

Pyongyang Prison, Hungnam Labor Camp

The following is drawn from the third chapter of the second book of the series True Parents' Life Course (참부모님 생애 노정). The books are composed of excerpts from Father's speeches over many years, arranged more or less chronologically in the form of an autobiographical account. Twelve volumes of the series have been published in Korean. An English version is far from complete and has never been made available as published text. It was prepared (at some speed) for the benefit of the True Children in their younger years. This excerpt has been retranslated and edited for Today's World.

Once I began my evangelical work, membership began to increase. The policy of those governing northern Korea at the time, however, was to systematically eradicate all religious groups. Also, ministers of established churches saw that many members of their congregations were coming to me, so they decided to report me to the authorities. This is how I came to be jailed for a third time in my life. This occurred at 10:00 AM on February 22, 1948.

They accused me of being a spy for South Korea, an agent of the Syngman Rhee faction in Seoul. They said all kinds of things, made up all sorts of ridiculous accusations. They claimed I was an agent sent by those wanting to take over the government north of the DMZ, an agent whose purpose was to plunder everything, and they did various other ridiculous things to have me arrested.

On the day I was handcuffed and taken to jail, I told myself, This is happening so that I can have a mark on me that says God loves me.

In the end, I was forced out into a global wilderness. That four thousand three hundred years of history had to be indemnified in forty-three years was so wearisome and unjust. You don't know the bitterly tragic circumstances that made me go to the concentration camp in Hungnam after the loss of the entire national and global foundations that God had worked six thousand years to establish. It seems like only yesterday that the people who wanted to welcome me as representing hope for the future both in heaven and on earth cried out in agony, and that we pledged in desperate tears to meet again, as they watched me being led through the mist into hell, into the world of darkness. It seems like only yesterday that I declared to them, "You are disappearing, but I will pursue my course and someday I will come back with the bright morning sun in my bosom and I will liberate you once again." I have never forgotten how I shouted as I was being led away in handcuffs. Each time I faced difficulty, I remember the way I prayed in that situation.

My head is shaved

I was jailed in the Internal Affairs Station because of the jealousy of the established denominations and the Communist government's policy to do away with religion. On February 25, my head was shaved. I remember the person who shaved it and the day he did it. I can never forget how I had to sit and watch as my hair fell to the ground.

As I sat there, I told God I had been brought to this place by my enemies and was being forced to have my head shaved. You cannot imagine how brightly my eyes shone during that experience. I watched my hair falling to the floor, and let go of the happiness that I had sought. It was particularly upsetting to me that I had to have my head shaved in the presence of my enemies. In the course of weaving together the circumstances of restoration, all these obstacles were particularly regrettable.

Torture and interrogation

Even when I was tortured so harshly that I threw up blood, repeatedly collapsed on the floor and finally lost consciousness, I never asked God to help me.

Instead, I always prayed, "Father, don't worry. I'm not dead yet. I'm not going to die yet. I am still faithful to you. I still have a mission that I need to accomplish."

I was a devoted son, comforting God. I held the blood in my mouth and straightened my posture; even on moonless nights after I had been tortured, I never forgot the life I had led previously, offering comfort to Heaven.



War refugees headed toward Busan, which became a shantytown during the war years

The times I would collapse from torture were the moments I could hear the voice of God. The times my life seemed on the verge of coming to an end were the moments I could meet God. You may not be able to imagine the profound background to this truth, or the deep valleys and dark tunnels that had to be traveled before this truth of the Unification Church could be revealed. I know that it was a situation where someone might ask, Hey, Rev. Moon! How did you ever get this far?

I was not beaten for my own sake but for the sake of the nation. The tears I shed were the tears of the indemnity paid so that I could shoulder the pain of the nation.

The circumstances called for me to shout, You rascal! to Satan's face, to face the substantial manifestation of Satan and shout, Go ahead. Hit me. Hit me! When the time comes, I will repay you at least sevenfold. Right now, you are giving me the material I will need to do that.

Even as I was being put in the place of torture, I was telling them to go ahead and hit me.

Beneath my clothing, I have scars in several places that I acquired after I took up this way of life. When I see these, I think of them as medals given me by humanity and by Heaven. The scars remind me: Have you forgotten the pledge you made? Have you forgotten how you pledged to follow this path at the risk of your life until you die?

Each time I see these, whether it's in the morning, noon or evening, I rededicate myself. I tell myself, Because you've been given these scars, you have to win. I encourage myself toward victory.

