

## The History of Unificationism in Taiwan

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*Nobuko Fukuda (who's Korean name is Jeong In-suk), who took the Chinese name Chang Ren-sue, was the Unification Church pioneer missionary of Taiwan*

This is a suitable time in the history of Unificationism to focus on our movement's development in Taiwan on several accounts: the mission in Taiwan started in 1967, fifty years ago. Taiwan was the third missionized nation in Asia, directly after Korea, the father nation and Japan, the mother nation. In 1998, True Parents promoted Taiwan as one of the three elder daughter nations (together with the Philippines and Canada). Additionally, Taiwan is one of our thirteen strategic nations, where members are intent on achieving national restoration.

### Learn from one another

The Taiwan way of development has good practices to offer. After years of persecution, our movement there was a forerunner in gaining official recognition at the highest level of the state. In the view of Prof. Thomas Hwang, the regional director of Greater China, Heaven has a special providence for the Chinese people themselves, who represent about 20 percent of the global population. God has equipped the Chinese civilization with many assets in preparation for the establishment of Cheon Il Guk. We are all aware that Christianity remains

the mainstream foundation for the returning Lord, but the Chinese civilization offers a legacy of family values and ethics that can help humankind accept the notions of True Parents and of true love. Recently, an organization, the International Association of Overseas Chinese, came into being with this in mind.



*True Mother boldly proclaiming the advent of True Parents and the Completed Testament Age in Taiwan*

### Stages of development

Our mission in Taiwan has gone through three periods: a period of planting roots and surviving in a hostile environment (1967–1989), a period of booming as a fast growing church (1990–1997) and a period of maturation, during which the government recognized it for contributing to the society's welfare (1998–2017). In the first period, our mission in Taiwan was in a symbiosis with Korea and Japan and had a providential role to preserve the security in Northeast Asia against the communist threat. Sadly, the church was banned beginning in 1975, and its growth was limited. In the second period, the church grew

rapidly and welcomed our True Parents at the highest level. The movement had strong ties with their counterparts in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations. In the third period, the mission has mostly relied on the expertise of its local leaders. Its main regional role is as the headquarters of the Greater China region, in relation to our missions in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao.

### **Christian roots, ties to parent countries**

True Parents have designated thirteen nations strategic. Among them, Taiwan has had the longest ongoing Unificationist mission. Geographically and culturally, it is also closest to Korea and Japan, the parent nations. The first missionary to Taiwan arrived in 1967. Miss Jeong In-suk was a Korean, born and raised in Japan. She joined the Unification Church in Japan, under the name Nobuko Fukuda. She was sent to Taiwan and took the Chinese name Cheng Ren-sue.



### **Unificationist roots**

The inception of the mission in Taiwan is the fruit of the cooperation between Korea, the Adam nation, and Japan, the Eve nation. The last chapter of the Divine Principle examines which nation in the Far East is the chosen nation for the Second Coming. Since ancient times, the nations in the East have traditionally been considered to be the three nations of Korea, Japan and China. Among them,... Japan entered the period of the Second Advent as a fascist nation and severely persecuted Korean Christianity. China at the time of the Second Advent was a hotbed of communism and would become a communist nation. Thus, both nations belonged to Satan's side. Korea, then, is the nation in the East where Christ will return. Nevertheless, in order for the Pacific Rim civilization to appear, Korea's mission has to reach Japan and China, the two powerfully influential countries in Northeast Asia. Since Mainland China had become communist, Taiwan was the only nation of Chinese culture where the providence coming from Korea and Japan could take root.

Having no official status, Cheng Ren-sue often had to leave Taiwan, going back and forth to Japan. She decided to focus on Taiwanese that had a Christian background and could speak Japanese. As it had Korea, Japan annexed Taiwan and ruled the country 1895–1945, but it was a less bitter experience for the Taiwanese than for the Koreans. Today, Christians represent about 4 percent of Taiwan's population. Mr. Chen Tuo-huan, president of UPF-Taiwan, said, "Christians are generally seen as more 'blessed' than the average citizen, having a better education, better manners and a higher income." Sun Yat-sen, whose political philosophy greatly influenced Taiwan, and Chiang Kai-shek, the first president of the Republic of China, both had embraced Christianity, with the strong conviction that the Christian way was the best to promote development and prosperity and to bring blessings to a nation.

