

## Witnessing in Alignment with Central Figures

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*Singing and street preaching outside Chiba Station; Mi-jae Lee is second from the left*

I came from Korea to Japan in December 1991. My husband and I started our family in Tokyo. After moving to Chiba in 2008, I served as a leader of families with bi-national parents in the Chiba Family Church. In June 2013, I joined the Cheon Il Guk Support Group to realize True Mother's wish for us to fulfill our mission as tribal messiahs.

### **The logic was impressive**

I was born to a farmer's family in Iksan in North Jeolla Province as the sixth of eight children. I have three older brothers, two older sisters and two younger sisters. My family was poor; we crammed into a small house with only two rooms.

During the early days of the Unification Church, leaders such as Rev. Jae-seok Lee and Rev. Hwang Hwan-chae (both in the thirty-six-couple blessing group) missionized in my village as regional leaders. Back then, no church or church-owned building for them to stay at existed in the village. Although my parents were not members of the church, they kindly offered these missionaries a place to stay whenever they came to our village. Winters were very cold, so my family gathered in one room and kept our chickens in the other room. The missionaries said, "We don't mind sleeping in the room with the chickens. Please let us stay." Looking back, I feel sorry for allowing respected leaders of our church to stay in that room.

My oldest sister (thirty-thousand-couple blessing group, after marriage) married while working in Seoul but she had many difficulties in her married life, which brought her to the Unification Church. My sister strongly wished that her brothers and sisters would marry through our marriage blessing.

In 1982, after graduating from high school, I started to live with my sister's family in Seoul. One day, she handed me Exposition of Divine Principle as she returned from work and said, "I'm exhausted. Could you read this for me?" After I had read it for about fifteen minutes, she asked me, "How is it?" Since it was very different from what I had learned in a Christian church I attended up until I entered high school, I answered, "It's scientific and amazing." My sister responded, "I know," in a content tone.

I visited the Unification Church with my sister and attended a seven-day workshop and a twenty-one-day workshop. Through these workshops, I felt that True Parents' teachings were the most precious of all jewels. Teachings of Christian churches such as "Just believe" or "the Lord will come to earth from heaven on a cloud" seemed vague and unscientific. On the other hand, the logic of the Divine Principle astonished and fully convinced me. True Parents' teachings have captured my heart ever since.

I worked in Ilhwa's Business Administration Department (in Jegi-dong, Seoul) until I was blessed among the 6,500 couples in 1988. My husband is Japanese. I had never met a Japanese before, and since I had

learned in Korean history classes that Japanese were “murderers” who killed many Koreans, I remember being scared that horns might be sticking out of Japanese peoples’ heads. I can laugh at it now, but I was serious then.

True Father said to the Korean sisters blessed in Japanese–Korean couples, “Go to Japan and love your husband’s tribe and nation in my place.” I have lived in Japan with these words in mind.



*Mi-jae Lee and her husband Hideyuki Okamoto at the February 22, 2013 Cheon Il Guk Foundation Day Registration Blessing Ceremony*

### **My view of witnessing**

I do not have likes and dislikes among approaches to witnessing. I take the central figure’s viewpoint and do my best in any given environment such as street preaching, social witnessing through True Father’s autobiography, explaining our teachings using a (computerized) tablet, etc. Since I believe oneness with the central figure creates the foundation to connect to God and to True Parents’ heavenly fortune, I make every effort to follow True Mother’s advice to forgive, love and unite and be grateful for any environment given to me by whomever is in charge.

In the Chiba Family Church, which is in the South Chiba District, we go out on the street in front of Chiba Station once every month. Around fifteen women and young members along with Rev. Takahashi Yosuke, the church leader, and Mr. Takayuki Koshikawa, the Missionary Department manager, participate. When I give a testimony as one of our bi-national blessed couples, some people stop and listen, others come up to ask if we are running an election campaign and still others hand me a drink saying, “Good job.” It is fun to receive various responses.

Since 2014, we officially started shosha witnessing [writing out True Parents’ teachings by hand] in front of the Chiba Station under the leadership of the then regional leader of Region Fourteen, Rev. Aoki Hiroshi. In starting shosha witnessing, we first visited Mrs. Masumi Maekawa of the Fukuoka Family Church (in our Fukuoka District) who had achieved satisfactory results in shosha witnessing. Her testimony of her having come this far because she has maintained the sheer desire to be a filial daughter to True Parents moved me. I was also surprised by how she listened closely to the people she met on the street and how she communicated with them with patience until they would open up their hearts to tell her their addresses, names or telephone numbers. Moved by her deferential attitude of continually making effort to return even more joy to True Parents regardless of the results achieved, I formed a firm determination to inherit her heart.

