

Blessing Ceremonies Held in Many Parts of Japan

Yong Cheon Song
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Japan Unification Church Headquarters: In the first half of 2014, a total of 3,300 previously-married couples were blessed in Blessing Ceremonies held separately in 150 places throughout Japan. In the second half of the year, Blessing Ceremonies have been held across Japan. In this issue, we will cover the series of Blessing Ceremonies in South Aichi Region, North Aichi Region, Fukuoka Region, Tottori Region and South Tokyo Region, introducing some comments given by the participants.

【North Aichi Region】 "Blessing is a Passport to Heaven!"

On September 10th by the Heavenly Calendar (November 2nd by the Solar Calendar), a Blessing Ceremony was held by the North Aichi Region in a hotel in Nagoya City in a light drizzle. Rev. Eiji Tokuno and Mrs. Hisae Tokuno acted as the officiators of the ceremony for a total of 102 families consisting of 20 previously-married couples and 82 spirit and physical world blessed couples attended.

In the ceremony, Rev. Tokuno gave clear definitions on "birth, marriage and death – the three times in life when one becomes the central character of his/her life", "passport to Heaven" and "three crimes one must never commit" with an occasional touch of humor. He officiated the ceremony in a relaxed atmosphere by sometimes asking the participants to clap their hands if they agreed with him. Rev. Tokuno's message was so concise and clear that many brides and grooms, especially those in the front seats, nodded as they listened closely.



A Faithful Son who Served His Mother Made His Father's Heart Melt (Tono Church, North Aichi Region, 77 year-old female member)

In mid-September, my son asked me to attend the Blessing Ceremony to be held on November 2nd. I wanted to attend but since my husband had a strong sense that the Unification Church had taken away our son, and since he did not like a religion, I thought it was impossible for me to attend with him. As expected, when our son told his father about the Blessing, he refused by saying, "I'm a busy man. I have no time to take part in such an irrational religious festival!"

My husband and I are full-time farmers, working day and night. Our son used to drop by our house and gave me massages on a regular basis. He would apply fingertip pressure to my muddy and sweaty feet.

One day, when we were working on the farm, my husband suddenly mumbled, "I don't think I could massage my mother's dirty feet with my bare hands even if she were alive. My son is quite a guy!!" I was very surprised because my husband had never praised our son before.

"Perhaps I can attend the Blessing with him", a ray of hope came to me. On another day, when I was thinking back of my son's childhood, I remembered vividly an event which took place about 35 years before.

One early morning when my son was in 4th or 5th grade, I saw an old man like a hsien with long white beard standing next to my pillow. He saw me surprised and said, "Your son will become a worthy man, so you must raise him well." In astonishment, I questioned him, "When will he become worthy?", but he was gone.

Since then, I perceived my son special, harboring great expectation of him. But nothing seemed going right for him, and I gradually forgot what that old man said. Belatedly, I am reminded of the old man, who must be trying to tell me that our son would take us to heaven.

After that, I faithfully served my husband with firm belief that we can attend the Blessing Ceremony together.

In the evening of October 27th, when our son came by to give me a massage as usual, my husband suddenly said to him, "I don't mind letting you take the credit this time!" At first, my son and I did not understand what he meant and blinked in confusion. When I timidly asked back, "Do you mean to say that you will attend the Blessing Ceremony?" he answered, "Yes!" I felt like I was in heaven!

On the day of the Blessing, I was thrilled by the great grace of being chosen as the representative couple. After the Blessing, I started asking myself who that old man was and finally I came to realize that it was God! It inspired me to know that God had always looked over me through our son.

I am grateful to God and True Parents for giving me and my husband the passport to Heaven! I would like to work even harder to build a happy family.

【South Aichi Region】 Blessing Ceremonies Held in Many Parts of Japan in My Life"

On November 3rd, under the blue clear sky, a Blessing Ceremony was held in the South Aichi Region with Rev. Yong Cheon Song, Chairman of National Federation of Blessed Couples' Associations, and his wife, Mrs. Hae Ok Lee, officiated the ceremony for 70 couples with 430 guests and congratulators.

Rev. Song preached the value of the family and the existence of the spirit world in lay terms as he shared his experience of seeing his wife in his dream three days before the Blessing.

Mrs. Song gave a message at the celebration party where 200 peoples gathered. She spoke intelligibly and said, "In this society with fallen sexual morals and family breakdown, Blessing is the only alternative of solving these problems. Blessing is not a religious ceremony of the Unification Church but the way for all humanity." Some were moved to tears as they listened.

Some comments given by the participants: "Blessing marked a new start in my life. I was very happy to receive words of congratulation from many people." "Somehow I could not stop crying, as if my late husband was rejoicing in the spirit world. I became happy, too."



【Fukuoka Region】 Guiding New Members from 'Shosha' Witnessing to Blessing

On November 3rd, the Fukuoka Region held a Blessing Ceremony in a hotel of Fukuoka City with Rev. and Mrs. Tokuno as its officiators.

Since March 2013, members of the Fukuoka Region have carried out missionary activities centering on shosha (Japanese word for scripture transcription). Street witnessing in front of train stations with invitation to Shosha has been well established. Many people have transcribed words from True Father's autobiography, reaching their number to 24 thousand in October.

Furthermore, the Fukuoka Region achieved the target of 1,000 courses for newcomers by setting up a

Shosha Hall inside the educational center, inviting them from Standing Shosha to Divine Principle study sessions, and by strengthening Family Shosha Groups, as well as enhancing educational programs for its leaders (Special Workshop for Shosha Group Leaders).

Along with such a method, members have devised their approaches for Blessing. This July, Shoha Festival Blessing Ceremony was held with 75 couples attending as the first attempt to collaborate the Shosha dedication and Blessing.

On November 3rd, the Fukuoka Region conducted Blessing in the form of a dinner party, where a total of 350 people participated. They included 130 couples consisting of 26 previously-married couples, 104 spiritual and physical worlds' Blessing pairs and guests. Among them were members and families who had encountered the Unification Church through the shosha practices.

At the Blessing Ceremony, Rev. Tokuno preached the value of Blessing, explaining about the lifestyle or attitude after Blessing. "Blessing is a passport to heaven all right, but you must also have a visa in order to live in a foreign country", said Rev. Tokuno. He emphasized: "(1) Don't commit sins of love, (2) Live with sincerity and don't abuse other people's hearts, (3) Avoid anything that feels guilty concerning money.

If you can avoid these three sins, you may obtain a permanent residence visa to heaven." Rev. Tokuno fascinated the participants by presenting the essence of True Parents' words within a short amount of time, yet in clearly understandable terms.

Two representative couples who stood on the platform were parents of Rev. and Mrs. Takaaki Kawashima, minister of the Fukuoka Higashi Church. Many members were impressed to see their pastor and his wife taking initiative in Tribal Messiah activity. (Rev. Kawashima's testimony is on page 17-18)



Testimony (Mrs. Susoe Shinbaru, Fukuoka Higashi Church, Fukuoka Region)

My husband is a compassionate man, but he is also a bit stubborn. Since he used to say "I don't like religions", I was unable to decide when to tell him about Blessing. Meanwhile, when I suggested him to do shosha, he agreed right away. In fact, he became fond of it than I was, to my gratitude for God's guidance, as I saw him neatly