

## FFWPU Japan: Bang Sang-il: The 2nd-generation - Vision and hope for the church

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On March 4, a special gathering for second generation was held at Kanayama Family Church of the South Aichi District, where Mr. and Mrs. Bang Sang-il, Regional Group President of the Heavenly Japan for the Heavenly Parents' Holy Community were received. In his message of encouragement, he testified of True Mother's hope for the realm of second generation and called on them to "respect and love our brothers and sisters next door, and to steadfastly protect the second generation who do not come to church." Here we present the content of the speech, as well as the greeting message from his wife, Kazuyo Fujinohara.

### **40-day workshop: Heartfelt exchange between newly appointed second-generation leaders and members**

Hello, everyone. It is a pleasure to be here today. The playing of the guitars, the dance performance, and the testimonies of the three youth members were all wonderful.

I am now making the rounds and visiting the districts where second generation district leaders were newly appointed. It was great to meet District Leader Kazuhide Kikuchi and his wife. I've heard that they had four children, but they look so young that I thought they were candidates for the blessing.

In the first 40-day course, the leaders were in charge of giving lectures at the 40-day workshops held in churches throughout Japan to study the Unification Principle and True Parents' life course. One of the reasons for doing so was to deepen the heartistic bond between the second generation leaders and their members.

Since coming to Japan, it takes a while to build up relationships with every member each time I'm transferred to a new church. For me, it is not easy to remember the names of Japanese people. At the church in Aizuwakamatsu (Fukushima Prefecture) where I was first assigned, there were many people with names with the Chinese character "fuji" (藤. This can also be read as "toh.") in them, such as Sato (佐藤), Ito (伊藤), Muto (武藤), Endo (遠藤), and Saito (斉藤). Even after a month, it was still difficult to match names and faces. For example, I'd say, "You must be Ito-san, right?" And the person would reply, "No, I'm Muto."

I had this kind of exchange many times. Moreover, there were several Itos. This may sound like a joke, but I seriously considered calling them in order of their height, for example, "The tallest Ito-san, the second tallest Ito-san..."

Last October, the second generation district leaders took a stand towards True Mother's hopes. If they fail to establish themselves, the brunt of the criticism will be directed at Mother. The critics may say, "Mother doesn't understand the second generation in Japan...", and a heartistic barrier may form between the members and Mother. The full-fledged arrival of the age of second-generation may be prolonged.

I was deeply worried and prayed to Heaven for assistance. After much discussion with the staff at headquarters, we decided to hold a 40-day workshop. I thought it would be good if the second generation leaders and the members could have heartfelt dialogue and share their opinions as lecturers and workshop attendees. This was in line with True Mother's hope of creating a church full of the Holy Spirit and truth.

I think we can all agree that the workshops were filled with grace. However, if the workshops were only

held in those churches with a second-generation leader, questions might arise from among the approximately 300 other churches in Japan as to why the workshops are only held in those churches and not in the others. For this reason, the workshops were held throughout the country. As a result, the leaders throughout the country were the ones who received the most grace.

I watched all of the second-generation district leaders give their lectures. They were obviously not as experienced in giving lectures as the first-generation leaders, and I could tell that they had spent a lot of time preparing. I'm sure they prayed with a lot of cheongseong. (Seeing them in action) I am convinced that the age of the second-generation has arrived.

Mother has used many words to describe the second generation. She has described them as "pure water" and like "crystals."

The words that remain in my heart are that "the realm of second-generation is the hope and vision for the church." I am sure that those of you present here can accept such words of encouragement with open arms. What about our brothers and sisters that don't come to church? The true value of the Family Federation will be tested by whether or not we are able to care for them, invest our love in them, and walk together with them.

### **Husbands and wives must respect each other**

Love is great. If you take love away from humans, they will be the same as animals. In some respects, we may become less than animals. Humans can express love, but its depth is immeasurable.

Even if a couple lives together for ten or twenty years, it would still be difficult to grasp every nuance of the other's world of heart. An unknown world will always appear (about your partner). Discovering this may be the joy of living together as a couple.

It has been about thirty-five years since I received the blessing. The longer I live with her, the more I am afraid of her. It is not fear like that of demons or tigers. She is much more sensitive to heaven's providence and the workings of the spirit world than I am, and she can make decisions very quickly. I am in awe of her and respect her from the bottom of my heart.

Husbands and wives must respect each other. Living together, there may be times where you feel dissatisfied with the other person or feel sorry for your own shortcomings. However, when you realize that both of you complement each other's shortcomings, you will feel gratitude, respect, and awe. When couples can see the preciousness in the other's existence in this way, they draw nearer to God's bosom.

When you happen to come across yakuza or mafia, you may probably be frightened. This is because there is an image of violence associated with them. You may fear the power of their "fists." However, the power of the "fist" cannot overcome the power of love.

