

STUDENT DAYS IN SEOUL



Living in Heukseok-dong, Seoul, while studying electricity at Kyung Sung Commercial Industrial Vocational School (April 2, 1938 to graduation, March 8, 1941)

The following is the fourth chapter of an English book about True Father's life.

The book was prepared (at some speed) from a collection of autobiographical excerpts from True Father's speeches over the years, which once collected were arranged chronologically. The book was not published generally but was prepared for the benefit of the True Children in their younger years. The content has been edited for Today's World.

Most of you here appear to be around twenty years old, between seventeen and twenty-one, which reminds me of when I was as young as you, struggling as I sought this way as a pioneer. I came to Seoul to attend school. I experienced culture shock. It was such a different environment from that of Chongju, my hometown, which was in a remote rural area. Seoul was such a big city. I remember many things that I did in order to try to fit into that new environment.

When I was your age, I did not talk much. How could I say anything when I had not found the way [the truth] and was still seeking my path? You should train yourself to be confident enough to feel that if you open your mouth, nobody can stand in your way. You cannot enlighten yourself in a drifting, rowdy environment. You cannot sink deep roots there.

A humble person is not arrogant even if he is very capable. No one can take such a person lightly. We tend to take comfort from such a person, someone with a strong personal sense of identity. Even in the old days, I was like that. My classmates took me very seriously, even more seriously than they took the teachers. It was not because I threatened them or used force.

In middle school, I used to clean the whole school. Because I wanted to love the school more than anyone else, I thought I would clean the building as a representative of the student body. When I was thinking like that, I didn't welcome others' help.

Even without talking much, I became a close friend of many of my classmates. When they were in agony, they came to me to discuss things. When they received money from their parents, they used to ask me to keep it for them, saying that it would make them feel safe even if the money might be stolen from me.

A persistent spirit of inquiry

Do you have any idea how many teachers hid from me, not being able to answer my questions? I used to ask, "Who created the formulae and definitions in the physics textbook?" I do not believe them. Can you explain them to me clearly? I did not believe anything until I verified it myself. When a math teacher taught me a formula, I chased after the teacher and asked him about it. "Who came up with such a formula?" I felt terrible because somebody else had come up with it before I had. I felt I should have been the one... [Laughter] I was digging deeper and deeper. There was no skimping. Doing things cursorily would not work with me.

Even from middle school, I used to give my teachers a hard time, asking many questions. When they were not able to give clear answers, I went to the library to research topics by myself and showed the teachers the answers.

Even when I studied for a test only the day before, things mostly worked out. I divided the lecture content based on the probability of material appearing in the exam and just focused on the parts with a high likelihood, ignoring the rest. When I prepared for a test based on a psychological analysis of how I would do things if I were a teacher, I was right about 70 percent of the time.... However hard one studies, one cannot remember everything. Some things tend to slip through.

Physical training

From the day I dreamed of this great revolution of heart and received an order from Heaven that said unless I was strong and healthy, I would not be able to accomplish this great under-

taking, I started tough physical training. I am strong and capable of easily defeating a couple of attackers that come at me together. There is no exercise that I have not done. I trained myself every day, day and night, until I was twenty-two.

I learned to box. I can do it even now. If I come across a bad man on the street, I can wrestle him down. A man should learn self-defense skills. I can jump over a fence even though I am kind of chubby. [Laughter] Because I went through that training, I can make all these movements look natural. Nobody will beat me in Korean wrestling either. [Laughter]

I am also good in such sports as soccer. Despite my rather large frame, I'm fast. In my younger days, I did all kinds of exercises, even on the horizontal bars. Even now, I do exercises that no one else knows. I developed my own exercises. Do you want to learn them? [Yes.] How much would you pay me? [Laughter]

When the body is trained, a base for the spiritual world is established. You then become a real man who will not float away. You should be bold and confident with the authority of the eldest son.

