

429 | Cuppa Joe | Historic Sites Foundation Fall 2021 Lecture Series | Life and Legacy of Apostle Kisuke Sekine  
Project Zion Podcast

**Josh Mangelson 00:17**

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

**Jewell Bolton 00:27**

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. This is Cuppa Joe where we explore restoration history. And I'm your host, Karin Peter. Today's episode is a collaboration with Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation as we interview the lecturers from the 2021, uh, Historic Sites Fall Lecture Series which is already in progress. And, uh, the lecture that we're talking about today, the, the recording for it is already up on the [historicsitesfoundation.org](https://www.historicsitesfoundation.org) website. So, please go there and you can listen to that lecture in full. Today we're going to be hearing from the lecturers who presented The Life and Legacy of Apostle Sekine. Apostle Sekine from Japan was the first Asian Apostle ordained at the World Conference of 1980. He was a courageous pioneer on our journey to be truly an international church and our guests to talk about Apostle Sekine today are Phil Caswell and Andrew Bolton and Jewell Bolton has graciously agreed to participate in our conversation, too. Jewell, did you participate in the lecture? No, I did not. (Oh, so) that's why I said I've only got a little tiny thing to say. So, we are privileged today to have Jewel Bolton with us as well. And Darlene Caswell is in the background, uh, there with Phil Caswell, so I'm hoping we might hear from her as well. So, Phil and Darlene and their family served the church in Seoul, South Korea for 11 years. And during this time, he got to know Brother Sekine and later they were colleagues in the Council of Twelve Apostles together. So, welcome to Project Zion Podcast, Phil.

**Phil Caswell 02:26**

Thank you, Karin.

**Jewell Bolton 02:28**

It's really good to have you here and to see you. You're in Blue Springs, Missouri today, and I hope it's been a good afternoon for you so far. (Good.) So, also, um, is our co-lecturer Andrew Bolton and Jewel Bolton who are joining us from England. (Yes.) Okay. Excellent. And they were both asked by Brother Sekine then Apostle of the church in Asia to serve the church's school in Tokyo. And this began a friendship with Brother and Sister Sekine that continued until his passing. Andrew later became the Apostle for Asia. And that was something that would not have been possible without Apostle Sekine's mentorship. Andrew's been a guest on Project Zion before as Jewel has as well. And we are grateful to have you both here with us. So, welcome to Project Zion Podcast.

**Andrew Bolton 03:31**

Thank you.

**Jewell Bolton** 03:33

So, uh, Phil, I want to begin with you and ask you to tell us a bit about Apostle Sekine before he was a member of the Council of Twelve. So, can you tell us a bit about his story?

**Phil Caswell** 03:46

Sure. Thank you. I met Kiskeye Sekine-san in, at Graceland in the mid 1950s. From that introduction, a friendship developed and continued throughout most of five decades. Our relationship was deep and personal and characterized by respect and affection. This didn't happen, uh, immediately, of course, but grew and matured over time. When our family was assigned to Korea, several factors combined to increase our opportunities to interact. A major decision, decision for the church to open the work in the Orient was supported by Apostle Charles Neff's family move to Tokyo. The team recruited several young men, including Sekine-san, Hiroshi Hamada-san, Brother Matsushita to continue the work. The Gary Beebe and Ron Yager families also were part of the early team. After a time, Brother Neff wanted to expand the church presence to Okinawa, and asked Sekine-san to lead the effort. My understanding was that he was reluctant to go. But he and his family did move and established a church presence including a kindergarten which is still flourishing. It is no small task for an outsider to establish roots like his family demonstrated. They were outsiders in the sense that they were long term residents in Tokyo and Okinawa was a different country and a different cultural area. He started his efforts by answering an advertisement in the newspaper, an announcement about a meeting of the Boy Scouts. He showed up early unannounced and asked if he could help. I think he did some janitorial work that night. It continued, he continued to show up before the scouts and showed, uh, he wanted to help them any way he could. The amazing thing to me is that over time, he qualified as a trainer of leaders for the scouts in Okinawa. Along the way, he met the Crown Prince who was involved with the Sea Scouts. Someone told me that he and the Crown Prince became friends and Sekine was welcome to visit any time he was in Tokyo. We had other encounters in the Asia Pacific conferences that were held regularly. He was friendly, considerate of others, and participated confidently in discussions. He was not a dominator, but he knew how to collaborate. The Japan Mission arranged for a professional to translate the Book of Mormon. And my understanding is that the mission team, mentioned earlier, edited the work done. I do not have first hand knowledge of the usage or role of this scripture in Japan. But I do remember a conversation with the senior members of the Tokyo congregation. I asked what they thought about the book. Their only reply was, We don't like war. This may suggest one isolated reply to the question or may point out one of the issues that affects the acceptance of this scripture in Japan. Brother Neff was a mentor to all of us. And the time came when he wanted to invite Sekines, why am I having trouble with this? We always called him Sekine-san and without the san most of the time, but we were good friends and he didn't consider it as, uh, being offensive. Thank goodness. We invited Brother Sekine to visit Korea to talk it over. He and I had several days to eat kimchi, look around Seoul, and talk about cultural challenges. Here's an example of one time he showed his skills and expertise. I wanted to introduce him to four young men who were teaching at our school in Seoul, school for youth. It involved four Koreans, the teachers, a Japanese national, and a white foreigner, me. The teachers were having a good time until they spotted Sekine-san and I coming through the door. It got quiet immediately. And the atmosphere was tense. Sekine couldn't talk to the men in English. They would consider that to be an insult. And they would be angry if he spoke to them in Japanese. All of us knew the memories of war and domination and unresolved conflicts between Korea