Cheng Ren-sue introduced the Divine Principle to the wife and mother-in-law of Dr. Jing-ching Chang. The three were all attending the same Baptist church. Dr. Chang, a university professor of physics, accepted the Divine Principle around the age of forty, translated it from Japanese to Chinese, and was the main lecturer in Taiwan for many years.

### **A first-hand witness**

Mr. Chen, the UPF president, remembers this period very well. "I joined the church in 1973, as did my future wife, Lily Lin. I came from a Buddhist and Taoist background, like many Taiwanese, but I had embraced Christianity by joining the Salvation Army. My wife's family had been Christian for four generations. Lily has strong heavenly fortune; she has found more than thirty spiritual children. Part of

this blessing comes from the Christian background, I believe."

Many other early Taiwanese church members had been Christians. A figure like Dr. Chang was impressive. At that time, not many Taiwanese could enter university. The fact that the main Divine Principle lecturer at workshops was a university professor was an asset. Professor Chang was not charismatic, but his presentations were logical and intellectually powerful. The students respected his knowledge and excellent manners.

Regarding deep, internal dimensions, early members had strong experiences with the missionary, Cheng Ren-sue. When hearing her soulful internal guidance during morning services, the young members yearned desperately for Heavenly Parent's heart. Moreover, during those days, Korean elders, particularly Lee Yo-han, who nurtured their faith, often visited the Taiwanese members. True Father had visited Taiwan in 1965 during his first world tour and established a holy ground in Taipei. The True Parents visited Taiwan in April 1972. The young movement kept slowly growing, regularly gaining members.



*The then vice-president of Taiwan, Annette Lu Hsiu-lien greeting True Parents in Taipei on November 30, 2005*

### **Banished**

Progress halted however in February 1975, at the time of the 1,800-couple blessing in Korea. First, bad rumors against our True Parents from the United States and Europe reached Taiwan. The international media bashed the Unification Church and the Taiwanese media followed suit. Second, twelve students volunteered to drop out of their universities to become missionaries, which led to the ban of the Taiwan church with the accusation of "offending our traditional values," prescribed by law at the time.

The ban against the Unification Church combined with the longstanding state of martial law (1949– 1987) forced the Taiwanese members to go underground for the next fifteen years, even though the situation improved gradually during the 1980s. The church retained a bad reputation and Taiwanese society ostracized our members. Perhaps ten couples received the blessing in 1982. In 1984, Lee Yo-han launched a new pioneering campaign in big cities. How did the movement in Taiwan survive the 1975 ban? Mr. Chen presented several reasons:

We had received much internal guidance from our first missionary. We had held onto deep memories of meeting the Korean elders. We had lived together in centers and had experienced God's unbreakable, eternal love. Remember that most of us had a Christian background; if you have a chance to meet the returning Christ, can you leave the Lord? Beside the internal reasons were external reasons. Father had established two international organizations that continued connecting Korea, Japan and Taiwan together. One was a supra-denominational organization, the ancestor of our inter-religious organizations. The other was an organization that brought together parliamentarians of Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Now, we have the IAPP; at that time, we had this association.

### **The 1990s: Rapid growth**

The government officially lifted the ban against the Unification Church in March 1990. Reverend Kim Byungwooh and his wife (Christopher also known as Byung-hwa, and Julia Kim) were then the regional

leaders of Asia at the time. Their focus was the growth of our young churches in Southeast Asia, but they also perceived the new potential offered in Taiwan. The Taiwanese church revived in a country blessed with an emergent maturing democracy and steady economic growth.

The Kims insisted that the primary targets of witnessing were students in good universities. Japan had established a model of video centers, and the Taiwan movement successfully adapted that method of outreach. Hundreds of members joined. Mr. Chen and his wife Lily received a posting to Taichung, Taiwan's second largest city, where the church opened four video-centers. According to Mr. Chen, the main reason for their success was Reverend and Mrs. Kim's strong and wise leadership. They had brought Japan's good fortune to Taiwan and had invested all their heart and inspiration. "I remember how Mrs. Kim was personally involved. She was both strict and caring, loving and concerned. She would always give the right guidance to see the next step. We were able to attract many students and to take care of them. We had many couples blessed in 1992 and 1995. Today, they are the backbone of the movement."