Speech training

If I want to speak fast, I can say ten words in the time it takes you to say one. Hurr... [Laughter] I worked hard to become a champion at that. After people in Pyong-an Province say one word, they have to think over (around ten times) what they will say next. When I came to Seoul, a lady with thin lips and small eyes at the lodging house where I stayed spoke so quickly, without pausing for breath, as she explained about the town. [Laughter] I thought, "I will speak faster than she does," and I did beat her after lots of practice. [Laughter] The most difficult sound to pronounce was ddi [띠]. I wrote down such sounds as gal [갈], nal [날], dal[달], lal[랄], and practiced pronouncing them fast each morning and night.

That's how I trained myself. Why did I do it? I wanted to learn to say everything I wanted to say right away, once I started talking. Hurr... [Laughter] Pour out everything from

head to toe. For six months, in a small room, I practiced pronouncing all kinds of sounds, including the Korean alphabet. I practiced until I grasped all the pronunciation. That's how I came to speak fast. It's possible for a person to improve even the way he or she speaks.

When I was in my teens, I loved music. The owner of the lodging house where I lived had been a chauffeur. He was the eldest son of a wealthy man somewhere in Gangwon Province. At that time, about thirty years ago, a chauffeur was a good occupation. There was no place he had not been to in Korea. He knew all kinds of folk songs and had hundreds of albums. I devised a plan to impress the landlady, the owner's wife. I greeted her every day and carried the dining table for her,¹ and I ran errands for her. As I carried out my plan in this way for a couple of days, she developed affection for me. She liked me so much she even said she would make me her son-in-law. All right! From then on, she lent me all the albums I wanted. [Laughter] I listened to all the recordings. Even if I borrowed several albums at a time, the owner did not mind. To listen to all the music over several days, I played the albums twenty-four hours a day! [Laughter]

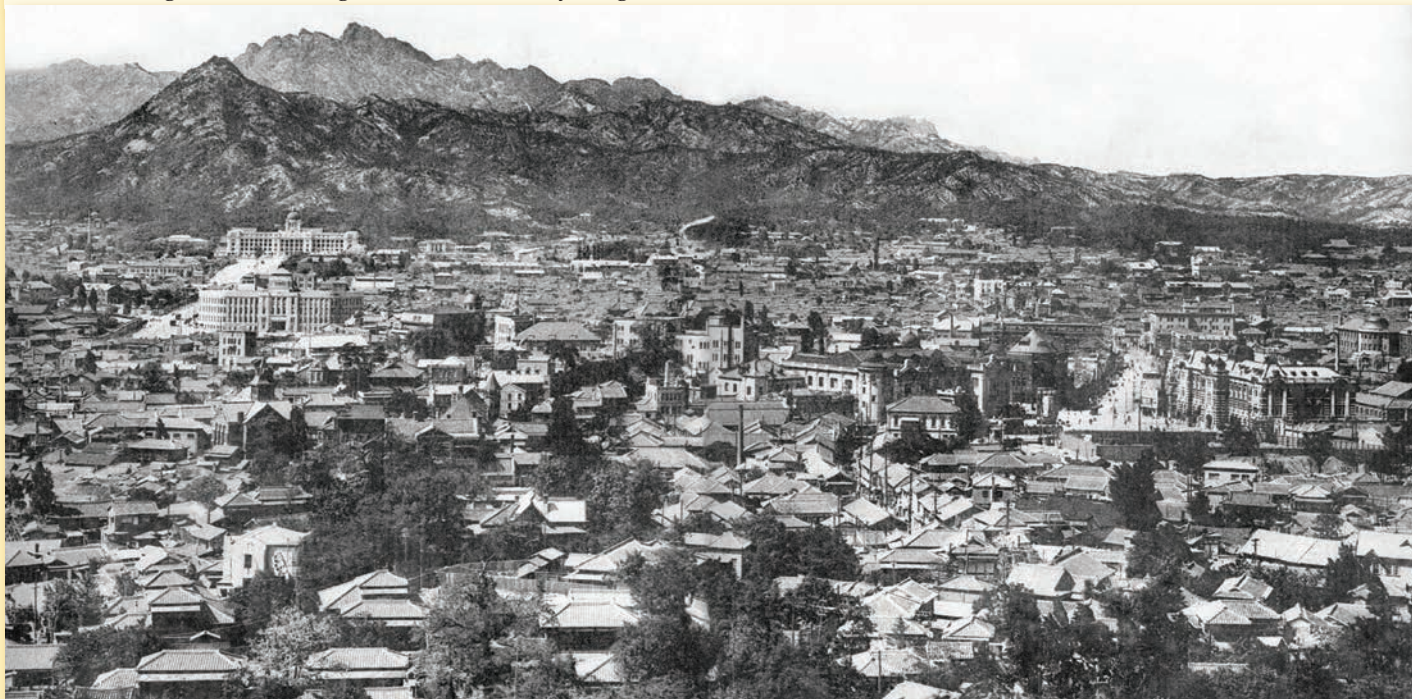
It is good to sing well. A man who feels devoted to his mother sings while he massages her back. A young couple should sing well if they want to express the love in their hearts.