and Japan. With a slight turn of his body, he whispered to me, Please tell these men that he has heard of the good service they are providing to those students. It is a good example of respect and service to all of us. He quick, his quick response changed the atmosphere entirely and we had a good conversation together. Brother Sekine did accept appointment. But added to this, like I just referred to, go deep and do not soften quickly. His command of English was legendary. Uh, I didn't see this, uh, particularly at, uh, Graceland, but this was, uh, after Graceland, especially after he, uh, was ordained to the Council. But this was a result of continual study and practice. I heard of him tell of a time at Graceland a long time after we'd finished our study there, that he tried to learn 50 new words a day to increase his vocabulary--50 words a day. I don't know if any of you have studied, uh, in another language, but to me, and I had some modest, uh, exposure and modest successes in speaking Korean, 50 is several times more than I had the capacity to absorb. One little aside, I remember in just a casual conversation with him one afternoon, he was talking about hosting, uh, several of his friends from, uh, Japan and other citizens that he'd met in the US. He had just purchased a car. And he said, Honestly, we were all of one accord. Think about that. We were all in one accord. That's a, a Honda. You know, that's, that's kind of a stretch.

**Karin Peter** 11:54

For our, for our listener base, I'm not sure, um, that Accords are even made now. So, our listener base, if you, if you're not sure, that is a car joke. So, thank you, Phil, for that.

**Phil Caswell** 12:10

Well, this is ancient history. I also remember an incident in Okinawa. He and I were on a hilltop on the north point of the island. The view was magnificent. The site was a memorial to all the Japanese soldiers who died during the Second World War. This was a functional equivalent to Arlington Cemetery. I asked him if he would point out the province that included his home area. He looked at me and said, You want to see the honorarium to a barbarian? Absolutely not. That never crossed my mind. Come on, let's get out of here. But he replied to me and smiled, Uh, I wasn't serious. I was just kidding. There is potential for genuine misunderstandings when one works across cultures. But my friendship with him and a few others has helped expand my perception and desires to search deeper and identify attitudes and principles that reflect divine characteristics. Our friendship also laid bare some of my biases. That's not a very pleasant exercise. But it is worth working at to strengthen relationships. Now there are more, uh, stories, but I'm very much aware that, uh, a comment by Brother Neff reminded me at a, uh, at a gathering of people, uh, at, uh, at Graceland in a much later time, he said, You know, Caswell has lots of stories and some of them are true. But I've tried to point out a few that are true today.

