ones of sacrificial offerings.

The rain fell softly but continuously that day. So too did the tears shed in the church. True Mother said, "I have planted a seed of heart. I hope it will spread across this country. This place has become the most purified holy land. Didn't I promise you? True Father is here with us today."

In the morning when she planned to depart to the next event location, True Mother indicated that she wanted to visit Nagano church one more time. After Hoon Dok Hae, she ate breakfast quickly, and came to the church. She had a cup of coffee with members, who had been called to the church at the last minute. We were able to have this opportunity to deeply connect with True Mother in heart. We didn't want her to leave. This experience became such a memorable and fulfilling moment.

It does not mean that we cannot see her again. We all hope to invite her again after we create a church that can show True Parents' glory to all the people. Thus, we are now preparing sincerely to achieve the commitment we made to True Mother: To increase our congregation tenfold.

Last time, we had prepared for eight years. When True Mother came in 2005, she had not said that our efforts would bear fruit in eight years. She only asked us to promise her that we would increase the size of the congregation by five times and that she would then come again to see the snow. We had believed what she said and prepared accordingly. All the members were united and had the common understanding that we had to achieve a five-fold increase.

Based on the accumulation of our daily conditions and dedication, a greater number of members are going out witnessing. We are using Chung Pyung's Wish Paper as a witnessing tool. True Father had suggested that these Wish Papers be used for witnessing in Japan. After doing that for eight years, we are increasingly convinced of the method's effectiveness. The Wish Paper allows people to inherit the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind's realm of victory and to receive grace from Heungjin nim and Dae Mo nim in Chung Pyung.

When people first began to study our teachings, some of those that had difficult problems gradually began to experience good changes in their family relationships, health conditions or working environment as they offered conditions while using the Wish Papers. After experiencing this grace, they become more willing to deepen their studies into this truth with joyful hearts. It was easier for them to recognize the value of Father's teachings. We have collected more than five thousand testimonies of people with such experiences. In addition, members have built up more confidence in witnessing by using Wish Papers, on which our church's name, the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, is boldly printed.

Not only have we invested ourselves in witnessing; we also put effort, devoting both time and personnel, into education, because we believe that providing education is the ultimate love. We set a goal to raise members that can witness to others within a year.

The first training period, approximately four months, will upgrade people's spirits substantially, to the point that trainees can realize the value and meaning of the blessing. Then we guide all of them to attend the Blessing Ceremony. This, precisely, is education through truth and the Holy Spirit.

The next step is substantial training, covering another approximately four-month learning period. Trainees will learn about the Fulfillment of Wishes Paper, to achieve heavenly life within one's family. They also study the importance of family life and the Chung Pyung providence. This training guides them to voluntarily participate in the Ancestor Liberation Ceremony.

Our staff members themselves devised the education curriculum and are continually trying to create a better one. Based on the Divine Principle, the curriculum covers practical education in one's daily life. Thus, we might call it parental education, using both approaches, from the Holy Spirit and from truth.

The Special Program, the final stage, takes another four months, approximately. We started it in June 2010 to raise faithful witnessing members. Currently, we have held seven training programs. Trainees come to the center three days a week and practice Divine Principle lectures, street preaching based on True Father's biography and door-to-door witnessing. Over the past four years, this workshop has raised six district leaders, two frontline leaders and 245 witnessing members. I'm convinced that this education paves the way for witnessing.

Moreover, we started the first Special Program for husbands last December with twenty seven participants that were witnessed to through the Wish Papers. This workshop began on a Wednesday night with a stay-over from Saturday to Sunday. It was very impressive to see trainees practice a lecture, speaking loudly in front of a subway station with confidence. Even though it was their first time trying door-to-door witnessing, they achieved amazing accomplishments: four people signed up to take the course. All the wives were moved at seeing their husbands pouring their hearts into the new guests as their spiritual parent.

After Mother's Departure for Korea

A few days after the event, the church mother figure greeted a crabapple tree with gratitude. True Mother had planted the tree eight years ago. Coincidentally, ruby-like fruit emerged from the tree on the day True Mother visited. Mother came to the church again in the morning, checked the tree and took several pictures. So, the church mother figure wanted to say to the tree, "My dear crabapple tree, thank you so much. You have also worked hard for eight years and remembered our promise to True Mother."

How am I going to live between now and 2020? How am I going to attend True Parents? What kind of relationship can I build in that short time, knowing that the Lord comes suddenly? I have never forgotten True Mother, who has taken all the heavy responsibilities on her shoulder alone. All our members are marching toward the frontline today, wishing to accomplish our goal, to invite True Parents again and wipe away True Mother's tears.