As a frontrunner in charge of the providence of restoration, I need to realize my goals somehow, don't I? All of this has to do with my course. It was a foundation for my course. What did I do when sleeping at night? I played the songs under the blanket at a low volume. I go to extremes. Whatever I do, I do not want to be second to anyone. You should learn how to sing.

A one-man show

God is very capable. He would say, "This rascal!" You are shameless. You rascal! He is also very good at joking. God is

1 Traditionally, Koreans bring out a low wooden table with folding legs at mealtimes.



View of Seoul in 1930, looking north to Mt. Bukhan; the large building near the mountain is the Japanese government headquarters, and the building appearing below that is Seoul City Hall, which is still used today.

the king of humor. ...Taking after God, I am good at humor and improvisation.

During my middle- and high-school years, I was a champion at one-man shows. At the school talent show when I performed, many parents would come to watch.

Having that quality is one reason I hold the position of founder of the Unification Church. Do you think it is easy to be in this position? [Laughter] Although church members are persecuted outside, you have fun once you come inside the church, don't you? [Yes.] That's because I put on a good one-man show. [Laughter] It is not a one-man show, but a real-man show. It is a real man's performance.

In the old days, I liked to throw pebbles into the gentle waves of the Han River. It is better to do that in the evening than in the morning. Seeing people boating on the river against the evening glow is very beautiful, as the sun, which had been burning hot during the day, is setting behind them. Wind up a round, flat stone and throw it. It flies gently, skimming over the water; it appears to glide across on the river. Do you sense that feeling? [Laughter]

In my hometown, there were no persimmon trees. Although I had seen the fruit, I had never seen its mother. What is a persimmon's mother? Isn't it a tree? Of course, that mother grows from a seed in the beginning. In those days, a persimmon, a red-ripe persimmon, well... When I eat persimmons, I do not eat just one. If we have persimmons at home, I eat them all. [Laughter] Eating is my hobby. I like to eat very much.

In Seoul, I saw persimmon trees. At a glance, the fruit appeared to be quite hard and beautiful, although it was not big. I had a friend living outside the Jahamun.² One day I went to see him. The persimmons near his house had turned golden in color and looked so tasty. My friend and I sneaked into the place where the trees were and picked some of them. [Laughter]

Boardinghouse life

I lived in a boardinghouse for seven years, but not because I didn't have money. I lived there as a way of learning more about a woman's lifestyle. When I was cooking, I never used warm water. I just drew water from a well with a bucket. In cold weather, my hands stuck to the bucket. With that water, I cleaned rice and cooked it.

When I first came to Seoul, it was quite cold. The average temperature ranged from minus 17° C to minus 21° C. When I was young, that kind of weather was common. Wherever I went, I did not live like a rich person. I started from the bottom. Those were cold winter months.

I don't need many side dishes. It is almost a habit. I only need one simple, tasty, practical side dish. I always had one tasty side dish per meal. That's enough.

You can tell if someone is a novice cook or not by watching how the person uses a cutting board. I am pretty good



Father looking over the local missionary's shoulder at the Myungsudae Worship Hall

at that—*tututuck, tututuck*... [Laughter]. You can easily tell whether someone has a knack for cooking by watching how he or she prepares a side dish. When I look at a woman making rice³ and side dishes, I can tell how much water she used and what kind of seasoning she used. With a cursory glance, I know these things.

