



Yoko Nakata (pseudonym), a woman in her 60s from the Tokyo metropolitan area

Media reports worsened relationship with daughter, leading to her suicide

Interviewer : Thank you for agreeing to the interview today. First of all, can you tell us what year you joined the Family Federation, Ms. Nakata (not her real name)?

Nakata : I joined in 2001. I was first introduced to the Unification Principle in 1988. When I heard about the “three stages of life” in the Unification Principle, namely life in the womb, life on earth, and life in heaven (spiritual world), I thought, “This is what I have been looking for,” and I began to study it in earnest. The Unification Principle was interesting, and I was happy to attend their lectures because I wanted to hear the rest as soon as possible. Then, to make a long story short, I officially joined in 2001.

Interviewer : I see. May I ask you to tell us about what happened to you after 2022?

Nakata : At the end of July 2022, my daughter, who was living with me, took her life. She was in her late 20s. Ever since she was a child, she was not very strong mentally

and carried a lot of stress in her relationships. That affected her health and she suffered from physical ailments because of that. She stopped going to school in middle school and did not even go to high school, but later took an exam and she was able to get her high school diploma. She also went to a psychotherapist for a long time. After becoming an adult, she did several part time jobs, but when she faced problems in human relationships, her hands would chap and she would get the hives. Each time she quit her job, the hives went away. This kept repeating.

My daughter was happy to come with me when I invited her to church at an early age. Of my three children, she was the most involved in church events. My husband was not a member, and my daughter did not go to church as much after she became an adult, but she helped out when there were church events and went with me to Cheongpyeong, Korea (a holy place for the Family Federation) every year.

However, after the incident with former Prime Minister Abe on July 8, 2022, media reports on TV or online were very critical of the Family Federation, and my daughter watched the reports all the time at home. I was very worried about her because she had just quit her job due to stress in her relationships at work, and she was very weak mentally at that time.

After the July 8 incident, my daughter once asked me in a very strong tone of voice, "How much are you in debt?!" I had borrowed a little money for my parents' funeral, but I told her that there was nothing to worry about. She never asked me (about my finances) after that. There was also a time when I was chatting with a neighbor, who is also a church member, at the front door my house. My daughter slammed the door to her room so loudly we could hear it throughout the house.

Then, in late July, my daughter committed suicide at home. When I opened the message app on her phone, I found that in one of the exchanges with her best friend, she said things like, "My mother is in debt because she donates to the Unification Church," or "(Is my mother) trying to use me?" It was as if she didn't trust me. It was really heartbreaking when I read that.

Interviewer : That must have been very tough for you.

Nakata : My daughter, who enjoyed going to church the most among my children, did not have any ill will towards the church before the events of 2022, that I know of. She attended church events and workshops several times a year and seemed to find peace of mind in learning things from the church and interacting with church members.

Since the (Abe) incident, I believe that my daughter's mind was driven into a corner from all of the one-sided claims from former believers, who were filled with strong feelings of resentment towards the church, and I believe she was affected by that. I am filled with a lot of heartache at the moment, but as for me, I believe that all I can do is to live each day to the fullest, even on behalf of my daughter.

Interviewer : Lastly, please tell us how you feel now.

Nakata : When I look back and read the messages the owner had sent me, they take me back to those days and it makes me feel sick. I am rather strong-minded, and I continued to work at my new job after this incident, but I think there are many people who hesitate to talk to someone or hold back and don't speak up when something similar occurs to them. Even if they're not fired like I was, I worry that more and more people are being bullied at work or even at school because of their religious beliefs.

Interviewer : Thank you for the interview today.



A photo taken in Cheongpyeong, Korea with her young daughter (courtesy of Ms. Nakata).