**Karin Peter** 14:12

I appreciate that, Phil. So, um, I was going to ask you more, to talk a little bit more about the church in Asia, but something you said really caught my attention. When you were talking about the, the Book of Mormon and how that was received in the church in Japan and the comment that we don't like war. Um, the, the experience of war in Asia colored Apostle Sekine's, uh, tenure in the Council of Twelve and his travels throughout Asia. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Phil Caswell 14:57**

I do not know the details of, uh, that circumstance. It, you know, the, Sekine was referred to, I was aware, he referred to as the pagan Apostle. And I never heard him say anything about that abuse, and that, that is serious, uh, flagrant a, abuse. It is certainly not true. Um, I consider him to be a gifted, mature, Japanese disciple. He taught me respect for other cultures. Uh, we had that privilege of meeting others, uh, in a variety of, uh, places. And it, what it has done is expand my understanding and perception that, you know, frankly, it is God that made us all. And the gospel is, uh, for others. We do not have the final, complete, inerrant description of the gospel. We see in part, like Paul mentioned, um, and that is a humbling thing. But it helps, I think, even in this time of chaos that is all around it. I, I don't watch the news as much as I used to because of that fact. But what this has done was remind me of a conversation I had with an Orthodox Jew who was my boss in my first job. Uh, it was a little town in southern, uh, Iowa. I was hired as a janitor and cleaned up every night, washed the windows, uh, did the stock and so on. And in private one time, ( . . . ), that was his name, said, Philip, I want you to look in a mirror, you'll notice that you have two ears and one mouth. Why don't you try to function in that relationship? Now that, that was not particularly funny to me, uh, but it wasn't as damaging as, uh, as it could have been because ( . . . ) helped, uh, an early receptivity to other faithful people. And he was a faithful Jew even though his business prohibited him from taking Saturday's off because that was the prime day for shopping for all of those residents. But Sekine, uh, helped me, uh, a lot. It continues to inform me and, uh, uh, help to mold my perception.

**Andrew Bolton 18:31**

I can say a little bit about the peace background in Japan if that's helpful. (Please do. Yes.) So, um, so after World War Two, there was a revulsion against war in Japan. It was a discrediting of the military government that had held power, uh, through 1945. Of course, the firebombing of Tokyo was dreadful. Perhaps 1000s, hundreds of 1000s of people died. The dropping of the atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of course. Dreadful. I mean, this is against just war criteria. The, the bombing of, deliberate bombing of, uh, of civilians. And, so, there's this revulsion against war and the United States imposes a peace constitution on Japan. But then the Japanese grab hold of that and any attempt even now to revise the peace constitution is met with resistance. So, when, uh, the, the sister in Tokyo said to Phil, we don't like war, that's an expression of that. And then I think the other thing is that, uh, there's Shintoism, which is the nationalist, uh, religion, uh, and then there's Buddhism, which is a non-violent religion. So, there's these two forces in the culture going, and, so, I think Brother Sekine identified more with the Buddhist part, the non-violent part of his culture.

**Karin Peter 20:08**

Thank you. And that's helpful to understand the, um, the context of that comment. Um, Phil, I want to, um, to ask a little bit about Apostle Sekine's experience in the Council of Twelve. He was the first Asian Apostle. Um, you made reference to how he was referred to in the life of the church. What was his experience in the Council like?

**Phil Caswell 20:39**

He would be a better, uh, speaker about that than I. Uh, but, uh, we were there on a regular basis, uh, in Council and, uh, served on committees as well, one of which was, uh, Issues and Events, uh, Committee. And there were, you know, 3, 4, 4 of us there. But I saw Sekine was very, uh, much aware

of other people. He was a collaborator. He was a very good listener, in my experience, both in those formal meetings, as, uh, as well. He was not, uh, uh limited. I mean, he didn't appear to have any, uh, limitations of the kind of con, concepts or explanations or arguments that he would make. Uh, but it was a very mature, uh, uh approach. And he had, uh, respect, uh, from all of us. He, like I said, he was a collaborator not a dominator.

**Karin Peter** 22:04

So, Phil, is there anything from his ministry that has stayed with you through the years or affected your own, uh, ministry and, and discipleship?