Fasting and enduring

During my school days in Seoul, at your age, I did not eat lunch. It was not because I did not have rice. To understand the hungry days of your parents, you should know the circumstances and story behind those days. You should strive to develop into dutiful sons or daughters by putting yourselves in a situation where you experience hunger and during that time repenting for not having been pious toward your parents. That's what I think.

You are closest to God when you are hungry. When you are extremely hungry, you look at people walking by as you might your mother or your sister, as people who can help you. Under those circumstances, you find you are able to comfort and embrace millions of people.

I was also asking myself whether I was qualified to eat three meals a day when we had no country of our own. I maintained a lifestyle of going hungry for a long time. I experienced a longing for my fellow man when I missed food. I thought I should love my country and fellow man more than I loved food. I thought in this way as I traveled from my hometown to Seoul. When I did not eat lunch, it was not because I didn't have money. I gave money to people in need.

I fasted just as often as I ate meals. I did not have lunch until I was thirty years old. I left home when my appetite was heaviest and continued to have only two meals a day. Probably, no one has been as hungry as I have. I hear the clamor of hungry people longing for help and liberation. That makes it difficult for me to eat. Those who pursue enlightenment and an ascetic life should practice it in everyday situations.

I often fasted on my birthday. Can you celebrate your birthday without establishing a foundation of victory on an individual level, a family level, a national level, and the world level? How can you dance and do such things? You cannot. A

2 The fortress wall that used to surround Seoul had four major and four minor gates (*mun*); Jahamun, in northern Seoul, is one of the minor ones.

3 From the Korean perspective, rice is the main dish of a meal.



Father (see arrow) at a service held for graduating Sunday school students in front of the Myungsudae Worship Hall of the Jesus Church religion, February 27, 1941

sinner can do that only after accomplishing the responsibility God gave him. I led that kind of lifestyle.

I was in a position to offer tearful prayers wherever I was, so people tended to feel sympathetic toward me without knowing why. Also, wherever I went, there were many people who treated me as you do now. There were incidents where women whose families lodged in the same houses I did offered me food they had prepared for their husbands, or for holidays, before they could take it to their own rooms. They did not even know why they did it. God moved their hearts, so that He could feed me the food they'd prepared with all their hearts. This happened many times. I have not forgotten about this expression of God's love even in my sleep.

I cannot forget one particular lady. Her family name was Song, and she was rather poor. At the time, she was living in a rented room with her daughter. She did not have a husband. She was living off the tiny store she was running. When she came across some food to feed herself, she said her hands took it to me instead. There was a time when two churches sometimes held joint services on the banks of the Han River, on a beach that once existed near Seobingo.⁴ When lunchtime came, I could not stay in the middle of the crowd. I left the group and sat for a while on a pile of stones, thinking. At that time, the lady, Mrs. Song, brought me two slices of bread and two ice creams. I still cannot forget that. What a serious time it was. You can never forget such indebtedness.

From this, you should understand how precious it is to visit people in their time of loneliness. People liking likable people does not seem to mean much. At that time, I learned that it is noble to visit and comfort people when they are going through difficulty.

A cold room in the winter

When I was in my twenties, winters in Seoul were quite cold. The average temperature seems to have been around minus 17 ° C. The Han River always froze in the winter then. In that kind of weather, I lived in a room without heating. I put a damask mat on the floor and slept on it. In the morning, the

design on the mat would be imprinted on the cold floor. Those marks were not easily erased; they used to stay for six months. That made an impression on me that lingers in my memory.

To overcome the cold, I used to sleep with a light bulb burning under the blanket to keep myself warm. Occasionally, though, I got burned by it. I still remember that. When I think of Seoul, that experience comes to mind. Even now, when I sit in the bathtub, I recall those days.

It was as if I were a criminal; I endured a path of suffering that no one else could have. You should not forget the historical suffering of your teacher and that of God. You should keep it deep in your heart. When you meet me in heaven later, you can hug me and say, "I was aware of your sorrowful situation and tried to live up to that standard, but I was not able to

do it. Please, forgive me." If you do that with a tearful, grief-stricken heart, even God will hold you and cry with you. Unless such a day comes, I don't believe the day of liberation will arrive. A devoted son, even if he is living in an unheated, cold room, should remain a devoted son. You should cherish the sorrowful heart of parents whom you attend from a cold room. You must have a penitent heart for not being able to love the whole of heaven and earth. You should also know that only if you have that kind of heart will the path to Heaven be nearby.