Put on Trial

When I was in the North, I was originally scheduled to go to trial on April 3, but the Communist Party took so long to come up with excuses for oppressing the church that it was April 7 before I finally went to trial. This was my fortieth day of imprisonment. I was being tried in court as someone hounded by Christianity, and the Communists took extra time in preparing the trial so they could use it to show the party members how religion was evil and like an opiate.

During my trial, certain Christian ministers came and testified against me, heaping all sorts of accusations on top of me. No one else can understand or experience how shocking this

was. I still have not forgotten that time. Throughout my life I have kept the memory what it felt like to be imprisoned and then taken to court. It's a desperate feeling when you realize you are going to court and that every word you say may affect your fate.

I don't talk much about how I even laughed at the Communist Party. I told them that my personal history was not something that would go away simply because they heaped blame on me. It seems like just yesterday I told them that **although I was going without complaint**, the day would come when they would be in the palm of my hand and be held accountable by humankind for their actions. It was Heaven's strategy to make certain that I would not have the slightest attraction to communism, and God's strategy to make sure I would not feel too much sympathy for Christianity that was under the Communist realm. It was a strategy to make sure that I rejected all this.

Send off by members

As I was led away from the court back to jail after receiving my sentence, I shook my handcuffs in front of the members of my congregation, and they made a clear and resonating sound. I still cannot forget how I waved goodbye to them with those handcuffs loudly clanking together. In that moment, it was as if a historic movie were being created for future generations. That moment would become an explosive foundation for countless young people in future generations to pledge their determination.

Singing songs of hope for tomorrow is more powerful than singing of the sadness of today. The heart can always



The war left millions of civilians dead, families devastated and the Korean hills denuded from heavy bombing.

be bigger if it is filled with hope for tomorrow, rather than bitterness over the injustices of today. It didn't matter how evil the enemy was that placed handcuffs on my wrists that day. When I stood there in handcuffs and bid farewell to the church and the congregation I loved, my words were signposts pointing toward a historical judgment. That is what I felt in that moment. As a man, I had to proudly walk down the trail that had to be blazed again. Prison was no problem and death no hindrance to a man who understood that he can establish the original value.

I still cannot forget how the members who remained in Pyongyang waved good-bye as I was taken away. I shed no tears, but they were all weeping. It was not as if a child were dying or a husband leaving home never to return. I could see them sniffing and wiping away tears. How tragic that was! As I watched that scene, I felt that a person who goes in search of Heaven is never abjectly unhappy.

Even if I tried, I could never forget the sound of their voices and the sight of how their whole bodies shook in sadness as I was being led away to prison. This is painful. When I think of it, in some respects, this is pain. It is pain.

Incarceration in Pyongyang Prison¹

I was handcuffed and taken to Pyongyang Prison on April 7, but I went with a sense of hope. I tried to imagine what it would be like when I had completed the course. I was very curious about that. After I had been sentenced and was being led away to prison, I was filled with hope. I realized that even in prison there would be people God had prepared. Rather than focus on the incident immediately at hand, I thought about what was going to come after that. I told myself, Here is something that needs to be done to cross over another peak. I was expecting something like this. I wondered what would come after this.

Whenever I was incarcerated, I was very good at making friends with the most senior prisoner in the cell. I only had to speak a few words to him, and we would be friends. I would sit down with him and analyze for him the psychology of each person in the cell. Oh, this person's face is shaped like this, so he will become like this. That person's face is shaped like that, so this is what will happen to him, and so on. He may not have liked what I said, but he knew I was right. If I

¹ Korea's largest prison, built by the Japanese. Its cells held groups of prisoners and were either 7.5 sq m or 14 sq m in size.

watch the senior prisoner's face and talk to him for a week—or even just three days—I am at the point where I can say anything to him. If I am sitting in the lowest position in the cell, where there is not much space, he moves me to a higher position. The head prisoner tells me to move up. Even if I refuse, he insists that I move to a higher position. I can make friends with anyone and make anyone my companion.

When you're in prison, each day of the year you can find all the material you need to write a long novel. Sometimes, you may hear the sound of someone playing a flute, and you can sing to that melody. Then everyone in that environment joins in. Whatever situation you find yourself in, you need to be able to find a place to tie your rope around and travel back and forth. That is how you become a man who leaves his mark on history.

My primary opponent visits

While I was in prison, a person who had been my enemy visited in order to apologize to me. Deciding whether to meet him was a test for me. This was the man primarily responsible for putting me in jail. The person who had played the lead role in the effort to put me in jail just suddenly appeared one day. In the moment that I came face to face with him, it was not a good feeling for me. I pretended not to recognize him, and said, "I'm afraid I don't know who you are." I looked into his eyes. In the past, he'd had a vicious and evil look, but his eyes had softened and he stood in front of me looking very much like a human being. He told me he'd done certain things and asked me to forget all that had transpired in the past. He asked me not to think badly of him for visiting me in prison.