**Phil Caswell** 22:16

Sure. You bet. I have a, a deeper understanding and respect and a sense of awe about the divine. I've come to accept that God has many names and all of which are culturally influenced. So, there's every reason for us to be, for me, to be open to other perceptions or understandings about the divine than I now possess. I think I've been influenced, uh, in a continuing way, partly, uh, with our most recent interaction with the Olive Branch Forum that, uh, Brother Andrew has, uh, initiated and chaired and led with real, uh, ability to seek bridges and understandings with the Restorationists. And I just recently had a, had a luncheon with, uh, one of the leaders of the Restorationists. And I was very much aware of, of a connection because of our meeting today and, and others with Andrew, that we are one family. Ideally, we got a long ways to go, and especially when I compare this with the chaos, absolute chaos, that we are experiencing as a nation, it is affecting every church that I'm familiar with, including ours, but I also, uh, have been, uh, encouraged to, uh, look more deeply to identify, uh, circles of influence, and that applies to any of us, to identify circles of influence and try to expand that to be willing to share insights as well as, uh, listen to alternative insights, uh, of others. And I think this has great potential for us as a movement. And this is not the beginning of that for us. We've had, uh, World Council of Churches membership, we've had interactions, uh, that, personal ones, uh, of other colleagues in the Council, uh, in terms of prison ministry and, uh, World Mission, uh, ministry as well. It has, uh, I have seen a lot of examples of this. But I also want to mention something that is very personal to me. And that is, how grateful I am for Darlene and her, uh, she's my beloved companion. We are coming up to our 60th, uh, anniversary and, uh, are looking forward to that even making a few, few plans and so on. But I can remember one time, a very difficult time for me and for our family, uh, while we were in Korea. And I told Darlene one night, I said, You know, I think that I might resign. Now, that's, that's a pretty, uh, pretty tough, uh, set of words. And, but her reply was, without hesitation, Well, think it through. Whatever you decide, know that I will stand with you. Now, that's priceless. Now, I think that this is not just an isolated event, but it's also in a part of this whole thing about the gospel, a sense of mission and purpose, quality relationships, and those that are related, uh, to our lifelong learning experience and a desire to be, uh, disciples.

**Karin Peter** 27:37

Thank you, Phil, for sharing that and for sharing a tender personal moment as well. I want to, uh, visit a bit and hear from, uh, Andrew and Jewel. You both served in Asia under Sekine's, uh, leadership. So, would you tell us about that experience?

**Andrew Bolton 28:01**

So, uh, it's around 1981 when, uh, we applied for World Church, uh, employment from Britain and, uh, somebody had suggested I should apply and I fought it for six months and then yielded. So, anyway, we were turned down, uh, but Brother Sekine, in those days appointee employment applications went before the Joint Council, which included the Council of Twelve. So, Brother Sekine saw our application and he thought we will be ideally suited for teaching in the churches school in Tokyo. So, he encouraged us to, to accept that invitation. While I was hesitant, Jewel was gung ho and eventually Jewel won on that. She was, she was, we were, I was teaching in, near Oxford, England at the time. And so after six weeks, I said yes, so we went to Japan. And, uh, that was a gift that ( . . . ) we made lifelong friendships that are still there--the Yamatas, Matsushitas, Chica-san, teachers at the nursery school, and other friends, and, uh, that first March when we arrived, because the school year starts in April, uh, there is my birthday at the end of the month and they always celebrate birthdays with, with, with wonderful cake with a strawberry on top. I, I, lots of strawberries and so it's delicious cake. I like cake and this was delicious. And so, Yamata sat, sensei, the, Sister Yamata made a card welcoming us and celebrating my birthday and said, We Japanese and British have three things in common. One, we're an island people. Two, we have monarchy, and, uh, three, we drink tea. We're a tea drinking culture. That made me feel very welcome. Uh, so, that, so, that those friendships, uh, that still continue, were a gift. The second gift was that we encountered a culture so very different from my British culture, from European culture, from Western culture. For instance, in Japanese culture, you don't have an idea of one God. In Western culture, even the atheists have this idea which they're rejecting. And it took me 18 months to believe Brother Yamata was telling the truth about this. So, yeah, I'm a slow learner. Um, and also we encountered, uh, uh, other things that Japanese people were really good at. They're really good at growing chrysanthemums. I thought my dad was really, really good at growing chrysanthemums. But in Japan, they beat him hard, uh, with varieties and forms I've never seen. So, I was in, I was awed by that. So, the second gift he gives us is to become aware that we're Westerners. And there's other ways of looking at the world. Um, and then, uh, the third gift was that we were employed by the church after those two years, because Brother Sekine, um, sponsored us and supported us. So, in August 1984, we turned up for training, uh, the Master of Arts in Religion, academically I did very well, uh, but I also spoke out about some things that I was unhappy and the group was unhappy about. Uh, I was too interested in poverty and peace and at the end of 10 months, I was fired. Uh, so that was a shock. In Britain, I wouldn't have been fired. Um, um, in Japan, we were culturally sensitive. But in the United States, I didn't understand that the US culture does not have the concept, was not comfortable with the concept of loyal opposition. That got me into big trouble. But it's in this time of great difficulty that Brother Sekine showed his true character. I was a nobody. I messed up. But he stood up for me, argued that people who made the decision to fire me should change their mind. That included a member of the Presidency. It wasn't, his support was unexpected. He didn't need to do that because I was a nobody. But he was so totally honorable in all his dealings. And he comes from a ( . . . ) culture like the British do. And for him to stand up in the Joint Council and say, You've made the wrong decision, was really brave, out of, way out of his comfort zone I think. I love that I could trust him deeper.