I did not wear clothes like those you are wearing until I was thirty. Life was like that during the Japanese occupation. We used to buy secondhand clothes that were worn-out, dirty and shiny in spots. When I wore good clothes, many girls followed me. To avoid that, I used to take untraveled, narrow streets and keep my hair unkempt. A man must lay the foundation to achieve his goals, once they are set.

I am good at knitting. I sometimes knitted a sweater by myself and socks, too. I have made socks, underpants and jackets on my own. I did a lot of research on how to live alone without a woman's help. I had determined to pursue God's will as my lifelong business even if I had to live alone. There is nothing I cannot do. I can quickly knit nice-looking hats or gloves.

The first school vacation

On the first vacation I had while studying in Seoul, I did not go home. Although other students were rushing to buy tickets to their hometowns, I solemnly stayed back alone. I notified my parents, who had been waiting for me to visit, and explained that I could not come home. Why did I do that? The path I had to follow was different from that followed by the satanic world.

When other students were going back home with their luggage, I thought, "Although I want to see my parents, I am longing for God who can save them," and I cried inside. Bearing that longing, I devoted myself for the sake of the nation and my goals.

My relatives were clamoring for me to visit. They said there was an emergency at home and I should come. Still, I

⁴ A district in central Seoul on the north side of the Han River

did not visit them. When my friends came back, they thought it was strange. I told them, "I must not waste this precious time, which is the result of thousands of years of history." I lived with that kind of attitude.

Investigating back-alley life

I'm not sure how much I wanted to go to movies when I was young. Going to movies was a shocking experience for us then. My temperament is such that I could scream with joy, but I never went to movies. It's not that I had never seen movies. Once in fact, I saw five movies in a day. After having such a movie-going experience, I stopped going to movies. I went from one extreme to another. It is not worthwhile if you do not go at all and never have the experience. That's why I stopped going to the movies immediately after going five times in one day. I said to myself, "You rascal, you are not coming here anymore."

Don't you think there were things that I was envious of when I was your age? You often go to movies, don't you? You should know that there was a time that I did not see movies at all and would not even walk past one. Why? This is because I had to cross beyond the line to where it was impossible for me to fall into sin if I were to go into such places, or even sleep or live there. Nowadays I can permit you to go to movie theaters on the condition that you maintain the standard at which you cannot be corrupted. After you achieve that standard, everything will be fully open to you.

In the old days, Jongro 3-Ga⁵ was all a red light district. I thought I should investigate it. Why must beautiful women have to do such things with just anyone? If they were your sisters, what would you do? What if they were your daughters? What would you do if you were their older brother or father? That is a serious question. I am thinking of how I talked with those women during the night. Everyone should go through that. We should love our country, shouldn't we? We have to love our fellow citizens, don't we?

I needed to understand that world. How can I save them if I do not understand what that world is like? By talking to those involved, you should understand their sorry situation and the whole story behind it, and save them.

