

My Testimony to Takeru Kamiyama

December 14, 2016

About 2 months into my life in the movement, I had the shock and blessing of being put on MFT. About a thousand strong, we were all aware of Mr. Kamiyama ("God's Mountain") whom we called "Taicho" (Big Leader, or Person of great responsibility).

MFT, in my experience, was something like military service, only our weapons were our minds and hearts--and our ammunition was flowers and candy and candles and toys. Up before dawn, a quick shower, and into the van where we prayed, ate, got our instructions, and were launched into our respective fields of battle. Jumping out of the van was like parachuting behind the lines of the enemy; we never knew the territory, rarely knew the situations of the people we were about to encounter. But by the end of the day, we would know it all.

Every few months, 'Taicho' would gather us for some event: a workshop, a day of inspiration and recreation. We did sumo wrestling on the beach, went deep-sea fishing, ran races, did horseback riding, or ate big meals together. He would share his own stories, and he helped us feel part of something bigger. We were far distant from the places of decision-making, but we felt proud--as if we were contributing remotely to important developments.

One of the disciplines we embraced was financial accountability. Money was strictly understood to be either "public" (the funds we raised, which we felt were holy and should never be used for our own needs or purposes) or "personal," which was the money given to us for our meals, clothing, or personal items. Personal money was usually a "needs-only" thing. Some captains dribbled it out daily (\$5 perhaps for the meals or incidentals like phone calls), and others gave a larger sum, which we could replenish as we needed (maybe \$20, to last a few days.) "Get the receipt" was crucial. It made us very aware of the value of each penny.

One year, for God's Day, Mr. Kamiyama gave each of us a copy of the black book DP, with an inscription that he had prayed over and created personally for each of us, in Japanese (kanji) characters. There was an envelope inside with three crisp one hundred dollar bills in it. "\$300! of personal money!" It was astounding, unexpected. I remember my inscription which I memorized in Japanese. "The spirit of loyalty, fidelity and filial piety will remain forever in your eternal history." I treasured the message, which to me was something of a prophecy but also, a personal commitment. Some spent their money quickly, some hoarded it. But it was very precious to have a little treasury of one's own...some emergency fund that was sort of okayed by God.

A few years later, I was injured in a van accident, and after some recuperation time, was sent to the witnessing side for Washington Monument. Despite working hard there, I felt somehow less powerfully involved than on MFT. About six months later, Father was choosing people for a new IOWC, but suddenly, a new challenge came. A group of MFT members were coming off, to join the IOWC, but they had to be replaced. Father asked the state and witnessing members who would volunteer to go to MFT. I wanted to, but had already completed the requisite two years, and had been injured as well. To my shock, almost no one from the many gathered from the witnessing centers would volunteer. Then Father turned to the MFT grads, and asked who would volunteer to go back to MFT, rather than join the IOWC. Every hand shot up. I was sitting up front, very close to Father, and I could see his face--pride in their willingness, but also, a feeling that they would be so valuable on the IOWC for the same reason.

He turned back to the sea of people from the state centers, again ready to ask if they would volunteer. Hesitantly, I put up my hand. He looked down at me, a bit puzzled, and I knelt up to explain my situation. I don't know if he understood or not, but he reached down in what I can only describe as an extremely tender and proud way, and taking my coat collar, pulled me up, to be chosen for the MFT group. I stood there, a bit stunned, and Mr. Kamiyama noticed me, and with Neil Salonen, he came over to me and asked "What did you say to Father?" I explained that I had been injured in an accident, that my back was injured, but that I was willing to go back to MFT if I was needed. Mr. Kamiyama immediately went back over to Father and interrupted him from choosing others, and brought him over to where I was standing. In Japanese, he explained the seriousness of my injury, that I had already done 2 years, etc. Father stared at me as Mr. Kamiyama was speaking, sort of searching my face. I felt so torn; physically, I knew I was in nearly-constant pain. Mentally, I loved the excitement of MFT, and also, wanted to explain my wish to do whatever God asked of me. In a whisper, I said in English "But I love MFT." Father looked strongly at me when I said this, and gestured to his own back, saying in Japanese "She'll be okay. Her back will be okay." Mr. Kamiyama looked surprised, but explained this to me, so I re-joined MFT for a second stint. Unbeknownst to me, Mr. K called my former captain and commander to explain my situation personally. As a result, after only one week in the freezing winter weather of Pittsburgh (which created a new hell for my back), I was sent to the Southwest where the warm weather was far more gentle on the torn ligaments and muscles.

Despite my best efforts, however, my strength didn't recover to my former levels. I couldn't handle heavy loads; I tired more easily; I became depressed and self-accusing. My faith had to change, and I learned that my value was not in my result, but in my relationship and love. Two more interventions: I was chosen to help start the "business" side of MFT, Original World Products, selling posed butterfly items. We also pioneered mall installations there. Later, Mr. Kamiyama picked me for a witnessing team in Colorado, where I could develop lecturing skills. He continued to be a source of guidance during crucial moments; when struggling with strange CFs, for instance. After I joined the News World, I observed his situation during the tax trial and later, incarceration with Father. His reports let us glimpse what was happening behind the jail walls, and what kinds of conversations and activities Father would have with the other prisoners. I was quite moved by one person's account, a diary by a guy named "Larry Shepherd" who wrote about the ways Father and Mr. K interacted with other prisoners.

I lost track of Mr. K during the years he was with the fishing or ocean activities. Once the Korean leaders began taking charge, the days of comrades in arms seemed over. Especially in Washington, the traditions and values we had incorporated in the early years seemed to be tossed out.

Only years later, after Father died, did I encounter him personally again, when, like my own journey, Mr. Kamiyama came to the conclusion that Hyun Jin was not only not a rebel, but actually, was the most serious and faithful of Father's children. This came on the shoulders of his own observation, first hand, in Korea during the last few years of Father's life, that there was substantial disagreement between Father's views and Mother's. He became aware that certain people were playing a false role in relation to Father. He was concerned with some false theological ideas were beginning to spring up which negated Father's actual teachings, ostensibly to highlight Mother's role. My husband and I invited him to Washington to share his testimony, which put us all in the line of fire by the institutionalists for daring to question the official party line. Our little bout of persecution was merely a drop in the bucket, of course, but the vehemence and vitriol expressed towards Mr. Kamiyama was quite stunning. Many people who once had loved and learned from him now attacked him and misrepresented his message. They conducted a massive campaign using phone, email, and in-person pressure on (mostly Japanese) members to boycott the meeting. On hearing about this, he just laughed. Evidently, the same things were being ordered and carried out everywhere he went. Sharing informally with us over a meal, he recounted story after story of experiences with Father, in Danbury, in serious moments, in light moments, and during the last few years of his life. It was reminiscent of all those times in the past that he would share with us on MFT, helping us see the larger picture. In this case, however, he was sharing some sad insights. At one point, I asked him about Blessed families, about the destruction of hope, about the loss of vision or faith in establishing a true world. I asked "Do you think there's any hope?" He looked straight at me, and his eyes were shiny with the same tears that were in my own. He said "I'm dedicating the rest of my life for that." It was like a promise of an old soldier, vowing to expend every last drop of blood, every last breath, rather than surrender the field. I had to honor him for being willing to die with his boots on, for the same cause he had lived by.

Pancreatic cancer is a bully, a tough and very painful adversary. He kept his word though, sharing his understanding until the last moments, according to all the reports we got. He didn't flinch from the attacks, and he didn't retreat. He embodied that uniquely Japanese code of loyalty until death. May God bless him, and may he be even stronger in the spiritual realm than he was in the physical.