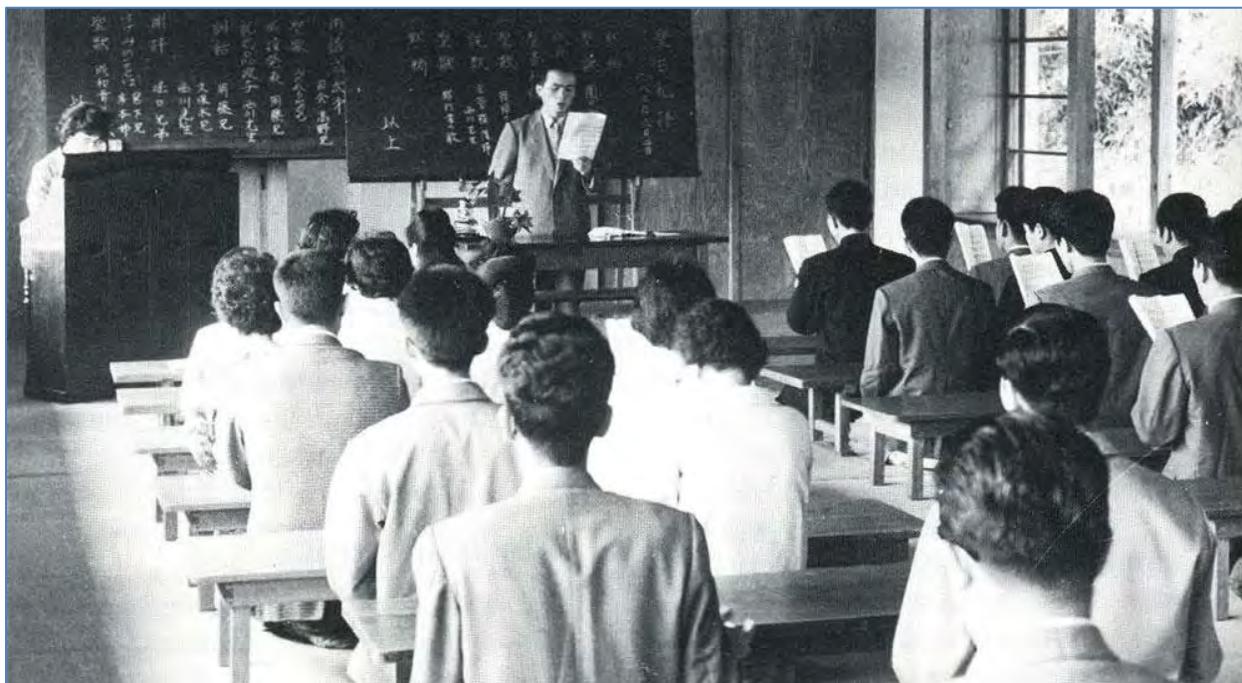


## My memories from when I joined the Unification Church of Japan - Part 2

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September 1991

Republished by FFWPU International Headquarters November 10, 2020



*Sunday service is held during the second workshop at Kominato in June 1963, whose trainees include Rishokosekai youth leaders*

A medical exam proved that I was healed. In five days I was out of bed. I prayed asking God for a place where I could stay. I wrote a letter to my friend. Amazingly the boarding place he suggested was right next to the Ikeda Baptist Church (Southern Baptist). It was a small, clean church. The pastor was an old but warm and dignified man. Attracted by the beauty of the hymns, I attended the services a couple of times as a guest, or rather, a stranger. Within a month it was Easter Sunday and the pastor introduced several people who were to be baptized and asked if there were any more volunteers. I responded and received baptism that day. Everyone was amazed at my sudden initiative, but no one was more amazed than I was. The pastor was thrilled, and the following week I became his secretary.

Soon afterwards, however, a struggle erupted within me -- the struggle of soul and flesh. The more I struggled, the deeper I went into a spiritual mud. I began to ask: "Am I saved? What was baptism? What is Christianity?" I had never actually read the Bible before, so I began studying it. Then more questions came to me: "What is the Holy Spirit? Who is Satan? Is there any real difference before and after Baptism? What is rebirth? What is new life? What is eternal life? How can I solve my own struggle? Is there any way out of the mud?" My shyness wouldn't allow me to ask anyone.

After working at the Biochemical Research Institute of Osaka University for a year, I became a teacher at a school for the deaf. One of the teachers was a spiritualist and she received a revelation that I might see Jesus on Easter. I did not understand what that meant. On Easter, I had been planning a hiking trip with my Sunday School students.

I woke up early Easter morning with an incredibly serene feeling. Suddenly, a spiritual voice spoke: "I am risen ... " I couldn't catch the second half.

"I am risen"? I wondered, "Whose voice is it?" Then I realized that it was Easter morning. "Oh, it's Jesus!" I was overjoyed.

Later, as my communication with Jesus developed, he told me, "The crucifixion was neither my desire nor the desire of the Father. But inevitably, I had to go the course of the crucifixion. Don't cry for me. It was the most glorious moment of my life although it appears to be the most miserable."