**Karin Peter 33:12**

Thank you for sharing that, um, Andrew. It gives us, uh, some illumination into his, uh, character. And also, uh, brings up the cultural divide, um, in the church that a lot of Americans are still, um, less than aware of, um, even with, even the relationship between people who speak the same or similar language. So, those from, uh, Great Britain, that the concept of loyal opposition is really difficult in American culture in the church culture, however,

**Andrew Bolton 33:53**

I know. Isn't that good?

**Karin Peter 33:54**

We've, we've completely changed. Yes, absolutely. So, with our faithful disagreement policy you can see the influence of our sisters and brothers from places other than the United States. So, thank you for that. Uh, you and all your colleagues who have helped us understand that more effectively. So, when a, a lot of different, uh, topics have been kind of touched upon as you've shared here and your experience in the school, um, it was you and, and Jewel who served, um, together. And so when we talk about Apostle Sekine, we're, we're not talking about his ministry alone, but his wife participated in ministry and leadership. So, can you tell us a little bit about Sister Sekine?

**Andrew Bolton 34:49**

Yes, so Sister Sako, who, we didn't know her at this time when we first went to Japan because she's in Okinawa which is maybe 1000 miles away, uh, so we only met Brother Sekine. Um, but when I went into the Council of Twelve Apostles, one of my first duties was to go to Okinawa partly to see my old mentor, Brother Sekine, who was ill with cancer and in hospital and, and there I was able to meet his wife, Sako. Uh, so, I had a wonderful encounter with her. So, let me tell you about account, encounter then tell me, tell something about their legacy. So, uh, it was their 50th anniversary of being at Graceland. And so they couldn't go because Brother Sekine was ill. And, so, I was with Jac Kirkpatrick and he brought materials from the 50th anniversary reunion at Graceland for, um, both Sekine, both Sekines. Now, uh, uh, Kisuke Sekine-san went to Graceland in 1953. And he persuaded Sako, his girlfriend, to join him. So, this is an amazing story. She sails by herself from, uh, from Japan to San Francisco unaccompanied, uh, when, this 10 years after the war, and then goes on a train, on trains from San Francisco to, uh, this small little town called Lamoni, Iowa. Right? And she arrives in January. I mean, what an awful month to arrive in Lamoni. (Great.) I mean, for our listeners, Lamoni is very cold. (. . .). So, she arrives at the station and Brother Sekine goes to meet his beloved. I mean, I can't believe that, uh, Sako's parents let her do this. Uh, but maybe they, uh, trusted her and appreciated her maturity. So, he went to pick her up and meanwhile, Brother Cheville, um, a teacher, a very fine teacher at Graceland, a giant, wonderful hymn writer and singer, leader, uh, organized a choir. And they sang in Christ There is No East or West. And, Sako broke down, as I'm being emotional about it. It was a wonderful hymn that meant something to me already. Uh, but to her, that hospitality, that welcome, she experienced the gospel through Roy Cheville's organizing of that choir as an affirmation of his humanity and the humanity of those that greeted her? She got the gospel, I think, in that moment. (Yeah.) So, they were married. They graduated two years later. They married, uh, had two children. Uh, and, uh, Phil has mentioned that they were sent to Okinawa for two years. That was the deal in 1963. And it became their life work because they never moved out. And they set up Zion Kindergarten in Okinawa.

It's still going. And their daughter, Michiyo, is the principal now, ( . . . ) we should say. So, both Sekines were really good educators. I'm a teacher, uh, by profession. They're better than me in terms of their insight and compassion for children. So, I better let Jewell say a little bit about his treatment ( . . . ) little boy Mathew at this point.