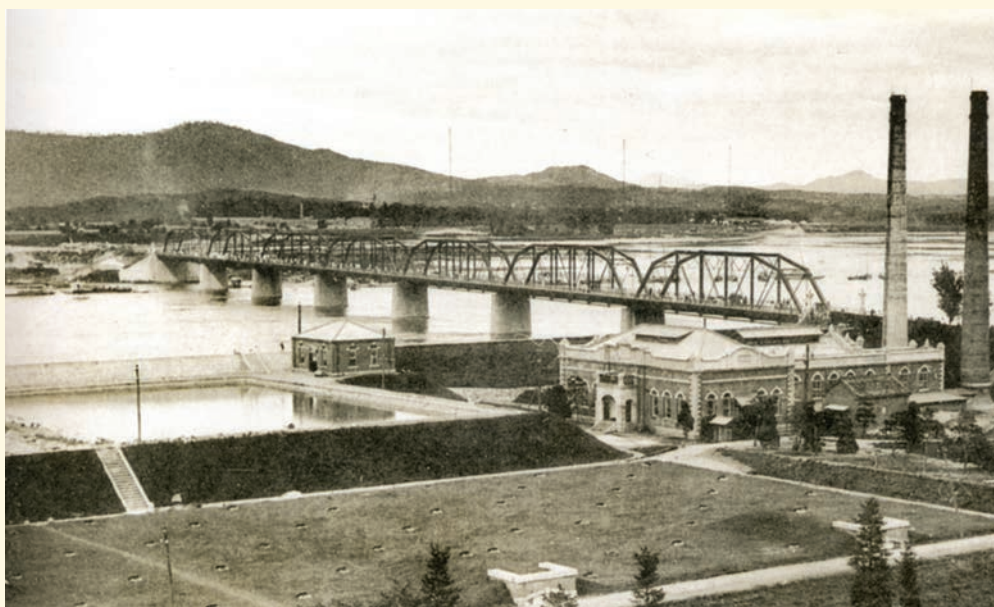
What are leaves without roots? When I went to that kind of place, I made an internal determination beforehand, so that I could not be snared by anything that goes on there. Members of the Unification Church should go through such a training process. You need that kind of training.

When I was living in Heukseok-dong, though a streetcar ride downtown cost only five *jeon*,⁶ I walked. It took forty-five minutes to the Hwashin Department Store⁷ on foot. I walk

fast. It took an hour and a half for an average person. On a hot summer day, I walked to the city in my school uniform, sweating. What did I do with the money I saved? I gave it to the poor. I said, "I'd like to give you a thousand tons of gold and help you immediately. For now, though, I'll give you this on behalf of the whole nation. I hope this will be the seed of good fortune."

I lived in Noryangjin for a while then. It cost five *jeon* to go to school by train, but I walked and donated the money. I did the same with the money saved by walking home. I remember patting the trees while walking, saying, "Grow well until I become someone in this country. Don't die; let's grow together." Those trees are all gone now, though.

When you take a train, bus or taxi, you should remember the standard I set as I walked from place to place. You should have the same attitude of heart toward this nation and people as I did, anxiously longing for the day when God can embrace the country.



The Han footbridge seen from the Noryangjin Reservoir

When I received tuition from home, it was gone within a month. I just gave it to poor people. I could tell many stories like that. How did I pay for my schooling? I did several things, including newspaper delivery and sales. I remember those days very clearly.

I have also experienced living in a slum, in rags. Lice were crawling everywhere. I had that kind of experience.

One time, returning to Seoul from home with tuition money in hand, I met a dying person. I spent all the money I had to put him in a hospital and to make him better. I cannot forget the fact that that situation made paying my tuition only possible with the help of my friends. I know how much of an impression the experiences I had during that short period have made on my life. I emptied my wallet of my tuition, lodging fees and money to buy books that time. I vividly remember carrying him a mile on my back to the hospital.

Anguished, tearful prayer

When you pray, you should pray so hard that your back is bent and calluses form on your knees. There still remains a

in the country, was a landmark said to be at the center of Seoul.

5 A borough of Seoul

6 A defunct monetary unit equal to one-hundredth of a won

7 This four-story building, the first Korean-owned department store

callus on each knee that formed when I was praying in the old days. Prayer should be offered on a hardwood floor. You should shed tears as well. I would experience a peak several times in prayer; I shed so many tears the tearstains didn't have time to dry.

Knowing that so many people pass away without coming to understand the purpose of life, I offered tearful prayers every day to solve that issue. While I prayed, I shed so many tears that I could not even see the sunlight. That's how I found this path.

My prayers lasted twelve hours on average and sometime seventeen or eighteen hours. I was on my knees and did not have lunch. I wept loudly. I could not have continued without this prayer. It would seem that all sides were blocked and there was no way forward. I saw the pin-prick sized opening only when I prayed. By undergoing such trials, I found the Principle.

There is a saying that hard work is never wasted. Isn't it true? You should labor hard for God. You need to enter into a state where you yearn for God so much that you would go crazy without Him. If God dwelt on earth, He would visit us a thousand times a day. However, since that's not the case, God sent me. Because I have some mysterious quality, you cannot help feeling love for me. Do you feel affection for me for no reason?

