

Witnessing with Shosha Calligraphy

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Ikebukuro Japan, where this story took place

Mrs. Nishi (sixty-one years old) who used to run a grocery shop with her husband in a shopping area in my neighborhood collapsed from a stroke around ten years ago. Although she escaped death, it left her severely paralyzed on her right side. Since it was difficult for her family to nurse her at home, she happened to enter the nursing home I worked in, and by chance, I had charge of her.

At the nursing home, Mrs. Nishi could not accept reality and was very confused. Although I tried to love and care for her with patience as if I were a family member, she strongly wished to go home. I told her husband and son about her situation and suggested they utilize home-visit nursing care and a day care service at the same time. Under those circumstances, she went home.

Although Mrs. Nishi was no longer my patient, since we were members of the same neighborhood association, I would stop by the grocery shop and ask her family how she was doing and if I could be of any help. Last year August, I received a phone call from Mr. Nishi asking me if I could visit Mrs. Nishi. This was the first time for me to enter their house, and I met Mrs. Nishi after an interval of three years.

Mrs. Nishi seemed to blame herself for putting a burden on her family by her not being able to help out in the store, let alone look after herself. As soon as she saw me, she wailed, "I wish I could die!" and recounted what was in her heart. I could do nothing but listen. However, feeling certain that I could not leave her the way she was, I visited her within a few days and invited her to the Shosha Festival. Although she could not actually come to the festival because of her physical situation, when with the ardent wish that Mrs. Nishi becomes happy I suggested she practice *shosha* [writing of True Parents' words in calligraphy] at home, she kindly accepted.

Because it took Mrs. Nishi a few days to finish one piece of shosha and her writings were messy, she said, "Are you sure this is acceptable?" When I encouraged her and said, "It doesn't matter if it's messy. What is important is for you to put your heart into it with gratitude for your family and your wish that your body will recover. To use your fingers to write is also a good means of rehabilitation." She nodded with a bright smile.

Nowadays, I visit Mrs. Nishi's house and hold family shosha activity with her and her family on a regular basis. Mrs. Nishi has definitely improved her writing skills and it is taking less time to complete a piece. I can feel that she has become confident and optimistic.

Fortunately, the Ikebukuro Family Church in Northwest Tokyo is open to witnessing through family groups and community groups for those who are not able to visit the church or Shosha Festival for various reasons. I would like to witness to True Parents to those around me by standing close to the people in my community.