When he left, he gave me some food he had bought for me. Was I going to eat that, or not? That was a problem for me. In a place like prison, food is very valuable. I received the food around lunchtime but kept it until evening, because I had to think hard about what I was going to do with it. Without having discovered the principle of love, it would be impossible to accept that kind of food. After thinking about it very seriously, I decided to share the food with others.

In addition to everything else, this man was a Communist Party official. He was part of what was called the Security Cadre, and he must have considered that I might make him lose face in the presence of the prison guards. I could see he had a future, and I thought very seriously about his situation



A view of the Chosun Nitrogen Fertilizer Company's Hungnam plant showing the dock area extending into the waterway

even though we were enemies. I could see that if he could leave with a heart-to-heart relationship with me, he would be someone who could meet me again in the future, someone who might find a new life. I still think about him in this way. On many occasions, I felt lonely in that prison. He came to me at a time when I was lonely and gave me comfort, and I never forgot this.

Hungnam's Bon-goong Camp for Special Laborers

I remember what happened on May 20, several decades ago. It was on that day that, after being jailed in the Pyongyang Internal Affairs Station and tried, I was transferred to a prison in Hungnam.²

I had wept with anger many times over having been beaten and unjustly treated. I felt ashamed to think of Heaven and I tried to hide my face and my body. That is why, when I was taken to prison, I asked to be handcuffed to a murderer. I became friends with him.

We were shackled all the way to Hungnam, and it took us seventeen hours to get there. What do you suppose I thought about in the railroad car on the way there? It was an outrageous situation. If it seemed outrageous to me, think how mortifying it must have been for God. My determination grew as I watched the scenery go by outside the train window. Can you imagine how serious I felt as I watched those mountains and meadows go by? If I had been by myself, it would have been easy to escape, but I was shackled to the worst criminal. Incredible things that went through my mind during that trip.

On the way to Hungnam, there was a time when we were deep in the mountains, walking along a path that followed a creek. I still remember how we followed that winding road through a mountain valley. Each step I took represented a new start toward a new world. How was I going to live in the prison? I knew it would be difficult, but I was determined to go. It was a good opportunity for me to come to new realizations about myself.

² It appears that Father spent time in two different prison camps in Hungnam; one of these, Bon-goong camp, he entered May 20, another that Father mentions later on this page he was apparently moved to on June 21. Both prisons served the fertilizer plant.



Loading the fertilizer onto a Soviet ship; Russia had reconstructed the fertilizer plant, which was damaged during World War II.

The moment I entered the prison, I felt it was necessary in order to bring about a result that would allow us to transition from Satan's world to God's world. I decided that even in that environment, I would not reveal who I was and I would not allow myself to change externally or internally.

Forced labor in the fertilizer plant

June 21. That was the day I entered that prison in 1948. I went to that North Korean Communist Party prison and engaged in hard labor for two years and eight months, working in the fertilizer factory.

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, many Russians experienced forced labor. Communist ideology does not permit any property-owning class or anti-communist elements to exist. In their hearts, they would like to kill all these opponents, but because of world opinion they can't do this. So the Communist Party collects these people, imposes forced labor on them and waits for them to die from it. I was in a forced labor camp in North Korea. Kim Il-sung took a lesson from the Soviet experience and gave all his prisoners three years of hard labor. He left them to die.

Morning inspection and a long walk

In the morning, when it was time to go to work, all the prisoners would be taken out of their cells. The prisoners would assemble in a field, where they would be checked for any contraband items. There was a body check.

Work began at 9:00 AM, and there was a four-kilometer trip to the site, which took an hour to an hour and twenty minutes. Add to that the time it took to eat a meal, and it would all take two hours. To be able to start work at nine o'clock, we would normally wake up at half past four. In that situation, when a man would sit down, he would feel dizzy and his head would begin to spin. He would try to stand but wouldn't be able to.

Sometimes the morning inspection would take two hours, and it felt as though the cold were carving off pieces of flesh from our bodies. We felt a lot more freedom when we were working. When the wind blew in from



A view inland from the sea of the Hungnam fertilizer plant after forty-seven B-29s bombed it on July 30, 1950

the ocean in Hungnam, it would carry tiny pebbles. That wind that constantly buffeted us really seemed like an enemy. It was so cold; one couldn't help but shiver and shout out. No matter how hard a person tried not to make a noise, it was no use. My way of fighting the cold and overcoming it in that situation was to think to myself, Make it colder. Make it colder. Make it colder!

