

Faith that Relies on Spiritual Powers is not Real nor Healthy

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Photo date and location unknown

This is something that happened as we were preparing for a Holy Blessing Ceremony. Before the ceremony, I asked every bride and groom candidate whether they had maintained their chastity. When I asked one particular groom candidate, he answered in a loud voice that he had remained pure. I asked him a second time, and he again assured me he had. I asked him a third time, and again he gave the same answer. I looked at him straight in the eye and said, "You served your military service in Hwacheon, Kangwon Province, didn't you?" This time he answered "Yes" in a voice filled with fear. "You received some time off, and as you were coming to Seoul you stopped at an inn, didn't you? And that night you had illicit sex with a woman wearing a red skirt. I know exactly what you did. Why do you lie?" I became angry at the man and chased him out of the Blessing ceremony venue. If a person keeps his heart's eyes open, he can see even what is hidden.

Some were attracted to our church more because of such paranormal phenomena than because of the teachings. Many people think that spiritual powers are most important. The phenomena often called miracles, however, tend to confuse people in the society at large. A faith that relies on unexplained or miraculous occurrences is not a healthy faith. All sin must be restored through redemption. It cannot be done by relying on spiritual powers. As our church began to mature, I stopped talking to members about the things that I was seeing with my heart's eyes.

I would listen with dedication

Membership continued to grow. Whether I faced dozens of people or hundreds, I acted the same way, as if there were only one. I would listen whenever a person wanted to tell me about his or her personal situation. Whether it was an old woman or a young man, I would listen with dedication, as if this were the only person I had to deal with. Each member would say, "No one in Korea listens to what I have to say as well as Reverend Moon." A grandmother might start by telling me how she got married and eventually tell me about her husband's illnesses.

I enjoy listening to other people talk about themselves. When people open up to me and talk about themselves, I don't even realize the passing of time. I listen to them for ten, even twenty, hours. People who want to talk have a sense of urgency. They are looking for solutions to their problems. So I feel that I need to listen to them with my full dedication. That is the way to love their life and repay the debt that I owe for my life. The most important thing is to think of life as precious. In the same way that I listened with sincerity to what others had to say, I also shared with them my sincere heart with fervor, and I would pray for them in tears.

How often I prayed with tears through the night? Blood and sweat saturated the floor boards where I prayed, with no chance to dry.

People who cannot respect their own tradition are destined to fail

The Cheongpa Dong church embodies an irrecoverable period in my personal history, but more important than that, it testifies directly to the history of our church. No matter how wonderfully it might have been refurbished, what good could come of it if our history were destroyed? What matters is not some beautiful exterior but the secret life of tears that dwells within that building. It may not be up to a certain standard, but it embodies a tradition, and therein lies its value. People who cannot respect their own tradition are destined to fail.

There is history carved into the pillars of the Cheongpa Dong church. When I look at a particular pillar, I am reminded of a time when I clung to that pillar and wept over a particular matter. To see that pillar where I wept makes me weep again. To see a door frame that is a little crooked reminds me of the past. Now, though, the old floor boards are all gone. The floor boards where I bent over in prayer and shed so many tears are gone, and the traces of those tears are also gone. What I need are the memories of that pain.