

Yoshi Ichijo, Japan, 1969



I joined the church on May 31, 1969 after I completed my two-week workshop with a pledge and a prayer vigil. I was met on campus at the university by my spiritual mother, Michiko Wilding (1800 couple), who lives in Canada. I moved into a center of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) soon after I attended a Victory-over-Communism (VOC) kick-off rally in Tokyo and did all kinds of activities until I graduated in 1973, including VOC activities, fundraising and witnessing.

One of my memorable moments was a three-day pioneering condition in the middle of the winter in Tokyo in the early days of the church; I had been a member for only six months. We were given a list of Christians in my area and one hundred yen. I visited them to sell VOC newspaper subscriptions. There were “lots of rejections.” On the first day I had no place to sleep. As it got dark, I was sitting on a swing set in a small park, feeling lonely. So, I drew a picture of a smiling Father, wanting him to console my lonely heart. I did not know that I should comfort God and True Parents. On the second day, after I had slept in a truck that was sticking out of the garage onto the sidewalk, I bumped into an elder sister at a train station. She treated me to a good meal. God comforted me through a person.

Soon after I graduated from college, I was called to the headquarters for an interview about becoming a missionary to the United States. I was chosen to be one of the 36 members in the third group in 1973. On June 15, 1973 I arrived on American soil in Seattle, and then traveled to New York. When we arrived at JFK airport, Mr. Ryoji

Sawamukai came to greet us. We were taken to Belvedere as a base, and after a week-long orientation, we witnessed and fundraised.

I was chosen to be on one of the first two IOWC teams under Dr. Joseph Sheftik. We traveled throughout the country on the team for Father's speaking tours, while fundraising for the team at the same time.

When the first global team was organized for the last 7-city speaking tour, I was still on it but soon removed due to a 7-day fast and a rally in front of the UN for the repatriation of Japanese citizens from North Korea as directed by Father. After that, I joined the Japanese witnessing team in New York at 71st Street center and witnessed every day until I was picked by Father to go to the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS).

After I graduated from UTS in 1977, I fundraised in New York for half a year until I joined Columbia CARP. While I was fundraising and witnessing, I started delivering the News World newspaper until I was kicked out of the country in the middle of the 1600-couple matching in Tokyo.

I was matched to Frances Drayton in Korea in October 1978 and transferred to Tokyo University CARP and my alma mater after that. In 1979 I joined International Cultural Foundation and stayed there for two years before I moved to the HQ International Section. I was translating English-language documents on Father's trial in New York City. After Fran and I attended the 2075-couple Blessing in 1982, I moved to Korea to start a family

We moved back to the States in 1986 and settled in the Washington, D.C., area to take care of our mentally challenged son, Kenji. I was hired by the Washington Institute led by Dr. Neil Salonen and then the Universal Ballet Academy, which was my last church-related employer.