Each morning when we left the prison, we had to line up in four lines and hold hands with the persons next to us. Next to this formation were guards who were carrying small arms. If someone fell out of line, or was caught not holding hands, he would be reported as having attempted to escape. You couldn't hold your head up straight.

Even though we would eat before leaving the prison, our legs were so weak that prisoners would often stumble on the way to the factory. Over a four-kilometer distance, this might happen five or six times, sometimes more than ten times in one trip. We lacked energy, but we had to drag our legs to the factory and do the work. I remember this every time things seem to get difficult. In that situation, when my mind seemed to wander far off, I would pledge to be a man of God. That is how I endured to the end.

Forced Labor at the Chosun Nitrogen Fertilizer Company (Hungnam Factory)

We worked at a fertilizer factory, where ammonia sulfate would come in by conveyor belt and pile up on the floor; it looked like a mountain. At first, it would be hot. As time passed, the crystals would melt and stick together, becoming solid like ice. It looked like a waterfall when it fell off the conveyor belt into a pile on the floor. It was just like a white waterfall. The pile was about twenty meters high. We had to dig the ammonia sulfate out of this mountain and put it into bags. Eight hundred to nine hundred people would do this work. We would normally take a single large pile and divide it in two.

It was very difficult work. Per day, each team of ten people was responsible to bag one thousand three hundred bags, each weighing forty kilograms. If a team couldn't finish the work in eight hours, its members had their food ration cut in half. We wore thimble-like protection on our fingers. As we

would tie the bags, though, these protective covers would get holes in them and eventually fall off. Each person was responsible for a hundred and thirty bags a day, and this was truly hard labor. A normal person living in society probably could not do even seventy or eighty. We were told to do almost twice that. Essentially, we were being told to die.

We had to take the bags to the dock, and load them onto a Soviet ship that was moored there. We had to achieve a certain tonnage, which was checked on a daily basis.

Sulphuric acid is harmful to the body. It causes your hair to fall out and your skin to yield water when squeezed. After six months, you start coughing up blood. Most of the time, people thought they had contracted tuberculosis and became so despondent they would die. They'd last a year and a half, two years at most.

Your skin begins to crack and bleed—so much so that after a while your bones become visible. It took less than a week for our cotton uniforms to become torn. After a person had worked for six months, all his skin cells would be dead, and water would come out when he squeezed them. You wake up in the morning to find blood dripping from the cracks in your skin.

Each day, we were given a fifteen-minute break about halfway to lunchtime, an hour for lunch and another fifteen-minute break halfway through the afternoon. So we had about an hour and a half to rest. At lunchtime, all the men were so tired they just ate where their teams were working.

You may be curious about the toilets. In a large factory like that, they would dig a hole in the dirt floor and harden it with concrete. A channel at the bottom of that hole let the excrement wash away. We used that for a toilet, but when we were working and had to have a bowel movement, our only real option was to dig a hole in the ammonium sulfate do it right there. It was all fertilizer anyway, so we just deposited it in there. We would squat down and fire off like a cannon, quickly. We had to do it quickly, otherwise, we would be beaten severely.

Total investment in the work

As I was tying those bags of fertilizer, I told myself that this was the final front line. Although I was engaged in labor, I did not think of it as labor. The time spent engaged in labor was time for prayer. I told myself I had been born to perform this kind of work. Always, I poured my full sincerity and dedication into the work, as though I were engaged in the providence of restoration. While I worked, I always thought of what I had experienced in the spirit world, and I imagined I was the main actor in a movie that I would one day show to my descendants and to the people who would follow me. Sometimes, the bell would ring for us to take a break and I wouldn't even hear it.

I have often heard people describe me as a man who is like a steel rod. Whenever I applied myself to a task, I did it with true joy. I liked doing that task more than anyone else did. I simply gave precedence to that emotion; there was no other secret to my work. Eventually, I would work through the task.

Prison life is difficult; you have to find a way to work through it. I told myself that even if I



In the years between the nation's liberation from being an annexed territory of the Japanese Empire and civil war, most Koreans were peasant farmers.

were to die in that prison, I wanted to leave behind a philosophy that would make people say of me, You died in victory, not in defeat.

