

# First Months Back in Korea



September 30, 1943–May 4, 1944

*The following is from the sixth 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.*

I had gone to Tokyo to study, but they graduated us six months early so students could do military service. Under the Japanese, students of subjects related with engineering were graduated six months early.

By the time I graduated, the war in East Asia was in full swing. Because Japan needed people to support the military effort, they graduated us in September rather than in March.

## A ferry that was sunk

After I graduated, I bought a ticket on the ferry from Shimonoseki to Busan. From Busan I was to travel overland to Seoul. I would have boarded the Konlin Maru ferryboat on October 4. En route to Busan, the Konlin Maru, which I should have been on, was sunk.<sup>1</sup>

I had gone to the bus stop to catch a bus for Shimonoseki, but my legs wouldn't move. If I had been onboard that boat, I would have been killed, but Heaven stopped me from catching it. I know about such happenings. My mind told me to go back to my lodgings.

I didn't telegraph home saying I wasn't coming. I went off to the mountains with my friends. It was autumn. I told my friends, "Let's go to Busa Mountain," and we went hiking in the mountains. Our trip lasted several days, and we finally arrived back after a week.... My whole family was in a panic, especially my parents. Their son, who had said which boat he would be on and on which date and at what time he would arrive, hadn't arrived. You can imagine what an uproar my house was in. There was absolute pandemonium. My family spent two days in and out of the Chongju Police Station in North Pyong-an Province trying to find out what had happened.

It's about eight kilometers from my village to the town of Chongju. My mother ran those eight kilometers barefoot. Do you think she was of a mind to worry about what clothes or shoes she was wearing? She thought, my son has been killed! She ran barefoot to Chongju and then traveled immediately down to the Maritime Police Station in Busan for information.

She couldn't find my name on the list—what could she do? She had thought her son was dead. Her heart propelled her toward the police station barefoot; she didn't even notice when acacia thorns pierced her feet. She didn't realize thorns were in her feet until they

<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times* reported on October 8 that an Allied submarine had sunk the ship at 1 am on October 5 and that broadcasts intercepted from Tokyo indicated only 72 of 616 of those on board survived.



The harbor in Shimonoseki during the time Father was in Japan





**Left:** The Tokyo that Father left behind; with wartime production it had become an industrial center; **Right:** The Strait of Shimonoseki, the beginning point of Father's trip back to Korea; while staying in Japan he sometimes crossed the strait en route to Fukuoka.

festered and burst. When I arrived home ten or fifteen days later and heard what had happened, I realized that I had made a mistake. My mother had gone the 230 km from Chongju to Seoul, which took ten hours by train. From there, she traveled on to Busan. Imagine how frantic with worry she must have been. She is truly a great mother. I was not able to demonstrate filial piety toward her. I believe my mother loved me more than any other mother ever loved a son. I was unable to show her the proper respect. Why was that? I had to love you first....

#### Thoughts of Japan

When I had returned to my home in Korea, I thought of Japan; I will surely return there in twenty years. "Let's meet again then. I left not yet having evened the score with the Japanese Emperor, still unable to relieve the bitter pain of the Korean people, but the time will come when I will teach and lead the young men and women of Japan. Let us meet again then."

I did return to Japan twenty years later. On my return, I wondered most about the number of young men and women attending the Unification Church I visited. There were about five hundred young people gathered there. They had all come from wealthy families. I asked them what they wanted to do in the future and they all said they would go wherever I guided them. This was quite moving for me. They don't worry about the Japanese emperor; they just need the Unification Church and Rev. Moon to succeed. I asked those members if they were willing to be guided by me, and they said they would.

#### Sung-jin nim's mother

I married Sung-jin's mother<sup>2</sup> in accordance with Heaven's will. I did not marry her just of my own free will. I receive the command from the spirit world. She was

also following instructions from the spirit world when she met me. Her name was Choi Sun-gil. The meaning of the Chinese character for *choi* (최) is "high." *Sun* (선) means "first," and *gil* (길) means "happy." It's like a boy's name. Why did they name a girl *Sun-gil*? It was something the spirit world instructed them to do. Her name meant she was to be the first person to be happy. She was to be the first happy woman. It meant she would be more blessed than anyone else connected with God's providence.

