

FFWPU Japan's Sang-il Bang: The second generation rising up as bearers of God's will

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On October 2, the "Commendation Ceremony Commemorating the 64th Anniversary of the Founding of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification" was held at Isshin Special Education Center in Urayasu, Chiba, Japan. In his commemorative address, Bang Sang-il, Regional Group President of the Heavenly Japan for the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community, shared True Mother's deep love, hope, and expectation for the second generation, and called for "the first, second, and third generations to be firmly united from generation to generation and testify to the works of Heaven."

Editorial Department

Grateful to the senior members who gave their all for the development of the church

Good afternoon, everyone. Today, many of you have received awards for your past services. I would like to extend my congratulations. (Applause)

Especially to those of you who have received the True Parents' Award as pastors with more than 33 years of experience, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your past efforts. Thank you very much. (Applause) The True Parents' Award is an award that True Mother specifically designated three years ago to honor 33 years of public work. I believe it will be the proudest treasure in your lives.

The history of the Family Federation in Japan spans 64 years since its foundation on October 2, 1959. Starting with Mr. and Mrs. Osami Kuboki, the first president of the church in Japan who received the blessing in the 430-couple blessing, our senior members who received the blessing in the 43-couple, 777-couple, 1800-couple, and 6,000-couple blessings have truly risked their lives and made a complete investment for the development of our church. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to them. Please give a big round of applause to our senior members. (Applause)

Approximately 6,000 second generation from Japan visited Korea, recently, to participate in the General Assembly of Second Generation from the Heavenly Japan (September 17, HJ Global Art Center). About 7,000 people, including brothers and sisters from Korea and Taiwan, dressed in matching white shirts as they welcomed True Mother. It was so beautiful and moving to see how pure they were as they shed tears of joy at seeing Mother.

True Mother was so happy to see the second generation that she could hardly contain her joy. Whenever True Mother gives a lecture at a convention, she usually arrives at the venue five to ten minutes before the event, but this time she arrived 30 minutes before. Then she asked, "When is it starting? When should I take stage?" It was very clear how excited she was.

Mother came to the venue despite the voices of concern around her

All second generation, including the 6,000 who visited Korea, are treasures of the Family Federation in Japan. Of course, this does not mean that the first generation are not treasures. (Laughter) If all the second generation left the church, the history of the Family Federation in Japan would end with the first generation. On the other hand, if the second generation rise up, the achievements of the first generation will be carried and passed on to the third generation. It goes without saying that the second generation are in a vital position in heaven's providence, not to mention the Family Federation in Japan.

In preparing for the General Assembly of Second Generation, I was informed by the organizer that 3,000 people would be able to gather without any problem. Frankly speaking, I thought it lacked impact. I felt that 3,000 people were not enough to lift the "heavy atmosphere" surrounding the Family Federation in Japan and give True Mother a sense of hope. So I encouraged them to aim for 10,000 people! And the number of expected participants increased from 3,000 to 4,000, then from 4,000 to 5,000, and it kept growing.

The Special Workshop for the members of Japan has been held in succession in Chung Pyung, Korea, and I visited Chung Pyung each time to give a lecture. On each trip, I visited True Mother and reported about the number of expected participants in the General Assembly of Second Generation. When Mother first heard that 3,000 people would be coming, she gave a simple reply and didn't seem all that impressed. But when the number increased to 4,000 and then 5,000, she would take delight and asked, "Really?" When the number finally exceeded 6,000, there was a definite sparkle in her eyes.

The venue for the General Assembly of Second Generation then changed to the HJ Global Art Center, but there had been much discussion at the World Headquarters about whether it would be safe for True Mother to speak at the assembly. There was concern that someone may try to harm True Mother.

Unfortunately, the Japan Top Gun College 2023, a training session for college students that was being held prior to the General Assembly of Second Generation, was secretly filmed and reported by the mainstream media in Japan. The schedule (for the assembly) was even leaked, and the atmosphere at World Headquarters, as well as the Secretary's office, was tense, with the majority of staff leaning towards safety and having Mother speak via video message.

Under such circumstances, True Mother asked how I felt. I replied, "If you don't come to the Global Art Center, it will be meaningless for 6,000 people to come from Japan. We will take every precaution to ensure your safety, so please come." Then, Mother said, "That's right! What's the point if I don't go? I will go." (Applause)

True Mother truly loves the second generation. I am sorry to say this, but if there were 6,000 first generation gathered together, she might have spoken to them via video message. (Laughter) Mother's love for the second generation is extraordinary.

Second generation who wish to serve their country and the world

I am sure that you have heard some of the testimonies from the second generation, who participated in the General Assembly of Second Generation, at your churches. I participated in the 2023 Hyojeong Dedication and Torch Ceremony for the Heavenly Japan to Inherit Heavenly Fortune held on September 23 near Obihiro City, Hokkaido, and heard the testimonies from nine of the second generation from Hokkaido after the ceremony. Each testimony was so moving that I was in tears the entire time.