**Jewell Bolton 38:56**

Um, we were returning to the States, so, we're jumping forward. This is not in, in, uh, chronological order, but anyway, it just gives a sense of, um, Sekine Sensei's kindness and interest in small children. And, so, we're in the Central Professional Building at this time because that's where the headquarters are, the big wigs in the church were at that time in Independence. Um, and we are waiting for the elevator to come up and, because we were going to go down, we'd already talked to people. This is Andrew, myself, Matthew who's walking and who is three, and, um, uh, I have Baby David. Okay. So, we're waiting for the elevator and then we hear the ping and the door opens and it's Sekine Sensei on his own. He comes through. He sees us. And we all greet him in Japanese and, and bow at the same time and Matthew bows as well. And then instantly, before talking to us, Sekine Sensei talks to Matthew in Japanese. They have a conversation, which I don't, I don't know what they said, you know, um, because our limited Japanese was, was very small. Anyway, um, so the two of them are speaking in Japanese and Matthew's fluent at this time because he's lived in Japan. And, and then, then Sekine Sensei looks up at us, Andrew and I, and says, He speaks with a Tokyo accent, not a southern accent. And I hadn't heard that before. And it just struck me as funny. And, of course, you know, in the States, you have a northern accent and a southern accent, you have all kinds of accents. Same in, in Britain, you know, their accents are all different. So, he picked that up and he's speaking in English to us saying, He really is fluent in, uh, Tokyo Japanese. And, um, so, at this point, Matthew understands that Sekine Sensei can speak English. So, from that point on, Matthew speaks English, too.

**Karin Peter 41:39**

Because he obviously learned his Japanese from Sekine, yeah. Well, that's marvelous.

**Jewell Bolton 41:46**

So, anyway, that, that was just a, it was the kindness and the importance of children. He spoke first to Matthew. So, it was lovely. Yeah. (Yes. And so,)

**Andrew Bolton 41:59**

Teachers in Okinawa who knew Brother Sekine spoke about his support, mentoring of them as teachers, his insight in child psychology, um, his compassion for children, his care that their spirit not be damaged. Uh, so they were first class teachers and Sako Sensei, during my time, when, uh, received an award as an outstanding educator, and she's in her 70s, late 70s at this time, still involved in the school.

**Karin Peter 42:33**

And still have a legacy with the school. (Yes.) Yeah.



**Andrew Bolton** 42:37

Yet, I think, uh, that tucked away in Okinawa and forgotten in some ways. Um, so she didn't receive the affirmation and recognition perhaps in the church that she should have done. Um, so, she is a, a, an unsung hero in this story.

**Karin Peter** 42:59

Thank you. We try to, um, highlight the stories of women in the story of the church, so, you've helped us do that here at Project Zion. Um, Andrew, you served as Apostle to, uh, Asia and in doing so, did you notice in your, uh, leadership there any connecting points with, uh, Sekine's ministry and leadership?

**Andrew Bolton** 43:21

So, I thought about this. It's a good question. So, I think the mentoring, he mentored me. When, uh, I went to see him when he was in hospital in 2007 just after I'd been a day, he had the booklets for me. He had articles for me to read. He was still my mentor. And he's so pleased about my new role. For life, we're connected. Uh, I learned, I, I already knew this, but he reinforced honesty, truthfulness and being honorable with people. He was caught by the gospel. And I am, too. And we both come from old cultures. He from Japan, where we're talking about more than 2000 years of history. And Britain, too. And Americans didn't have all the answers. And we knew, we know that as an outsider. We have things to contribute also from our culture. Um, so, both of us were non-Americans. Both of us were out, others were outsiders in terms of the church, but I have to say that I had it a lot easier than he did. I mean, I spoke native English. Um, uh, I came from the land of F. Henry Edwards, uh, uh, Will Timms, Arthur Oakman, uh, Harry Black--giants of ministry in the church, well known to people in the States. So, I came with an expectancy that I, I, e, even if I'm not them, I would still be worthwhile listening to. And, and we've been, America and Britain, had been on the same side in two world wars and wars since. Uh, Brother Sekine didn't have any of that. So, he had a much harder journey than I did. Um, both of us came from nations with violent colonizing histories. So, Phil's already alluded to relationships in Korea with Japanese. Um, I, uh, I had to deal with the stereotype that people easily pushed on me of being a colonizing Brit in India, for instance. So, we were affected and easily stereotyped because of our national histories, even though, uh, we both rejected that, nevertheless, we were easily stereotyped. I learned in Japan that little children are cultural bridge builders. So, let me explain a little story of that. So, I'm big and hairy. I'm a bit scary for Japanese people, by size and hairiness, right? Um, but I had Matthew as a little boy in my arms or in a push chair or walking alongside me or in the bike seat. And because this little boy was not afraid of me and I was being dad. Um, that was a bridge builder with Japanese people, made me less scary. And I remember watching one day in the park, a Japanese old enough to be a father, watching Matthew and I saw the dad in him and that was a humanizing thing. So, so I think, uh, focusing on children is a kingdom thing and Brother Sekine got that. And I learned that children, uh, are very important bridges of peace between people. They bring out compassion in us.