I've wondered why this happened to me and perhaps it is because of the following reason. One time when I went with some of the teachers to see "Ben Hur," I burst uncontrollably into tears inside the movie theater. It was at the scene of the crucifixion. Afterwards, I felt so ashamed that I ran away and walked the three miles back to my own place, crying all the way.

On another occasion Jesus mentioned, "Why do my people pray to me as God? I am not God. I am a man -- the son of God." My pastor always preached that "Jesus is God, the Creator," and that "he came to die

on the cross." That content was not what I had heard Jesus say. I knew it was impossible to expect the answer from the church. I went to a mountain and prayed all night on a slope looking down at the city of Osaka. Then I went to the southern tip of Kii peninsula and prayed all night on a rock facing the tossing waves of the Pacific Ocean. Lastly, I went to a waterfall and prayed under a small waterfall like an ascetic of Shintoism. I did not know what more I could do.



*New trainees gather with Ken Sudo during breaktime at the Toda Training Center in 1964*

### **Meeting the Unification Church**

One day I was walking along the sidewalk of Osaka station when I heard someone street-preaching. It was a small lady speaking about the end of the world. It was late in the spring of 1962. The woman spoke with an apocalyptic fanaticism. I picked up a flyer and was impressed. I could not visit the church, however, until the beginning of the summer as I had responsibilities to the deaf children. When I finally did visit the lady (Mrs. Hasegawa), she was very surprised but happy to receive me. She did everything she could, but told me that I would have to wait for the teacher's return to hear a lecture.

Soon a Korean lady in her fifties entered and smiled at me even more than the first lady [Note: this was Mrs. Michiko Matsumoto, who was Korean-Japanese]. As soon as the Korean lady sat down, she asked if I would listen to her lecture. Without waiting for my answer, she began to teach "The Creation Lecture." She repeated plus/minus, plus/minus, over and over. After thirty minutes, the lecture ended for she had run out of content. Proudly smiling at me she asked, "What do you think?" I was a science major at a university and felt it was too ridiculous to say anything.

Yet I kept returning to their humble center, as they would feed me and I wouldn't have to do the dishes. In addition, they were very nice to me and simply required me to sit down for an hour or so. But after seven or eight visits, the lectures ended and I came to the shocking realization that the "Messiah is here." That meant Jesus had come back. "This lady may not know much," I thought, "but if the Messiah is back, he can answer all my questions. The Kingdom of Heaven will come!" My teacher, Mrs. Matsumoto, was so glad to see I had understood something of crucial importance. She then brought out a box. Opening it carefully, she drew out wrappings from which a piece of dried-up cake was produced. I couldn't understand what this meant. She said, "It's the wedding cake of the Marriage of the Lamb." I was astonished, totally overwhelmed and elated.

I walked and walked that moonlit white road with tears rolling down my face. I knew I would have to change my life completely. When a man comes to the turning point of his life he always looks back to the past to see the future clearly. I too looked back on my past that night. I remembered my conversion, my first encounter with God. Then I came to the breathtaking realization that it was exactly eight years earlier, August 22, to the day and even to the hour, 8 p.m., that I had my conversion experience. I was astounded upon realizing the significance of that number. God was guiding me!! Even though I had been in spiritual mud, God had been with me!! I felt His love once again.

In the beginning, I began to commute to the church. It was the second floor of an old house. Unlike a normal church, it was very difficult to find, even with the small sign.

One day, Mrs. Matsumoto mentioned to me that a very special person was coming. They were cleaning and preparing for some important occasion. I felt that maybe, the Messiah was coming. That day came and in the evening, about ten people anxiously awaited the arrival of the special person. I was scared and tense but they were happy and relatively relaxed. Therefore, I thought that maybe this 'special person' was not the Messiah. When the person came, all but myself went rushing to the door. There, I saw the face of a Korean man in his forties.

"Good," I thought, "He is not the Messiah. He must be the one next to the Messiah." As soon as he arrived, he sat down and began to talk. His speech was plain and yet so clear, holding deep truths. His face was smiling but his eyes were sharp and shining. "If he is not the Messiah," I thought, "he absolutely must be the one next to the Messiah."

His talk led him to the crucifixion of Jesus. He told us Jesus had died because of the people's disbelief, that Jesus had not come to die but to build the Kingdom of Heaven. If he had not been crucified, the ideal world would have come during Jesus' time.

Even though I had heard a passionate lecture on Jesus from Mrs. Matsumoto, I did not know what the Divine Principle was saying about Jesus' crucifixion until I heard this man. This was my first encounter with Mr. Nishikawa (Mr. Choi Bong-choon, Sang Ik Choi or Papa-san), the first successful Korean missionary to Japan.

When I understood that I had to join the Unification Church, I knew I would have to resign from my job at the school and leave the children behind. I had a wonderful relationship with them, so it was a painful decision. Feelings for the children kept flooding back, despite my resolve to join the church.

I did not go to the church for days, causing Mrs. Matsumoto to worry about me. She visited the school and tried to convince me not to listen to anyone else. I did not know how many tears she was shedding for me in prayer.