One scene left a strong impression on me during the General Assembly of Second Generation. The screen on the stage split apart right down the middle to the right and left, and True Mother appeared as if from the screen. One of the participants was so impressed that he said, "Mother is moving!" Probably half of the participants had never seen Mother in person. The image of the True Parents that they see on three home altars or at church is the only image they have of True Mother. Therefore, it is a complete surprise for them just to have Mother walk up to them.

Seeing their reaction, I realized that we must allow all second generation to meet True Mother. Let us, first generation, take responsibility and give the second generation wisdom so that the gap between their hearts and Mothers can be closed, and that they may have more opportunities to meet her.

True Mother spoke to the second generation before her as "pure water" and called on them to help bring back those second generation staying away from the church. She also spoke of them as the "elite troops" of heaven. This means that they are special beings who live for the salvation of Japan and the salvation of the world.

True Mother sincerely hopes that the second generation will serve the nation and the world.

I believe that one of the conditions for the older senior families to receive the blessing was to witness for three years. That was the tradition of the Family Federation. However, as the blessing spread globally and grace from True Parents' realm of victory expanded, witnessing activities and spiritual children were no longer required as conditions to receive the blessing. The blessing for second generation has proceeded without inheriting this tradition.

Therefore, starting next year, we will recommend those who wish to receive the blessing do one year of missionary work overseas. We ask that you deeply accept True Mother's wishes and expectations for the

second generation, and give them guidance.

The pioneer days of Korea, when True Father and members shared hardships

The anniversary of the founding of the Family Federation in Japan is October 2, and in 1959 this was the day of the first pledge service.

The Family Federation in Korea was founded on May 1, 1954. During the pioneer days, True Father often spoke about Jesus and the Unification Principle.

The person who supported True Father and was in charge of lectures on the Principle was Yoo Hyo-won, the former president. Despite being disabled due to spinal caries, he lectured every day for three years and eight months. Sometimes he lectured eighteen hours a day. Sometimes, he gave lectures on paper while lying on the floor. Whenever the former president gave a lecture, Father would sit in the attic listening to the lecture and praying with tears flowing from his eyes.

True Father fasted for seven days from July 1, 1957 for the progress of heaven's providence. At that time, all the Korean members also fasted for seven days in order to unite their hearts with Father's.

We may never have the opportunity to fast with True Parents in the future. However, I hope that each one of us will have the experience of working together with True Parents, united in heart and mind.

True Father was detained on July 4, 1955 and imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison on the 13th of the same month. This was due to attacks by the government and mass media about the problems stemming from Ehwa Womans University and Yonsei University. This is the same situation that the Family Federation in Japan is now in. Father was completely isolated from the world, but he was confident that he would be released without charge because there was nothing to pin him as a criminal. He entered prison without any fear.

Such is True Father, but he once told us that he had a heartbreaking and unforgettable moment. A woman, who had walked the path of God's will together with Father, came to visit him at Seodaemun Prison and said, "If you are God's son and God loves you, why are you in jail?" She cursed him and said, "Mr. Moon, don't you realize it yet?" The woman had already gone to another denomination and was vehemently opposed to the Unification Church. How frustrated Father must have been?

He was released from Seodaemun Prison on October 4. The day he was released from a concentration camp in Hungnam was October 14, 1959. To commemorate this day, the 6,000-couple blessing was held in 1987. As if symbolizing God's providence spanning six thousand years, he blessed six thousand young couples who had gathered from eighty-five countries around the world.

October is also known as the "Month of Liberation and Blessing" as it includes the anniversaries of the 777-couple (October 21) and 6500-couple (October 30) blessings.

Loving the Japanese people more than anyone else in Japan

After the Korean War, which started when the North invaded the South on June 25, and when things were settling down, the Soviet Union (at the time), China, and North Korea were working together to make Japan into a Communist state. True Father felt the need to send missionaries to Japan as soon as possible to counter such moves, and the mission was entrusted to missionary Bong Choon Choi [Sang Ik "Papasan" Choi] (Japanese name: Masaru Nishikawa).

On May 30, 1958, True Father called missionary Bong Choon Choi to Gab-sa Temple in Gongju, Korea, and together they took a walk along a path in the mountains behind the temple. The path could have been walked in less than ten minutes, but on that occasion it took two hours. Under two pine trees, when Father told him, "You are going to Japan," and Bong Choon Choi said, "Yes. I understand. I will go there with my life." There was not the slightest hesitation.

Japan and Korea normalized diplomatic relations in 1965. Therefore, in 1958, it was obvious that going to Japan was fraught with danger. Nevertheless, True Father made the decision to dispatch missionaries to protect Japan, which occupied an important position in Asia, with an eye towards the future of heaven's providence at stake. On July 15 of the same year, missionary Bong Choon Choi departed Korea on a stowaway ship.

True Father testified about this in his autobiography.

Bong Choon Choi did not even know if he could enter Japan, but he was prepared, if necessary, to lay down his life. Until I could hear that he had safely crossed the strait to Japan, I put aside all other work and sat praying in a small room in the church. I didn't eat or sleep.