There was a time in the cold winter when my cotton clothes were soaked with tears from



prayer. Think about how astounding that is. I offered many serious, sharply penetrating prayers.

I cried for the nation under Japanese occupation... I shed more tears for the nation than any patriot. Even now, the streets in Heukseok-dong... Although the road to Yongsan⁸ is now paved, I feel as if something is missing. There were trees such as poplars in those days. I still cherish the good impression I had of the area then. Myungsudae, the river...

When you cross the Han River, you can see an island in the center of the river. On that island, I would lament and speak to the river, saying, "Although you have been flowing for thousands of years, do you flow with the single-minded desire to embrace this nation and people? Water can be a lifeline. Han River, you should be a stream decorating this beautiful and fertile land like a rivulet of mother's milk. If you do not do that, I will." This is vivid in my memory. There was only one bridge across the Han River then. I would stop at this island while walking across the bridge.

8 A borough in central Seoul

You students who are studying hard! When I was studying in the old days, I cried even after reading one page because on every page I was looking for secrets that might save the nation. I prayed in the same style. Make your hand into a fist. When I was praying in those days, I clenched my fist so tight, it hurt when I opened it. Can you imagine how tight a fist I made? I was making pledges, clenching my fists tight, regardless of how much I was sweating.

Myungsudae and Seobingo

There was a sandy beach along the Han River at Seobingo⁹ in the old days. It is sad to see the beach is gone. Don't you feel that way? It's good to see buildings standing on that spot, but I deeply miss the beach. Many memories were made there. The Myungsudae Worship Hall,¹⁰ which my friends and I built, was in Heukseok-dong. On many Sundays, the church in Myungsudae and one in Seobingo held a joint service on the beach. When the wind was blowing, it would stir up the sand and small pebbles. It was bad, so we found a place in



Above: One of the houses in Heukseok-dong where Father lodged as a student. **Left:** The opposite side of the facing wall in the photo above. Father stayed in the end room.

between piles of pebbles to sit closely together to offer Sunday service.

While I was attending school in Seoul, I taught Sunday school. I taught at both the church in Heukseok-dong and the one in Seobingo. During the cold winter, the Han River froze, and you could hear the ice splitting—*bbang, jijiji*.... It was scary when you were alone. I crossed that frozen river to teach Sunday school.

I was a good Sunday school teacher. I am not a good storyteller now, but I may have been back then. When I shed tears, everyone else wept. Once you make them cry, you expect them to beg you to stop. But they didn't. Instead, they followed me, asking me to tell more stories. I told them stories like that. I was an excellent teacher, guiding the Sunday school students. I felt a lot of hope for them. I loved them more than anyone else did. They were so attached to me that they used to follow me, even skipping school.

I had been living like that. I served and took care of little

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9 Seobingo was almost directly across the Han River (on the north side) from Heukseok-dong, which is close to the south bank of the Han

10 The name of the church of a breakaway Christian group, the Jesus Church, led by Lee Ho-bin

children, elementary school children, middle- and high-school students and old people. I served them as if I loved them more than I did anyone else. I served them even better than I served my parents. When I had something to eat, I packed it for them.

I was good at making people feel at home in any situation. That is how I made friends with grandmothers, ladies and little children. When I told stories with a loving heart, like a kindergarten teacher, nobody could forget it. That's true even now.

I know the backgrounds of people like Rev. Park Jae-bong and Rev. Lee Ho-bin very well.¹¹ However, I have never said anything bad about them. They had many followers. They and their followers met because some kind of spiritual destiny brought them together. As God connected them with strong ties, the person who weakens that connection between them is responsible for that. Something planted in that soil should be harvested there.