**Karin Peter** 47:03

So, through your, um, life and ministry and leadership in Community of Christ, you have traveled many places around the globe. What do you notice maybe one of the most significant pieces or maybe the most significant impact Sekine's ministry had on our global expression of the church today?

**Andrew Bolton 47:27**

So, it's again, a really good question. Thank you. So, the first thing I would say is I've worked and lived abroad 25 years in four different countries. So, what I know now is that I don't know. I don't know that I get another culture. So, that's a very helpful learning position, but it means I'm not an expert. Um, Brother Sekine mastered English. He's the first non-Caucasian Apostle, is the first non-European descendant Apostle. So, he plows a new furrow for the church. We tell Brother Sekine's story because he's a part of the major internationalization of the church. And he paid a heavy price, I think, in terms of racism and ignorance in the States. I wouldn't have given him that, him an assignment in the States. It was to crucify him, perhaps, in some ways. What I've learned wherever I've gone is that I found humans there with whom I can have authentic, deep relationships, not everybody, but some. So, the whole human race I discover is made in the image of God. The worth and dignity of every person is important. And, uh, I want to echo Paul's words that, from Galatians, chapter three, to baptism in Christ is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female. Traditional characters important 2000 years ago in the Mediterranean culture no longer applied in the church, and Apostle Sekine bore testimony of this like the Apostle Paul. In Christ was neither American nor Japanese, and so on. So, he's up there for, with me, for, for me with the Apostle Paul and pointing, bearing testimony about the worth of all persons from all cultures and backgrounds. And that's a wonderful gift for us.

**Karin Peter 49:38**

Yes. So, uh, Andrew, both you and Phil have shared, uh, story and narrative about Apostle Sekine's, um, gift of expansion to the church, of our expanded perception, of diversity, of divinity, and of our own, um, ignorance, if you will, and helped us become a better people as we continue our journey in Community of Christ. Before we bring our episode here to a close, are there any last thoughts or comments that you'd like to share? I'll start with you, Phil, to see if there's any last comment or thought you'd like to share about, uh, your lecture.

**Phil Caswell 50:25**

Well, thank you for the invitation to join this, uh, group. It's very, very worthwhile to remember, uh, our good friend and fellow disciple. And I'm, I have been reminded again, that a deep desire and need, uh, for me and all of us to seek brief, bridges and deeper perspectives in the gospel that point to one world under God, that seek to future in the cause of the kingdom. It's rooted in Christ, should include all people and encourages all of us to act in the Spirit of that commitment. Sekine's friendship has encouraged me to be that kind of man. I'm very grateful for that.

**Karin Peter 51:23**

Thank you, Phil. Andrew, I'd like to give you the same opportunity. Do you have any closing comments or thoughts you'd like to share?

**Andrew Bolton 51:31**

I want to say thank you, Brother Sekine. Thank you, Sister Sako. Thank you, Michiyo san Sensei, their daughter, who's now the principal of Zion kindergarten in Okinawa. She's a hero in this story. I didn't know Michiyo's brother, but we owe the whole family a debt of gratitude. They serve the gospel. And,

uh, Brother Sekine was part of a team. So, as a debt of gratitude to all those who served in Japan, or from Japan, the Yamatas, the Mtsushitas, the ( . . . ), and so on. So, I'm saying thank you.

**Karin Peter 52:13**

And we're saying thank you, to you, Andrew, to Jewell, to Phil and to Darlene that helped to get us connected this morning, uh, we give our thanks from our team here at Project Zion Podcast for you all participating with us today. So, a reminder to our listeners that you can find, uh, Phil and Andrew's lecture and the others from the Fall 2021, uh, series of lectures at [historicsitesfoundation.org](https://historicsitesfoundation.org) and we encourage you to listen to those. This has been Cuppa Joe, the Restoration history series for Project Zion Podcast. I'm Karin Peter and we thank you so much for listening.

**Josh Mangelson 53:05**

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