... Bong Choon Choi was arrested as soon as he arrived in Japan... While in prison he decided he would rather die than be sent back, and so he began to fast. During his fast, he developed a fever. The Japanese authorities decided to place him in a hospital and delay his deportation until his health could be restored. While in the hospital, he managed to escape from custody. After such efforts made at the risk of his life over a year and a half, Bong Choon Choi established the church in Japan in October 1959.
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True Father asked him to love the people of Japan more than anyone else in Japan as a Korean. He appealed to him to continue to invest his love until the Japanese would testify that it was he who loved Japan more than anyone else.

About forty years later, on January 1, 1998, True Father proclaimed that Japan was now the Mother Nation instead of the Eve Nation. Today, there are 283 churches in Japan. The seed of love that one missionary risked his life to plant bore fruit in this way.

In January 1959, a missionary was sent to the United States.

When Jesus came to earth, the Roman Empire was the major force of the world. Today, with the arrival of True Parents of humankind, the United States is in the same position as the Roman Empire. True Father appealed and said, "Unless America's crisis could be resolved, Korea would be destroyed" (p. 147), and he dispatched missionary Yong Oon Kim (former vice professor of the Department of Social Work, College of Humanities and Science at Ehwa Womans University), who was said to be the most outstanding of all the disciples. In this way, he established a foothold in building a worldwide missionary foundation.

What we learn through missionaries Bong Choon Choi and Young Oon Kim is the importance of standing in the position of Abel, completely united with the Heavenly Parent (God) and True Parents. First of all, you must be able to fight against Satan and separate yourselves from the Satanic world. Then you will enter the sphere of God's love with those who are in the position of Cain.

Surely pass down God's lineage granted to us by the blessing from True Parents

Many second generation do not know how big the second generation community is in Japan. Due to the influence of biased media reports and other factors, some may not have confidence in their faith in the Family Federation and live their daily lives with a sense of loneliness.

One leader sent his daughter, a third-year in high school, to the General Assembly of Second Generation. When she arrived, to her surprise, a good friend who was a classmate at her school was there. "Oh, you're a second generation," she asked, and her friend asked the same thing. They were so happy that they hugged each other and rejoiced. The story did not end there. It turned out that there was also a first-year student in her same school club at the assembly.

There were several such instances like this, and the General Assembly of Second Generation was like a reunion for them. Many participants were encouraged by the fact that "there are so many of my peers" and were encouraged.

It must have been the greatest moment in their lives that they were able to share the same time, space, and heart with True Mother. There is no doubt that they gained strength and support that will help their future lives of faith. And Mother gave a double peace sign as she was leaving, which seemed to have left a particularly strong impression on the second generation ladies. It may sound rude, but some second generation said Mother is kawaii (cute). It seems that the double peace sign will be popular for a while, especially among the second generation who visited Korea this time.

The True Parents love the second generation so deeply. How serious were we in protecting them? True Father taught us that of love, life, and lineage, lineage is the most important. If you ask an ordinary person which of the three is more important, he or she will probably say love or life.

We have been blessed by True Parents and have been granted God's lineage. That lineage has been passed on to the second generation, but unless the second generation rise up, it cannot be passed down to the third generation. If this happens, the Family Federation will have no choice but to decline. The blessed children are the strength of the Family Federation, and God's lineage must be passed on from the second generation to the third generation, and from the third generation to the fourth generation, and must be expanded.

We, the first generation, have served the Heavenly Parent and True Parents, and have been fully committed to God's will. In the same way, we must put our care and efforts into the second generation.

At important events such as today's, President Tomihiro Tanaka and I have presented flowers to True Parents. I proposed that one of the second generation should be chosen to present the bouquet for this event, and asked Mr. and Mrs. Katsumichi Motoyama, Director of the Future Human Resources Department, to be the presenters. They really worked hard to prepare for the General Assembly of Second Generation. I believe that True Parents came to this assembly and received it. Also, I asked Kenryu Kageyama, Church Leader of Niigata Family Church in the Niigata area to do the final Eog Manseis. (Applause)

A world of heartache and longing to meet True Parents

When True Father entered Seodaemun Prison, many members were so eager to meet him that they requested to see him every day. Dozens or hundreds of people waited in line at the prison entrance. Since only one person was allowed to visit each day, the members had to stay up all night at the entrance to contend with other people to get a visitor's pass. One of the members finally received a visitor's pass after staying up all night for three days. Just the thought of seeing Father brought tears to this member's eyes, and he met Father in tears.

This must be the world of heart that the first generation have gone through. I believe that many second generation have not experienced such a world, yet. We (first generation) must make more effort to connect the second generation to True Parents' world of heart. How much more reassuring would it be for True Mother if they would be so eager to see her that they would stay up all night for three nights? For the sixty-fourth anniversary, I hope that we, the first generation, can commit to protecting the second generation, so that the second generation can protect the third generation, and third generation will have a tradition of protecting the fourth generation, and so forth.

There is nothing to fear if the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology asks to impose a civil fine or if a request for a dissolution order of a religious corporation is made to the courts because the Family Federation did not respond adequately to the Ministry's right to asking questions. If we are united with our Heavenly Parent and True Parents, we will surely overcome them. Let the first, the second, and the third generations be firmly united from generation to generation and testify to the works of heaven.

This is the last message of Rev. Bang before he resigned his position.