

***Sumiko Davis,
Japan, 1969***



I joined the Unification Church in 1969. I came to America in 1973 and was grateful to be working with Father and hundreds of brothers and sisters in America. I don't think I did anything special; I just tried to do my best. However, this is my story.

I was the oldest of three girls in my family. I spent a lot of time as a child with my grandparents. My grandmother would take me up to the mountain to the shrine every morning to pray and pay respects to our ancestors, so from an early age I already knew about God, ancestors, and spirits.



Sumiko Davis (third row standing, far right)

I was a happy-go-lucky child and spent a lot of time with many friends running around all over the neighborhood eating fruit and nuts in the woods. I was wild and carefree. I never liked to study, and I never read any books except my school books and comics. I was the leader of many wild children and was happy with this until I went to middle school.

One day I decided on a change. I wanted to be the top student in my class. I heard a voice, "If you work hard, you can do it." From then on I started studying very hard, and my life of fun was finished. My sisters wanted to play with me, but I was too busy and didn't pay attention to them. I accomplished what I had determined to do, and I became the top student in my high-school class. I loved English and was good at it so I determined to go to a good college to study English.

I made a strong determination to go to one of the top universities in Okayama and studied very hard to pass the entrance exams. I had confidence I would do very well, because I had been the top student in my high-school class and my teachers had great expectations of me. When it came time to take the test, with utter shock my brain froze! I couldn't think, I couldn't answer the questions. It was as if "something" was blocking me, and some strange force did not want me to pass the test. I was distraught; everything that I had worked so hard for was slipping away from me. I was very discouraged.

I had previously applied to a Catholic women's college, and so it seemed I was destined to go there. My father encouraged me to go and was willing to pay the expensive tuition for me. One day at school, I was reading a notice about an English-conversation club and I thought I would attend. While I was reading the notice, two friendly girls came up to me and asked if I was going to go. Their names were Tomoe and Katsumi. Later we would become lifelong best friends and still are to this day.

My college was for rich girls who wanted to find husbands. I didn't get the point of it and had many questions about relationships and

the purpose of life. I studied the Bible and was interested in who Jesus was and why he had suffered. At school I was reading a Catholic book about the Bible, and the words “original sin” jumped out to me and struck my heart. What was the meaning? I thought about this experience often, and I started to visit many churches to find the answer. Many of my friends tried to convert me to join their church, but for me, something was missing.

I had one friend who was very interested in philosophy and religions; she sent me a letter and told me of a group she met and that she had attended their seminar. She explained that she was very moved by the seminar and that after she returned home, she couldn't stop crying for three days. She came to my room many nights in a row and read to me from a black book. It was the *Divine Principle*.

At that time there was no Unification Church in the area, so the church decided to send two missionaries to our city to start a church. My friend, Kazumi, took me to meet them and I went many times to meet and talk with them. I was moved by their purity and high spirit. Eventually I went to a workshop and heard a three-day lecture about Divine Principle. I finally got my answer to what original sin was. Although I really didn't understand very much, I was inspired and joined; it was 1969. In the meantime, my friends were curious as to what I had been doing.

Kazumi invited Tomoe and Katsumi to come to the church with us. They were both searching for some “religion” at that time. When they heard the lectures, they became so inspired and decided to join the church with us. Something touched them deeply in their hearts; yet it was not this way for me. I understood intellectually, but it didn't touch my heart. Later many of our college friends joined also. In spite of my struggle I wrote a letter inviting my high-school friends to a workshop to study the Divine Principle. One of them joined, and he later became the leader of the Okayama church. He was the best friend of my cousin and was my first spiritual child.

After I finished college, I joined the International One World Crusade (IOWC) and Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) and traveled all over Japan fundraising and witnessing with many brothers and sisters. There were many excellent leaders who inspired me with their sincerity and high spirit. I was very happy with high spirit and brought many spiritual children. Those leaders gave me a lot of hope about the future of the church.

One day I was called to come to the headquarters in Tokyo without knowing why. I had an interview with an elder of our church. She asked three questions, 1) Do you want to go to America to work with Father? 2) Can you earn your own travel expenses to go? 3) Will your parents be willing to let you go to America? Without hesitation I said "yes." I did not have a deep understanding; I just had a strong desire to help Father in America.

I went back to MFT with a strong determination and fundraised by myself. At the end of one month I had more than enough for the trip to America. When I asked my parents for their approval to go to America, they were willing to let me go. They fully believed I would be coming back in a few years. I didn't know that would be the last time I would see my father.

I arrived in America on June 15, 1973 as one of 36 pioneer missionaries in the "Third Wave" of Japanese members who came to America to work with Father. At that time, Mr. Takeru Kamiyama was in charge of all Japanese pioneers. I was sent to MFT in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania., although I was very eager to witness. Our team stayed with George and Diane Fernsler, one of the first blessed couples in America, and I remember being very inspired by their loving relationship and their faith. It was my first impression of an American blessed couple, and it gave me a lot of hope for the future. I stayed with that team until we were all called to join with hundreds of our brothers and sisters in New York City for Father's speech at Madison Square Garden.

After the Madison Square Garden event on September 18, 1974, I joined the New York church and witnessed very hard every day. My favorite place to witness was around the New York Public Library. I found many spiritual children there. I stayed out on the street every night until 11 p.m. until I found a guest to bring to the church. Every weekend we witnessed till 4 a.m. at Times Square until we found a guest for our workshops. I was very happy and high spirited, and we had a very good center atmosphere. Everybody was working hard, and we brought many spiritual children during those days.

Later, I was sent to MFT to take care of American brothers and sisters as a team mother and traveled all over America. It was God's blessing, because I saw many beautiful places as we traveled. One of the teams I was sent to assist was in a small center outside of the city of Philadelphia. On the first day of my arrival, a tall, bright, smiling young brother came to me and said, simply, "Hi my name is Greg, I have a Japanese spiritual mother." I was very moved by his kind heart. He was one of the team captains in the center. One day, his parents came to visit him, and I served them some melon and a drink. They were very loving and kind to me. After that, Greg was sent to another region. I never forgot his kind heart.

In 1979, I was invited to participate in the matching at the New Yorker Hotel along with hundreds of other brothers and sisters — many of whom I had worked with, since coming to America. At one point I was standing in front of Father with several other Japanese sisters, and he said to me, "You should brush your hair off your forehead; you will attract strong fortune through your ancestors." As he said that, I instinctively did just that. Soon, I was standing in front of my suggested match, to my amazement; it was Greg, the friendly brother whose parents I had served many months earlier in Philadelphia. I was comforted, because I thought, "I know this brother." It was a very powerful experience, as I felt God had selected this brother "just for me." We were blessed in the 2075-Couple Marriage Blessing

in Madison Square Garden in 1982, attended by Greg's parents and aunt. A few months later, we began family life. My husband and I felt a lot of love for each other, and our family life was very happy and smooth.

Today, we have two beautiful and intelligent daughters and in spite of unexpected health challenges of both me and my husband, we carry on in faith. Like many brothers and sisters, I feel sorry that we couldn't accomplish as much as we would have liked, but I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to work with True Father in the very special providential activities in America. I congratulate all my brothers and sisters with whom I was able to share laughter and tears as we traveled all over America in those precious days.