Sung-jin's mother is a very smart lady. She's extremely good, and she is good around the house as well. The Choi clan was quite a famous clan in the Chongju district. She was the daughter of the head family. She was thrifty as well and being extremely strong-willed. She didn't like to be indebted to anybody. She graduated from elementary school, with only seven or eight years of schooling in all.

It was Heaven's will that we met. Even from the worldly point of view, Sung-jin's mother should have realized that there was nothing more important than her husband. Despite her shortcomings in every area she needed to adapt to the situation. She should have willingly accepted any sacrifice that might have resulted from her husband's working for the larger purpose. From the individual point of view, I chose Sung-jin's mother to be my bride because I thought the greater our differences, the more God's will would benefit.

She had a strong Christian faith. She was a model Christian. From that point of view, she represented the world and Korea, not in the position of a male John the Baptist but in the position of a female John the Baptist. The mission of Christianity was to prepare the bride for presentation, connecting her to God's will. Sung-jin's mother even spent some time in prison because she refused to bow to the Japanese Emperor's shrine. I had found that kind of woman, that kind of virginal woman.

I was the twenty-fourth person to be suggested to her as a potential husband. The person trying to find her a husband had searched throughout the whole



**Choi Sun-gil was from a devout Presbyterian family.**

2 Choi Sun-gil is the grandmother of Shin-mi nim, Shin-il nim and Shin-sook nim. Shin-mi nim was blessed in 2000; Shin-il nim and Shin-sook nim were blessed in 2006, in a blessing ceremony for members of the third generation of the True Family.





**During the Japanese occupation, village pupils spend long hours weaving rice sacks.**

district for a suitable man. Sung-jin's mother's family was also spiritually open. They had prayed with my photograph and had been taught by the spirit world. They received many revelations at that time. They saw two mirrors appear, in the east and in the west. In the center of heaven they became one; from its center, the sun rose and shone its light all over the world, and the moon and all the stars in the cosmos from the east, west, south, and north surrounded it. Under the light shining from the moon, all of creation was transformed into a flower garden. They received many incredible revelations like that.

After praying, they were taught all these things. In light of this, do you think she had some other man in mind? No, she was determined to marry me.

A woman—a distant aunt twice removed or so—just appeared one day because she felt determined to find a match for her nephew. She was quite a famous matchmaker. I like joking and I used to like teasing her. [Laughter] If I was hungry she would buy noodles for me. So I said to her, "If you are such a good matchmaker, why don't you go ahead and try?"

Soon after that, I left my hometown. Somehow or other, with this and that, it was a year and eight months before I returned. I thought that since I had been out of town, enough time had passed that the lady might have married someone else; she might not be interested in me. On the contrary, when I arrived home, my aunt yelled at me and said the lady was so charmed by me she had resisted marrying another man. She only wanted to marry me. [Laughter] As soon as I arrived my aunt said, "Let's go," and walked ahead of me. My mother came, too.... I became a topic of conversation in my town. As I recall, about five of us, including my uncle, went to the lady's house...

### **Meeting the prospective in-laws**

We arrived from Seoul at night and walked twenty-eight kilometers without sleeping. The road was not even paved; there was a lot of gravel on it. It was horrible to walk twenty-eight kilometers in shoes. When the sun rose, we could see an inn. We went there and asked where such and such a person lived and the innkeeper said her house was the one right in front of his building. The house was a good, tile-roofed house. It was the biggest house in the village.

I offered a bright greeting to the owner of the house, "Please forgive our rude intrusion as passers-by." Can you imagine my being so cheeky? Can you be so bold if you have walked all night long? "Could you please give us a room? I have not slept for three nights." My mother and aunt slept in one room and the others slept in a room in another part of the house. Because I was a prospective groom, they allowed me a room to myself.

However, we hadn't even woken up by noon the next day. [Laughter] The owner of the house had already prepared breakfast. What could she do? We finally got up around one-thirty or one-forty. I folded my bedclothes and





washed myself, since it was someone else's house and she had already prepared a bowl of water and some salt to clean my teeth. By the time I finished washing, it was already two-thirty, so I had no choice but to eat something. I quickly ate everything they had prepared for me. I didn't leave a thing. I asked her for some water and even some fruit for dessert, which they had not prepared.