Just because you train physically, that does not mean you will go to a higher position in the spirit world. Once you reach a certain age, your body stops growing. In contrast, the spiritual body can grow as long as we are alive. Therefore, nurturing (our ability to) love is more important than acquiring any kind of power.

All of the family youth here today, which is more important, you or your children? I think anybody would answer that children are more important. As parents, we all put our children first. Parents put their lives on the line for their children.

Since God and True Parents are the parents of humankind, they seek to care for us, their children, more than themselves. True Parents are eternally unique. Even though their value is immeasurable and they should be cherished the most, they do not care about themselves but try to protect us with their lives. For this reason, they have walked the path of hardship and of thorns.

Today, society is full of problems. Marriages are breaking up, and it is not uncommon for parents to abuse their children. Some people even call the term "filial piety" a "dead" word. The environment young people are in is a mess, with drugs and the decaying of sexual morals. If one expresses a differing opinion about same-sex marriages, he or she is labeled a bigot or sexist and is severely attacked. Under these circumstances, the Family Federation has been vocal about the preciousness of love nurtured in the family and the true nature of marriage. However, the bashing of the Family Federation and biased reporting by the mainstream media have not subsided.

True Mother called me and said, "These problems will pass. Don't worry. It is in times like this that we need to witness." Then, to my surprise, she strongly requested me to multiply tenfold. During the call, she even talked about the second and third generation who have not been able to come to church. If they return, there is no doubt that the parents of those families and the realm of second generation will be

greatly revitalized, wherein a whirlwind promoting witnessing will be generated.

What you should practice today in order to bring victory in witnessing is to improve the relationship with your spouse. A couple that gets along well with each other, even if they don't say anything, will be noticed by their neighbors. They will take an interest in them because they admire how they appear. They will say, "You two really get along well. I wonder why. I hear you have some kind of faith..." In this way, they come to you. This is the starting point of witnessing. If a husband and wife are united in witnessing, they can witness to more people than ever before.

If the blessed couples are constantly quarreling and arguing with each other, people will talk behind their backs and say things like, "They preach 'True love, true love,' but all they do is argue." The blessed couples may have taken great lengths to bring witnessing candidates to the church, but they will just leave (when they see them constantly arguing.)

### **The Family Federation has not committed a crime that constitutes grounds for dissolution**

On every TV channel, the "former Unification Church" is being repeatedly called out, and there is probably no one in Japan who does not know about the Family Federation. True Parents once said that becoming famous is the same whether you are in a good or bad position. Even if we have a bad image, it would be good if we could reverse it all at once.

If you yourself have sinned, even if the world does not condemn you, you must live your life reflecting on your own actions and a part of you will always shrink in shame. However, if you have not committed a crime, you should behave with dignity. The mainstream media has repeatedly reported that we should file a request for dissolution, but the Family Federation has not committed any crimes that would constitute grounds for dissolution. Why is it a crime to voluntarily donate money in order to promote heaven's providence?

There are many Japanese religious organizations that have large facilities. They own buildings that are larger in scale than those of the Family Federation.

After dinner, my wife and I take a walk for about an hour and a half. We try to take a different route every time, but everywhere we go, we see a building of some religious organization. They are all quite large. Of course, the believers must have donated a lot of money to build those facilities. Otherwise, how could they have built such large structures?

Compared to those religious organizations, our activities are very small. Nevertheless, the Japanese Communist Party leaders, left-wing lawyers, and left-wing journalists have attacked our church because affiliated organizations have been spreading the word about the threat of communism and have been campaigning to win the war against it. They are taking advantage of this opportunity, rejoicing that they have "a great chance to crush an eyesore."

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has continuously exercised its right to ask questions to the Family Federation. Each time, we have responded in good faith and have sent them answers that have amounted to several cardboard boxes. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology staff members are working day and night to review these materials, checking and verifying each term they are unfamiliar with, such as heavenly tribal messiahship etc. Perhaps they will become more familiar with the history of the Family Federation than you.

### **Mainstream media reports and reality regarding Family Federation are completely different**

Rest assured, everyone. The Family Federation will never collapse.

Last year, a city council election was held in a local city, where a first-time candidate who was blessed, won the election in a landslide. At the time of the election, the bashing of the Family Federation was at its peak. A large number of leaflets opposing him were handed out, and at times he wondered if it would be possible to win. However, when he visited the homes of the voters to call for their support, everyone knew his personality well and told him, "You definitely don't look like a bad person. I will support you!" He received many words of encouragement.

In the end, this member received more votes than the other three candidates combined, who had led this opposition. They must have been surprised at what happened. The head of the women's department of that church was so impressed with his efforts that I've heard she is planning on running in the next elections. She has even appointed an assistant department leader who can be ready to take over any time.

The mainstream media reported that 80 percent of the public wants the Family Federation dissolved. This data is not trustworthy. This report and reality are completely different. The foundation that the members have built in the community have not been shaken. People who have been in contact with the church

praise the members of the Family Federation and have said the members of the Family Federation are pure. We must not be defeated by leftists who are eager to create a bad image of us.

