

## The Japanese Chuhwa Cultural Festival trains New Leaders

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December 2014

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*A student from Nara District presented flowers to Yeon Ah Choi Moon.*

The Seonghwa Student Association provides spiritual guidance to second-generation middle school and high school students who are actively engaged in church activities. After Sunday service, Seonghwa students come together to take part in a variety of cultural activities at the church to nurture their bonds of heart as brothers and sisters and as children of our Heavenly Parent and True Parents. The students are able to enrich their emotional experience as God's children and as brothers and sisters by creating a community through these cultural activities with their fellow second-generation Unificationists. The Seonghwa Student Associations throughout Japan cooperate in organizing the Chuhwa Cultural Festival each year. This year will mark the eighteenth time we are holding it.

### The theme: filial piety

The concept of "*chuhwa*" (中和) in the Chuhwa Cultural Festival means "harmony." This reflects our wish for those in the second-generation "realm," which includes young first-generation members, to unite through this cultural festival. This year's slogan is "Seonghwa students! Let us become the flag-bearers of the tradition of filial piety!" The central theme for this year's festival is "filial piety" with the goal to have young people become flag bearers in carrying on the spirit and tradition of filial piety and love for our Heavenly Parent and True Parents. The Chuhwa Cultural Festival has four areas of competition -- chart-style Divine Principle lecturing, public speaking, and traditional Divine Principle lectures for individual contestants, and entertainment for contestant groups.



*Arisa Takezawa's lecture was deemed best*

Each year, during September and October, student representatives are selected through a tournament in each church district. These district representatives go on to participate in regional tournaments. In November, district winners that had also won at their regional level go to their respective competition in either East Japan or West Japan. Through these two tournaments, we present awards to first-, second- and third-place winners in each area of competition. For most of the contenders, this level constitutes the national level.

For the Divine Principle lecture section, the top lecturers from the East Japan and West Japan

tournaments compete in the National Seonghwa Student Divine Principle Lecture Tournament, which is broadcast to the churches in Japan through the internet.

As students prepare for the Chuhwa Cultural Festival each year, they are able to nurture their character rooted in heart, contribute to the establishment of a community based in a culture of heart, and spread the spirit of living for the sake of others to their surroundings with the ultimate goal of disseminating Godism in this nation.

The West Japan Tournament of this year's National Chuhwa Cultural Festival was held on November 16, at the Izumino Municipal Culture Hall in Osaka, with more than 1,300 Seonghwa students and parents in attendance. The skies were clear on that day, and the excitement of the Seonghwa students filled the hall.

After the opening ceremony, nine representatives from each region competed in the chart-style Divine Principle lecture contest, speech contest, and Divine Principle lecture contest.

For the middle school students' chart-style Divine Principle lecture contest, presenters chose a portion from the summarized three-hour Divine Principle Hoon Dok charts and gave a seven-minute lecture using PowerPoint slides. We expect them to have studied the Divine Principle and to be able to convey it in a way that would be easy for students of their age to understand. The presenters made the most of their knowledge to convey concisely the content while utilizing anecdotes and analogies in giving their presentations. Some presenters included their own family photos when explaining about God's purpose for the Creation, while calling on the audience to create true families centered on God's true love.



*This year's speech contest winner, Yumi Egashira*

Presenters gave lively and powerful lectures through which the results of their research and diligence were evident. Speech contest contenders conveyed a testimony of their own experience growing up as a second-generation member while proudly testifying about our Heavenly Parent and True Parents, the Divine Principle, or about the details of their daily lives at home, church or school that shows how they understood and practiced True Parents' teachings. We give speakers seven minutes to inspire their fellow Seonghwa students to have greater awareness and to strive for loftier goals in spreading the culture of heart.

Speakers share their personal experiences in overcoming struggles, while exhibiting hope as advance toward their dreams. What sometimes happens in their environment, such as quarrelling with their parents or encountering bullies at school, hurts. Some make effort to seek out God's love in order to overcome these challenges through the culture of heart and the spirit of living for the sake of others that they learned at their Seonghwa Student Association.

Through this process, they grow in their faith, find confidence in addressing issues and dynamically take action in transforming their environments. Some of the speakers were in tears as they shared their personal experiences growing up. One goal of the traditional Divine Principle lecture contest is to have lecturers learn how to be more active in conveying our teachings to young people their age. Lecturers gave ten-minute lectures. From the tone of their voices, their facial expressions and gestures, the lecturers invested everything to convey, through heart and body, their Divine Principle lectures, in order to touch the hearts of those in the audience. We could feel the results of repetition and practice to better understand and clearly express the Divine Principle through these lectures.

After these contests, the festival moved on to the main event -- performances by nine teams of entertainers representing their regions. The entertainment is the most popular aspect of the Chuhwa Cultural Festival. The contestants' performances reflected the concept of filial piety, the festival's theme, and expressed pride and love for our Heavenly Parent and True Parents with the aim of moving the hearts of the audience. During the fifteen minutes each team had, students performed onstage using video presentations and background music that they had made on their own. The teams rendered a wide range of spectacular performances displaying their creativity through drama, dance, traditional plays and ensembles.

### **Future festivals**



*The Okayama District's performance*

The inspiration to hold the Chuhwa Cultural Festival came with the goal of it becoming an offering to the True Family. We invited Yeon Ah Choi Moon nim from Hyo Jin nim's family to the East Japan Tournament in 2012, the West Japan Tournament in 2013 and the West Japan Tournament again this year. Yeon-ah nim gave the closing remarks after watching the speech competition, the Divine Principle lecture competition and the entertainment competition. In her address, Yeon-ah nim spoke about a speech entitled "The Way of the True Filial Son" that True Father had

given on November 11, 1996, in Uruguay. She encouraged the Seonghwa students to be proud of True Parents, to be proud of the fact that they are True Parents' children, and to carry on True Parents' true love tradition of living for the sake of others to become the hope for the future.

During the closing ceremony, the judges announced the top three winners from each contest. When the judges called the name of an individual or team, students swelled up in joy as if their hearts had been released from the strain of making so much effort for this festival, while disappointment showed on the

faces of others.

First place for the chart-style Divine Principle lecture contest went to Nanami Takahashi, a middle school student from the North Aichi District, who lectured on the "Root of the Sin" from the "Human Fall." First place in the speech contest went to Yumi Egashi, a high school student from the Saga District, who gave a speech entitled "My Church History." She spoke of her experience attending church services despite her parents' opposition to the church. She explained how she came to learn God's word and ended up participating in an overseas workshop after experiencing our brotherly and sisterly culture. First place for the traditional-method Divine Principle lecture contest went to Arisa Takezawa, a high school student from the Kagoshima District, who lectured on "The Power of Love, the Power of the Principle, and God's Commandment," from the "Human Fall." First place for the entertainment group contest went to the Seonghwa Student Association from the Okayama District that performed a play entitled, "The Path to Filial Piety: Our Starting Point Is in True Parents."

At the awards ceremony, Yeon-ah nim presented the winners with certificates and souvenirs. She shook hands with each person and posed in photographs with them as if to comfort them for their past hardships and to encourage them for their future.

These second-generation middle school and high school students today will all be young adults by 2020.

These Seonghwa students are the oncoming generation of leaders for the Unification movement. They are now at a stage where, through the Chuhwa Cultural Festival, they can actively aim to expand the culture of heart, not only to other second-generation members but also to the young people at their schools and in society.