Witnessing

When I was your age, I used to go to parks and give public speeches wearing a hat—I wore a hat then—carrying my books in a bag hanging down my back. I urged people to listen to me. It was leadership training for my future. You need to try many times. It is a good experience to ask many questions and to give many answers. One day when we went on a picnic at Chang Gyung Won,¹² something happened. It was so crowded, but I started witnessing there. I witnessed with my jacket off. Nobody knew it was me. Even though I was giving a speech in public like that, who would have guessed it was me, who was quiet in the classroom? Other students were saying, “Wow, he looks like Moon, but can it be him?” In class the next day, it was clear that my classmates had not figured out it was I who had given the speech. I knew who was at the picnic because I saw them while speaking, but they hadn't recognized me. [Laughter] Nobody would have guessed I would speak in public when I didn't speak in class.

When I was living in Heukseok-dong, there was a grove of pine trees on the way to Sangdo-dong¹³ and across from it was a Japanese style house with many flowers. Farther down, around a corner, was a rice field and a small town. In that town, there was a house I used to go to when I was doing pioneer witnessing.

School diary

I kept a diary, and on certain days I might write thirty pages, or fill a whole book. It was during the Japanese occupation, and as events transpired, the Japanese police used my diary as a starting point to investigate incidents that had taken place, about which I had expressed my strong determination in what I wrote. The police arrested as accomplices many people mentioned in my diary. Since then, I stopped keeping a diary. I do not even carry a pocket notebook even now. I keep all the important things in my memory. If I had kept that diary until now, it would be invaluable. All the descriptions of the world of heart I inhabited while growing up, that traced my footsteps through mountains and the various villages, were destroyed because I was being pursued by the

Japanese police. There are many stories related to that—traces of what led me toward my goals.

As I was burning those diaries, I wept. I vividly remember talking to myself, about the historic materials that I would need as I took this path. Those diary entries could have shown the way to liberation for young people groaning in distress, but I was burning them. In my youth, I worked hard to implement God's plans for the nation and the world, while overcoming hunger and other difficulties.

I left my hometown when I was eighteen.¹⁴ For my entire life since then, I have been working hard to save the satanic world. I forgot my hometown. Leaving Chongju for Seoul was like going to a foreign land. What will happen if I go overseas from Korea? Seoul will then become a hometown to me. That's right. Seoul will be a hometown.

I have since visited Heukseok-dong several times, thinking of the old days, but because Seoul has changed so much, I couldn't find anything that triggered memories. I was so disappointed. Development is good, but how can it be like this? Nothing that dates back to the old days remains. I could not have imagined what I saw on top of the high mountain nearby. They have dug up the whole place and built houses. Even the valley that I thought was so deep has been filled. Many houses have been built there. It felt so bleak. Still, I looked for the old house. It was difficult because of all the new houses. Little by little, I was able to discern the way there. How great it would be if there were even a model of the original Heukseok-dong house as it was! This kind of attachment is human nature; we retain significant events in our memory. Having emotional ties, those memories stimulate us to grow and develop further. We need museums for that reason. Likewise, you need to leave behind something like this in your families.

The foundation for hope

I have paved the way for Heaven to go. That's why when I visit Heukseok-dong and see the rocks on which I shed tears in those days...

When I was about 70 years old, I searched again for the house I had lived in during my school days, though I had failed to find it when I had searched a few years earlier. The Unification Church began as the smallest of houses. Did you know that a long time ago, I built a house?...¹⁵

When people tracing the history of the Unification Church come to Heukseok-dong... Heukseok-dong should become “Baekseok-dong.”¹⁶ That's what I think. That dark valley, where I was living in the old days, should become a foundation stone of historic value emitting the light of hope for all humankind. When I think about that... I also bought the church there. Why did I buy the church? It was not because there were many church members there. Even if I cannot find people who used to live there in the old days, many of their descendants are there. How inspiring it would be to meet their sons and daughters! The spirit of the history enacted there will resurrect. You can make this present age blossom by talking about the past and resurrecting that historical spirit. You should know that this is the reason we study about great people and history. Only the owner knows the value of these precious treasures. ♦

14 By Western reckoning

15 Probably a reference to the hut Father built from cardboard boxes in Busan during the Korean War

16 Father is playing on words: “heukseok” means “black stone” and “baekseok” means “white stone.”

11 Prominent Christian leaders of the time; Lee Ho-bin was the first leader of the Jesus Church religion.

12 A palace whose park-like grounds are open to the public

13 A district south of Heukseok-dong