

Our Displeasing Neighbors: Tragedies of Women “Saved” from the Unification Church

by Kazuhiro Yonemoto (407 pages) Joho Center Publishing (6/29/08)



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Review:

The Unification Church, founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon of Korea, has made a lot of fuss through the media with their international wedding ceremonies and “spiritual sales”. A few left-wing lawyers and Christian ministers have carried over 4,000 cases of kidnapping to coercively convert followers of the church known as “deprogramming” of Unification Church members.

The author points out the problems of the Unification Church, but he indicates that it still can’t justify kidnapping its members to abandon their faith. This book talks about the “deprogramming” or kidnapping and coercively converting others from a faith one don’t like, which is still being practiced by some Christian ministers in Japan. The highlight of this book is the frank confessions of former members, who were “successfully saved” from the Unification Church, according to their family members and the ministers. Never before has there been such a book until now.

For Asako Shukuya, her skin disorder worsened after being released from confinement, and now she would just stay in her apartment all the time.

Asako would suffer from depression for most of the day, and she has said, “If something happens, my head would start spinning really fast and it wouldn’t stop.” Psychiatrists call these symptoms Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) where the brain gets overly agitated. Besides her skin disorder and PTSD, she suffered from nausea, nightmares, irregular heartbeats (palpitations), and insomnia amongst other symptoms, and she has complained how these have been “very painful.”

Two other friends of hers have also suffered from similar symptoms.

Misa Takasu (age 36) also suffers from depression. However when she has free time, she would have flashbacks of the “disturbing past”, so she would overwork herself by working as a temporary worker in an office during the days, and waiting in a Japanese restaurant at night just to get her mind off.

But still, she has not been able to sleep well. Even after taking sleeping pills, she would wake up after 2 or 3 hours. There were also days where she would go to work half asleep because of the effects of the sleeping pills. (Currently, she is unemployed.)

Yumi Nakajima (age 41) has been divorced and is raising her two children, who attend elementary school and kindergarten, but has not been able to land a job due to her cases of depression and is receiving welfare. Her children go to school from an custody institution. She has said she would confide to alcohol, and currently suffers from bulimia. She would sometimes even have seizures from panic attacks.

These three suffer from mental disorders, and their diagnosis all fall under the name Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – mental stress caused after external harm or injury. They are taking over 10 different types of drugs such as sleeping pills, sedatives, and anti-depressants as well as receiving psychiatric treatment.

The following is Asako’s physicians reply to questions from the author.

“Asako’s case differs from other cases because the cause of her disorder was not a simple one time event, but continuous and repeated traumatic experiences over a long period of time in her confinement has brought a more severe case of ‘complex PTSD.’”

All three were suddenly abducted and held in confinement by their own parents, and after receiving continual coercion over a long period of time, it was inevitable that they leave (the church). These were shocking experiences that their doctor explained, “Their freedom of faith was forcibly taken away from them through continuous coercion.”

A work that will sound the alarm in Japanese society, it has painted the tragedies of abduction, confinement and forced conversion (deprogramming) by collecting the lives and voices of former followers of the Unification Church.