### **Give respect and love our brothers and sisters next door and protect all second generation**

It is time for you, the youth and students, to take the lead in witnessing to True Parents. God and True Parents are your parents, and they have been pouring out true love to you without change. We must respond to that love.

Even now, the war with Russia is still going on in Ukraine. If President Putin, who started the war, had any love for the people of neighboring countries, he would not have started such a catastrophe.

Unless we - brothers and sisters of blessed families, second-generation, and third generation - love and respect each other, problems will always arise. If our own spiritual lives are important, then the spiritual lives of the second and third generations who don't come to church at this time should also be important. We are all irreplaceable brothers and sisters centering on the Heavenly Parent (God) and True Parents.

In August of the year before last, True Mother invited me to visit Cheon Jeong Gung Museum in Korea.

I was in the same room with True Mother. A silence continued and the atmosphere became quite suffocating so I approached her like this. "Mother. I am actually a second generation." She was surprised and said, "Oh, you're a second generation, are you?" I explained to her that True Parents' Holy Wedding took place in 1960, so everyone born after that time must be second generation. Mother seemed to understand and said, "Oh, you're right."

In the True Family, Ye-jin-nim was born in the twelfth month of 1960 in the heavenly calendar. True Mother asked me, "Are you the same age as Ye-jin?" I replied, "I was born a little earlier, so I am her older brother." Mother laughed and said, "I see."

I am not a Blessed second generation, but I am proud to say that I am a second generation providentially. Yoshifumi Kotoda, leader of Subregion 3, is the same age as me, so he is also a second generation.

True Mother has blessed us and said that the realm of the second generation is the hope of the Family Federation. I am always thinking about how I can establish you, the substance of this hope, at the center of our subregions and districts. That is why I am visiting the churches where there are second generation district leaders. I will continue to do my best, but it is not enough for me to do it alone. I need the help of the subregional and district leaders, as well as all of you. If we say that we are brothers and sisters, we need to listen to the second generation who have not come to church and ask them what their problems are and what they are facing. Please create opportunities to interact with them and ask them out for lunch or dinner, or even for a walk.

The youth and student base of the Family Federation is so large that it is the envy of other religious organizations. It is not easy for even the leading religious organizations in Japan to hold a convention of 10,000 young people. But we have done it. Let us be proud of that.

Let us respect and love our brothers and sisters who are right next to us, and let us steadfastly protect the second generation who have been staying away from church. I hope that you will lead the way and testify about True Mother's words that the second generation are the hope (of the Family Federation).

### **Mrs. Kazuyo Fujinohara's Message**

#### **God's calling and hope for us**

Good evening, everyone. Thank you very much for gathering here today, from middle school students to the family youth. We just witnessed that there is a solid foundation of support for District Leader Kikuchi that I don't think there is anything for me say.

A few moments ago, a member of the family youth gave his testimony. Since you have such a fine role model, I believe that there will be no problem if all of you walk in accordance with the examples set by your senior brothers and sisters.

The Regional Group President is making the rounds of churches where newly appointed second generation district leaders have been assigned. So far, he has visited about six districts. Because he is asking the members in each location to take care of the district leaders, it may look somewhat like an election campaign externally, but internally, he is trying to convey what kind of hope True Mother has entrusted to the second generation district leaders.

**The second generation are God's precious children and our brothers and sisters, so we cannot leave**

## **them alone**

Even though we say we are going to reclaim all those in the realm of second generation, there are second generation members in so many different age groups and societal positions, and how distant or close they are with the church that we have to be prepared in order to create an environment where they can all come together. It is difficult to just say that we are setting an example.

Some (second generation) have been away from the church for a long time and are suffering alone, while others have become so entrenched in their resentment that they are engaged in anti-church activities and have been featured in the mainstream media. I hope that all of you can reaffirm why you are here and that we have to also take these second generation into consideration.

Some of you may say that you are too busy just keeping your families connected to the church and that you don't have time to care for others. But if you are here and listening to what we have to say, then God must be asking you to do something. As you pray and practice the word, try to sense heaven's hope for you.

I am sure that some of you came here reluctantly. You may have come to the church with some doubt or skepticism. However, these are the type of people that we need. There are still many people who have their backs turned to the church.

There are probably many second generation in the South Aichi District who do not come to church. If you think of them as your brothers and sisters who share your blood, you cannot leave them alone, can you? They are all precious children to God. I ask that you help them so that they can get involved with the church again.

The number of second generation leaders will increase in the future, but right now there are only twenty district leaders established throughout the country. You are the first to receive this grace. The struggles you are going through, I'm sure Mr. Kikuchi has faced them as well. Therefore, it's easier for you to share what you're going through with him. That is the difference with (second and) first generation leaders.

Heaven has great expectations for this district. Please become one with your district leader and work hard together. Thank you very much.