



Toshihiro Kimura (pseudonym), a man in his 50s from the Chugoku region

Forced by his father to forfeit his inheritance

Interviewer : Hello, Mr. Kimura. Nice to meet you today.

I heard that you dealt with some familial issues. What did your parents originally think about your faith in the Family Federation?

Kimura : I started working after I graduated from high school, and soon after that, I came across the Unification Principle. I was moved by its well-reasoned arguments, as well as the philosophy and activities of the Family Federation, which was based on living for the sake of others, for the country, and for the world, so I joined in the early 1980s. I told my parents that I was attending the Unification Church (Family Federation) after I joined, but they seemed to have a distrust of this new religion from the beginning. Some time after that, I was almost kidnapped and confined in order to make me renounce my faith.

One day, I finished attending a lecture on the Unification Principle at church, and on my way home, a group of about seven or eight men, including my father and uncle,

surrounded me and suddenly forced me into a car. I resisted the best I could, but I couldn't get away. I think the car belonged to my uncle. I didn't know where we were going, but when they stopped for a short break, I jumped out of the car and ran away.

After that incident, my parents came to the church several times to try to bring me back to their home, which was in another prefecture. At the suggestion of one of the then-staff members of the church, I went back to my parents' house to talk things out with them. My parents made me read a book written by an anti-Unificationist who criticized the church, but I told them that I would continue to attend the church because I had not changed my mind, so we settled the matter as if we had made peace.

However, I can't say my relationship with my parents was normal after that, and they always seemed distrustful towards me. Therefore, I gradually tried to rebuild their trust by contacting them frequently, or taking my wife back home with me, and taking our children to them after they were born.

Until my mother's death in 2021, my wife and I took the most time, among my siblings, to visit my parents in order to take care of them and help them out. Therefore, my father came to trust us. Shortly before my mother passed away, my father repeatedly asked me if we would come back (home), and he even wrote a letter to my wife and I saying, "This house will be passed down to Toshihiro Kimura (not his real name)."

Interviewer : How has your relationship with your parents deteriorated since the incident in July 2022?

Kimura : The mainstream media bashing the Family Federation only intensified, and my father's opinion of my wife and I deteriorated dramatically. Whenever I called my father, he would tell me that I did not have to come back or even return home.

My father also told me that he did not want me to come to the first anniversary of my mother's death, but I managed to get permission, and I attended. When I returned home, I found a postcard on my father's desk from a member of the Japanese Communist Party, which my father had never supported in any way. And my father wrote, "Quit the church! Even if I tell you to quit, you're brainwashed anyway, so there's

nothing I can do about it!" He was so insistent that no matter what I said to him, it was useless, and he revealed his disbelief in me.

The situation got worse at the time of the third anniversary of my mother's death in 2023. Up until then, my father told us not to attend the memorial services, but this time, he contacted us and told us to be sure and come to the service together. Because of that, I felt a little uneasy, but we went anyway. After the memorial service finished and the priest had left, my wife and I were surrounded by about seven relatives, including my father, two of my brothers, my aunt, and my aunt's husband. They all pressed us and said, "We don't know what you're going to do because you are part of an anti-social group. If you aren't going to sever ties with us, sign this document pledging you will forfeit (your father's) inheritance!" The document was handwritten by my father, and I had to fill out my name and address. My wife was also terrified, and we couldn't leave until we signed it, so we reluctantly signed the document.

Interviewer : So that's how it happened. How is your relationship with your father after that?

Kimura : I call my father from time to time to ask how he's doing, but the conversations always become one-sided where he criticizes our faith. It doesn't look like our relationship will improve anytime soon.

Earlier this year (2024), I visited my father, who lives alone, and asked him again about the document I signed on the third anniversary of my mother's death. We talked about it a lot, but it seemed unmistakable that my father made me sign the forfeiture because of my religious belief. My father's property was mainly his house and land, but he seemed to be concerned that if I inherited it, it would be used as a base for the Unification Church.

I never once mentioned that I wanted to inherit the house or land; I was going to leave it to my father. Nor did I ever think of using it as a base of operations for the Family Federation. My father's story came from his own imagination, and I was surprised at how far removed from reality it was. I had genuinely taken care of my mother and helped my father as a son, but now my father says to me, "You must have had some sort of ulterior motive!" I am really shocked that the parent-child relationship we had

built up was destroyed so quickly; this is much more shocking than the inheritance issue. My wife is also saddened by this fact.

By the way, my father always watches the mainstream media, especially tabloid shows, and often believes the biased content of the programs. When I tell him about my experiences in the church or at home, he says, "No, that's not what the TV says," and he doesn't listen to me at all. For example, some of my children have inherited the faith and some have not, but as a parent, I treat every child the same. However, my father has no doubt in his mind that "all second-generation children are victims of their parents," and blamed my wife and me.

I would like the mainstream media to be fair in their reporting. I am not opposed to them featuring the voices of former believers in their TV programs, but I would like them to feature the voices of current believers who are living their lives of faith with gratitude just as much. I believe we must make an effort to continue to speak out and not give up.

Interviewer : We'll pray that the relationship between you and your father will be restored as soon as possible. Thank you for sharing your story with us.