

## My memories from when I joined the Unification Church of Japan - Part 4

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In the summer to fall of 1962, a connection was made between the Unification Church and the Rishokosekai, an Abel-type Buddhist denomination whose membership was well over 1.5 million. Nichirenshyoshu was a Cain-type denomination.

Mr. Komiyama, whom Mr. Sawaura had witnessed to, had invited one Mr. Osami Kuboki, the secretary to the president of Rishokosekai, Nikkyo Niwano. Mr. Kuboki was considered one of the "hopefuls," as he was thought to be the next to inherit Mr. Niwano's position. When Mr. Kuboki visited our attic center, arrangements were made for Mr. Choi [Sang Ik "Papasan"Choi] to meet President Niwano. This took place in September 1962. Mr. Choi was urgent to prepare a substantial external foundation for the movement. Also, some claimed that he had received a revelation to build a temple as Solomon had done, or Japan could not be saved. We don't know whether this is true or not.

In the summer of 1962, another important event occurred: The wealthy Hirafuku family joined and donated their property for the construction of a building that would be used as a training center and church headquarters. The family was comprised of a mother and two daughters, Mihto and Yuriko.

I wasn't aware of it at the time, but negotiations had already begun with a construction company. Mr. Choi had convinced a company to begin work on our building. Soon, however, trouble started. The construction company had heard unfounded rumors that Mr. Choi, who had Korean connections, was dangerously plotting against Japan. On top of that, they discovered we had no money. The company stopped their work and asked Mr. Choi to pay for at least half the construction expenses upfront.

That money amounted to around \$100,000 or \$200,000. We met, talked and prayed vigorously. It was decided that everyone would visit any possible place to receive or borrow money. We prayed, pounding on the floor with tears, and went out. No one came back with any money as our families and friends had dispossessed many of us upon our entering the church. We came together again, repented and cried.

Nevertheless, we didn't give up. We went out again and came back with the same result. Again we met, prayed and cried out to God for the sake of the nation. This cycle continued for over ten days, until we began to feel hopeless. Although Mr. Choi encouraged us, he himself was very concerned but not directly involved -- the responsibility was ours.

We felt we had done all we could and if nothing came of our work, it was not our responsibility but God's. Our desperation, sincerity and effort finally reached such a level that good news came. Someone had donated \$5,000. We were delighted but still desperate, as we were so far from our goal. It was Mr. Choi's faith that supported us. We cried out to God more and continued our same efforts day and night. Finally, news was brought that two new members, sisters within one family, had received a revelation from God to donate all the money they possessed which was approximately \$100,000. In a couple of days

more news came. A member who had heard of the sisters' donation decided to donate all of his money: \$100,000.

All together, that made exactly \$200,000. Mr. Choi called the company and paid them in cash. The company could hardly believe we had acquired the money: they changed their attitude completely. The construction was accomplished smoothly and quickly. The building was named the Rittai Cultural Center.



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Shortly afterwards, we moved into the new center and attached the signs, "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity." In December, the church expanded to nine locations-Tokyo, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kitami, Takamatsu, Fukuoka and Kyoto.

Mr. Osami Kuboki began to visit the new center and Mr. Choi asked me to give him a lecture. I had never taught the Principle before anyone before, except to two high school girls when I had gone back to Osaka in hopes of finding donations. If I had known what kind of person he was and what mission God was preparing for him, I probably would not have been able to give the lecture. I had with me my messy notes from Mr. Choi's lectures and a typed edition of the "Explanation of the Principle." I had to construct the presentation as I spoke.

Mr. Kuboki turned out to be a man with an amazingly pure heart. Even though he had a high position in Rishokosekai, he accepted almost everything like a child. I felt that I was writing the lecture on a sheet of white paper that was his heart. I do not remember exactly how he reached the point of accepting Father, but he seemed to be committing himself when he spoke to Mr. Choi afterwards. He began working as a mediator between Mr. Choi and President Niwano (and his denomination).

Around that time, Mr. Choi invited almost all of the members to a Divine Principle workshop at the Rittai Cultural Center. Mr. Choi, Setsuko Ogawa and myself were the lecturers. It was my first organized lecture and I received much inspiration.

Early in 1963, Mr. Kuboki took the headquarters members to the first prayer vigil at Nanasawa in Kanagawa prefecture. We prayed overnight in the dead of the winter. It became a precious foundation for our spiritual life. Some prayed loudly, some prayed softly, while still others prayed in tongues.

Before I go into my training session experience, I want to mention an exciting event that took place owing to the efforts of Mrs. Matsumoto. While she was working in Osaka, Mrs. Matsumoto extended her activity to Kobe City where she met a Reverend Machida, the pastor of the Church of the Nazarene. The Church of the Nazarene was an offshoot of the Methodist Church that believed spiritual perfection was a

realistic possibility. Somehow, arrangements were made for the whole church to attend a 3-day Divine Principle workshop. Mr. Choi asked me to give the lectures. I realize now, I probably didn't think about it too deeply. Otherwise, I would have lost my confidence.

There were from fifty to seventy young and old people waiting for the lecture. At the beginning of the Principle of Creation the atmosphere was a bit stiff. But as the audience members were not theologians, it was not difficult to break through the theological barriers, especially with the support of the pastor. I could even give the Jesus lecture as well as the Fall of Man. I was relieved because this made it possible to effectively introduce the audience to the return of the Messiah in the flesh. When I explained the time interval of the return of Christ to be between 1917 and 1930, they were literally speechless. I prayed, they prayed and many of them began to cry. Then emotions exploded. I don't know what became of that congregation because I had to return to Tokyo. I do know that Rev. Machida sent his own son and daughter to the next forty-day training session. Thus, I felt that the three-day workshop had been a success.

Shortly after this event, a similar meeting took place in Fukuoka, Kyushu. After the introduction to the Messianic Age, there was happy turmoil as there had been in the Church of the Nazarene. I don't remember many details, but I do remember that the female deacon of the church came to me after the evening lecture on the last day with a happy smile and greeted me saying, "Good morning!" She didn't know the time, the date, or where she was because of her overwhelming joy at the news of the return of Christ. Within a couple of months, I became one of our church's main lecturers.