I weighed 19 *kwan* 300³ (72 kg) then. Other prisoners all became thinner, but I did not lose weight. People began to make me an object of study. During the almost three years I was in that prison, I almost never became ill. Just once I caught malaria. No matter how sick I became, I didn't take medicine. I continued working, sometimes even as I fasted. I suffered from malaria for twenty-four days, but I never took time off from work; anyone who tries to avoid a difficult task will not be able to endure.

Volunteering for the most difficult tasks

When you are in prison, it is important not to allow yourself to be indebted to anyone else, no matter how difficult your situation may be. This is the way for a person to rise to the highest point. Receiving special favors from others is not allowed on the road of indemnity.

Because I knew this, I decided when I first entered the prison that I would take responsibility for the most difficult tasks, ones that no one else could perform. In terms of taking responsibility, I would be responsible for several times what others did. I was already telling myself this.

As we worked our way through the mountain of fertilizer, we would get farther and farther from the place where we would take our bags to be weighed. If we took time to carry the bags to the scale, we wouldn't finish the work within the deadline. If we had worked our way four meters into the mountain, it would take five minutes to take a bag to the scale and have it weighed. We would not be able to work fast enough, unless someone stood in there and tossed the bags out. Who was going to do such a difficult task? I took responsibility to do that.

I did about thirty percent of my team's work. I did the most difficult task and took care of the other team members so that we always finished our work by half past twelve, instead of five o'clock.⁴ Once we had met our quota of one thousand three hundred bags, we could spend the remainder of the time relaxing. The satisfaction of finishing the work by twelve, and then eating lunch and relaxing the rest of the day is something that can only be appreciated by someone who has actually experienced it. I became the champion in doing that work, so everyone wanted to follow me.

If a person can't be a savior in prison, he would be a fraud if he called himself a savior in a time of tranquility.

3 An antiquated standard of weight, one *kwan* was equal to 3.75 kg.

4 This paragraph and the one immediately preceding are drawn from different speeches (given in different years). It is the opinion of a researcher at our History Committee (where True Parents' life history and the history of the movement are researched) that Father's seriousness about surviving Hungnam prison while establishing the necessary conditions to continue his mission fueled his desire to maximize efficiency; he learned, then helped other prisoners to learn, how to work together like the parts of a machine. With practice over a period of time, the prisoners would be able to fulfill their goal more swiftly.

I know that one man who was in Hungnam has written a book in which he calls me "the saint in prison."⁵ Prison is not something I fear. No matter how merciless the beatings may have been, or how harsh the environment, it could not conquer the heart that is centered on love. It could not break the heart that called out to God, to the Father, and sought to live for His sake. Based on that energy, I was able to lay a foundation for the solid liberation of the vertical stage.

Working with modesty

When I was in prison in Hungnam and working in the fertilizer factory, I always kept my trouser legs closed by tying them at the bottom with a strip of cloth, even during the hottest months. I never let my shins show. I still had a sacred path to travel that required me to shed sweat and offer it to God, and I didn't want to show my body to anyone when I was in the process of offering sincerity and dedication to God.

You all know about sulfuric acid. A steam-like mist rises from it. It was so hot that even in the winter months, everyone else would strip down to his underwear to work. But even working in the fertilizer factory, I always wore long trousers.

I made sure my underwear was not visible. I have always trained myself to be more modest than a woman protecting her virtue. I was committed to reaching the home I knew of in the original homeland and to establishing the tradition of that homeland. No matter how difficult life in prison might be, I could not let that stand in my way. While in the satanic world, I had to offer my entire body to God and maintain the standard He desired. I had to maintain my chastity. Women are not the only ones who need to keep their chastity. Men do, too.

Honored as a model prisoner

I have never failed to accomplish my responsibility. When I was in prison, I received special treatment from the head of the prison. He never said anything to me, but he watched me with an expression of admiration. There weren't just a few dozen workers. There were eight hundred, it may have been more than a thousand, but they recognized

that I was someone who could accomplish the work of hundreds.

After I had been there a few months, I was called the best worker. Team members were changed every day, to prevent us from planning an escape. Whenever it came time to change teams, everyone wanted to go to the team that had the best worker. Many people would line up behind me.

Every year I received an award as a model laborer. There is no such thing as a natural born laborer. I don't know what happened to those awards. I never wanted them, so I didn't take care of them. It was not because I wanted them that I received them; they wanted to give them to me. I went to prison in the Communist world and became the best laborer, so there is nothing I cannot do, anywhere in the world. JW

5 Kim In-ho in the book 서울로 오는길 (*The Road to Seoul*), which does not exist in English



Many Korean families were separated during the years of war; many family members never found each other again.