### **Working in Chiba**

I pick up trash as I walk from the church to the Chiba Station every morning after attending our 9:30 AM departure ceremony at our church. I believe that picking up trash has been a condition to clean my impure heart and to love the people of Chiba. Although I used to be a bit embarrassed around people, I can now

talk to strangers on the street without getting nervous. My heart has become so close to the people of Chiba that some say they mistake me for their cousin or other relative.

How would True Parents love this person who is standing in front of me as their child? If I approach a person with that heart, my joy will reach them. I usually start with a greeting saying, "I came to Japan from Korea as a bride twenty-four years ago. Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon blessed me with a Japanese man because they love Japan. I also learned to like Japan, and now I love Japan!" This moves people and I can praise them naturally.

After I have them experience shosha, I show them a video on a tablet and invite them to the Chiba Shosha Hall. A year has passed since we started shosha witnessing and fifty-four people from various age groups and careers have decided to take the course.

### **A returning guest prepared by God**

I make appointments to meet my guests from morning to night as much as time allows. However, I could not build a deep relationship by merely conveying True Parents' teachings. Therefore, I always think of ways to make them happy by serving them, by cooking Korean food, preparing birthday presents for them, etc.

In February 2014, I met Ms. A (a woman in her fifties) on my way to the airport to participate in the commemoration of the first anniversary of Cheon Il Guk Foundation Day in Chung Pyung. Snow fell heavily that day and Ms. A gave up her seat for me when I finally managed to reach the bus station with a large suitcase. I thought to myself, "I wish I could witness to such a warm hearted person," and kept her in mind.

A month later, I ran into Ms. A on the street by coincidence and found out that she lived nearby. We exchanged greetings and enjoyed some conversation. As we talked, I learned that she had lost her parents and lives in solitude with no friends. When I told her I was Korean, she said, "I used to attend the church before." I wondered if she was talking about the Unification Church but chose not to ask at that moment.

Since then, I kept in contact with her by cooking and delivering Korean food or by bringing back souvenirs whenever I visited Korea. Ms. A, who had a certain faith, one day asked me to visit the training hall for tekazashi [healing through energy coming from the palms of one's hands]." When I asked her, "Would you come to my church if I visit yours?" she said, "Okay," so I visited the training hall three times.

After that, I gathered the courage to ask her, "Which church was it that you had attended before?" and she answered, "The Unification Church." I told her that I had met my Japanese husband through the Unification Church Blessing Ceremony. When we both felt better by getting it out, I invited her to our church.

When she came to the church, she willingly told me episodes, such as how she witnessed with devotion to her spiritual child who has now received the blessing or how she ended up placing a distance between herself and the church to take care of her parents. She started to learn True Parents' teachings again and she was able to receive the Cheon Il Guk Scriptures by contributing a donation to the global providence.

### **Wealth through witnessing**

Until recently, I had been too busy to pay attention to my personal appearance. I think I had also placed restraints on my husband and two daughters in various ways such as by not buying clothes or enough food. True Mother said that we can become wealthy through witnessing. When I first heard this, I thought, Really? However, as a result of holding firm faith in what True Mother had said and making continual and desperate efforts in witnessing, I now realize every day that this is true.

One of my guests brings me deliciously cooked food once every week. Another guest gives me clothes as seasonal gifts. Now I can give a street sermon wearing nice clothes. A church member who is a farmer brings me rice and vegetables. I feel the existence of God who lives and works in my daily life through such people around me.

God also polishes my character through my guests. One of my guests who is a corporate operating officer's wife and a teacher of flower arrangement and the tea ceremony strictly points out the strange Japanese phrases I use. Until meeting her, I used to communicate with people casually without using honorifics or formal terms because church members usually understand me even if my Japanese is a bit strange. But this will no longer apply.

There are times when I feel so severely stressed that I want to break off my relationships with guests. Yet I gain power to love them again by thinking of God and True Parents, who strive to embrace humanity

with parental true love and their true hearts. Even if I find fallen nature within guests, I feel grateful that I can be liberated from such fallen nature through such experiences.

Our regional leader, Rev. Gyeong-tak Nam, who began working in this post in March 2015, is asking us to shift our mentality in witnessing. He suggests that we relate to True Mother's wish and witness to guests who can contribute to establishing the foundation to save the nation and the world in practical ways. At first, the members were puzzled, not knowing how to witness to such people. But as our mentality and our ways of thinking started to change, guests in their twenties or thirties started to increase. Another significant characteristic of our recent guests is that many of them work in welfare-related jobs such as caregivers and nurses.

I want to keep up my effort in witnessing by becoming one united with the heart of the central figures who represent True Parents and interact with their wishes with a pure heart. I will offer absolute sincerity with faith in what True Parents instructed: To fulfill the mission of a tribal messiah by completing the blessing of 430 couples and to move forward for the victory of Vision 2020.