

## My memories from when I joined the Unification Church of Japan - Part 5

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President Niwano of Rishokoseikai was a very open-minded leader. He had founded and built the movement of 1.5 million members from scratch. Although he was a prominent Buddhist leader, he invited our charismatic Christian leader, Papa-san Choi, to introduce the Unification Movement to his 150 leaders. Furthermore, he decided to send the youth leaders of Rishokoseikai to be educated under this new Christian-style training. Forty youth leaders were chosen from all over the nation (mainly the Kanto/Tokyo area). They arrived at the Koseikai Headquarters with their Buddhist sutras and so on. They came by bus to the Rittai Cultural Center. The forty leaders were not told where they were going or for what reason. As soon as they reached the facilities, they were given new "uniforms." They weren't allowed any contact with the outside as they had been asked to focus solely on the lectures for seven days. They were all serious and some of them were nervous. I was asked to give the first lecture and was also nervous.

The entire movement was excited by these epoch-making breakthroughs. The future of the movement depended upon these training sessions. Mr. Choi didn't say anything about the content of the lectures but it was obvious that he was concerned with every moment of progress. The people, however, were well-prepared and accepted the Principle of Creation and the Fall of Man very well. The Messiah lecture led them to the shocking realization of Jesus' life and they began to understand the significance of Christianity. Thus, they didn't have reason to oppose the Second Coming of the Messiah.

When the lecture progressed to the history section, however, some of the students began to worry about whether Mr. Niwano was the Messiah or not. Finally, after the lecturer introduced the Advent of the Messiah and the arrival of the Messianic Age, it ended. We finished with a fervent prayer which carried into a unison prayer. They, too, prayed fervently. Some pounded on the desks, some began to cry, others hit their own heads while others began to speak in tongues. The lecture room became a vortex of tears. This continued for at least an hour. The next day I found that two young brothers had shaved their heads like the penitent Buddhist monks.

This incident changed the whole atmosphere of the training session. We were intent and serious. The students gave up the idea that Mr. Niwano was the Messiah. Miss Setsuko Ogawa, whose nickname was "The Queen of the Fall of Man Lecture," was the next lecturer. Whenever she gave this lecture, people repented and drastically changed their lives. Her lecture series to the trainees was well-accepted. Although Mr. Choi did not say anything to us about their many future influential leaders: Mr. Oonuki (Daikan), Mr. Ishii, Ms. Oyamada, Mr. Yokoi, Mrs. Nada, Ms. Kajikuri and Mr. Hoshino.

Because of geographical distance and his busy schedule, Mr. Choi could come only once during the next forty-day training session. I was almost totally responsible, which caused me to be even more tense internally.

I was pretty confident in giving the lectures; the hardest part was giving the inspirational talks, such as after a meal or in the evening. I had no idea what the topic should be or how to present it. Although I tried so hard to inspire them, it did not work; the more I tried the worse it became. Some began to doze, even snore. My own coordinator dozed off and fell over. I was very sure everyone was just waiting for the speech to finish.

However, one night Mr. Choi came and attracted everyone's attention like a magnet. His speech was simple, easily understood, like a casual daily talk and yet profoundly instructive. Everyone was really inspired. When I saw this, I developed an inferiority complex. I got angry with myself. I began to take memos from his inspiration. I made small "inspiration notes," always keeping them in my pocket. If any new inspiration came from anyone, any book or any talk, including from myself, I wrote it down. I then rewrote it on my notes and studied it. When I had accumulated five or six such memos, I was able to inspire many trainees.

When the lecture series was over, almost the same phenomenon occurred as during the first forty-day training session. Although I did not see anyone shave his head, most of them made a tearful commitment to dedicate themselves to God.



*Participants sincerely thank their lecturers at the graduation ceremony of the 18th workshop at Toda*

*Training Center, July 1964*

For the concluding activity of this session, we street preached on the busiest street of Kominato City. We were about to begin street preaching team by team, when a huge storm started. There was lightning and thunder; then the rain came down very strongly. This, however, could not stop the burning hearts of the young people; rather, it fueled the fanaticism of the group of young converts. They jumped into the thunderstorm and began to preach. Stretching their hands out, they shouted to the people. They were preaching and crying out in tears: "The Kingdom is coming!"

From out of the rain, someone came and asked, "Do you mean that Christ has returned?" We said, "Yes!" He took a flyer and disappeared into the rain.

On the way back from street preaching, we took a train. During the onehour trip, they began to witness to the passengers. A fanatic atmosphere was created in the train: they went crazy! The train was in turmoil. The conductor soon found out what the trouble was, but he did not know what to do about it. I stood quietly in the background.

The third training session was an extended session from the previous one, with thirty-four people continuing to study. When the fourth session began, fifty-two new people attended. There was also another training session at Kosuga Jingu Shinto shrine. The real progress of the session I don't remember exactly, but I do recall the green rice field and the fragrance of young rice plants as we drove to Kosuga Jingu. It was such a hopeful and active period of the movement.

I began to feel I was a pretty good lecturer and could change peoples' lives. I was becoming proud and arrogant. My original mind was growing concerned about my internal situation. One day, a brother and a spiritual seer, Mr. Tanaka, came to talk with me. I was scared. When I met with him -privately, he mentioned, "I saw a coffin in which someone's white bones were laid. Many of those who joined the Unification Church later were passing by the coffin. Some looked into it and left with a sad face; some left with scornful sneers, and some paid no attention to it. Do you know who was in the coffin? It was you!" Then he left, saying no more.

For a time, I was spiritually crushed: it took many months until I could fully understand the reality of my own fallen nature. I had not been glorifying God. My concern had been my own reputation.

Around that time Mr. Choi called for two kick-off conventions: one for the Unification Church, and the other for all members, including those who came from the Rishokosekai.

President Niwano attended the second convention entitled "The Convention of the World Youth." It was held at the headquarters of the Rishokosekai. On July 3rd, he was welcomed with fanatic applause by two or three hundred enthusiastic young people who were a mixture of the original Unification Church members and the newly-joined converts from the Rishokosekai. It was the most uplifting effervescence for us.

However, something happened then between the Unification Church and the Rishokosekai. By July 11th, no more youth leaders came to us and the Rishokosekai facilities were no longer available.