Meanwhile, the church, following the long ban, was gaining acceptance. During her world tour in 1993, True Mother spoke on "Family Ethics and World Peace" at Taiwan's Legislative Yuan on December 22 and met the president of the country (1988–2000), Lee Teng-hui. Two years later, Father gave the speech "True Family and I" in Taipei. Our True Parents were then pushing for the globalization of the blessing and expected our members to turn the blessing into a large-scale social movement.

The mission in Taiwan was a pioneer in working closely with local governments to prepare for the huge blessings of 1995 and 1997. While Taiwan was definitely becoming a model of democracy and of economic prosperity, the society was facing new challenges with the rise of individualism. Local elites in Taiwan, often raised with conservative ethics, saw that our movement was providing a strong ideology and practice to keep the traditional Chinese values and adapt them to the modern world. The unification movement had been able to educate many students about successful marriage and strong, patriotic families. These values and good examples met with great empathy in Taiwan.



*Secretary-General Ching Jang Chen of the Taichung City Council presents a plaque on to Mother December 22, 1993, following her speech to the Taiwan Legislative Yuan during a fifty-three day tour*

### **A creative minority (1998–2017)**

In its third stage of development, the movement in Taiwan has trained to become a respected religious group trusted by the state and by the population through grass-root social programs. With eleven Unificationist NGOs registered, the movement can secure strong influence in politics, economy, society and culture. The best case study of its national impact is its central role in the 300,000-person historical demonstration held in front of the Presidential Office Building on November 30, 2013, to oppose the legislation of same-sex marriage. In 2013, some activist groups tried to legalize same-sex marriage in Taiwan. The silent majority of the population opposes this kind of law, but the media push for its adoption. As we have seen earlier, Christians are powerful in Taiwan but represent only 4 percent of the population. Most Christians opposed same-sex marriage and wanted to attract the support of people from different faiths to stop its legalization. Having understood that the Unification Church in Taiwan had a strong and longstanding tradition of inter-religious dialogue, Christian leaders took the initiative to reach out to Unificationists in conjunction with Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, Islamic and other religious organizations to form the Taiwan Inter-religious Confederation for Cherishing Family (TICCF). They

proposed that Mr. Chen, the UPF president, be the convener of the confederation and that Dr. Chang Chuan-fong, vice-president of FFWPU, be the spokesperson.

In some ways, this amazing story illustrates Arnold Toynbee's theory of a creative minority. The British historian (1889–1975) contended that civilizations progress mostly through the driving force of their creative minorities. Reversely, civilizations perish when their creative minorities do not shed their light anymore and do not resist trends toward decadence. Christians have long been the creative minority of modern Taiwan, and the same-sex marriage bill was a test of their influence. They understood that in order for them to be successful, they had to rely on the very small creative minority that God had prepared to save the country, and that is the unification movement. As Dr. Robert Kittel noticed at the time, "This historic event represents Christianity, as Cain, cooperating with the Unification Church, as Abel, and of their own volition asking the Unification Church to take the lead in TICCF."

The Unification Community in Taiwan did not only reach out to the elites of the country, but mobilized blessed members, who sought signatures. Christians and other religious groups mobilized as well and worked with our members. Signatures from 550,000 people had been obtained by November 30, the day of the main demonstration, which attracted 300,000 people in front of the Presidential Office Building. A key point of the success was to change the focus from the negative "opposing same-sex marriage" to the positive, "Stand up for the happiness of our next generation." TICCF religious representatives, some legislators, mayors, lawyers, students and entertainers spoke out to advocate healthy sex education, to maintain marriage between a man and a woman, to leave light and warmth for our next generation.

The people all wore face masks, symbolizing the "silent majority," as opponents to the same-sex issue among the Taiwanese public and the media. The impression had been that only Christians opposed the change of the law. The huge crowd encouraged opponents not to be silent any longer. Our Taiwan mission sends us a universal message, to remove our mask and speak out bravely.