A rumor began circulating. News that a prospective groom had come to see and interview the potential bride spread quickly all over the Choi village, which had about a hundred and fifty houses. The villagers talked about all kinds of things, such as how long the candidate-groom had slept...

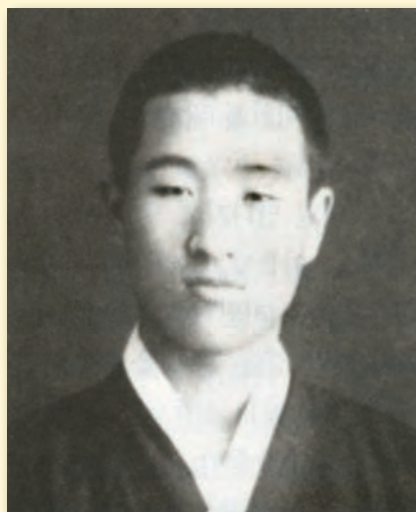
I wanted to know how magnanimous they were, so I asked them to cook a chicken for me. They had to catch and cook all the hens they had. They even caught a distant relative's hens for my family. They probably caught about fifty hens in all! So many people came to visit and eat with us. One ate and left; then another ate and left. [Laughter]

Then we had dinner. I had gone there to meet the prospective bride but I didn't say anything about meeting her. What kind of person acts in that way? [Laughter] I just told some interesting stories. [Laughter] I told them how Tokyo was and how the Japanese lived. I told them everything. I spoke until two o'clock. I mean two o'clock in the morning.

#### Engagement (December 1943)

It was past three in the morning. Past three! I thought that I should not wait to take some action. So, I said, "Though it's very late, please let me meet your daughter." I may have been the first prospective groom to ask to see the bridal candidate at three o'clock in the morning on the issue of marriage. I asked her to come in and had her sit down. I asked everyone else not to leave. Then I led them into a pleasant mood. I spoke about how school is, and other things...

Then I arranged to meet them the next day, when I would



**True Father at about the age he was when he became engaged**

test them in earnest. If I stayed with them for two days, which became three days... If someone stays for more than three days, he is sure to be spoken ill of. [Laughter] So, I asked them detailed questions, and told them I would go the road of the Unification Church. I went as far as telling her that she may have to live alone for five years after the marriage and that it might end in five years or seven years. Even at that time, I told her she should be prepared to live alone. Knowing her own situation at that time, she was in the position where she had to accept everything—that was the price, wasn't it? She had to meet whatever this other person asked. She said she would do anything. In this way, we married. After the engagement ceremony, I returned home.

And so we were engaged in December.

Sung-jin's mother was nineteen.

#### Change of plans for Manchuria

North of the city of Harbin<sup>3</sup> there is a place called Hailar. At that time, I was accepted to a job at an electric company in Jonup, and I planned to live there when I returned from school in Japan. Why did I want to go to Hailar? To learn Russian, Chinese and Mongolian. I planned to go there with the intention of later creating a continental base in Asia, and to spend three years learning the languages.

Jonup was in Andong-hyun in Manchuria. However, while I was planning to visit the branch of the electric company I was to work for, I saw the situation was not favorable and I decided it was not a good idea to go to Manchuria. So I went there to return everything related to the job I had gotten in Andong. I went there with a letter of resignation and all the necessary expenses and met the head of the branch.

<sup>3</sup> Today Harbin is the capital of Heilongjiang Province, China, one of three provinces traditionally referred to (collectively) as Manchuria. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, declared it the (largely unrecognized) nation of Manchukuo in 1932 and installed Pu Yi, the last emperor of China as its nominal ruler.



**The years that Father's testimony covers were difficult ones for Korea, especially in rural areas. These photos were taken in the 1930s.**

**Left:** The banner reminded Korean farmers of the percentage of their harvest that had to be offered to the Imperial Army; **Middle:** Farmers personally delivering rice to a government station, where it was loaded on containers; **Right:** Rice was weighed at this inspection center at Kunsan Port, from which it was shipped to Japan.





#### A visit to Kwaksan (February 1944)

Kwaksan<sup>4</sup> is a city between Chongju and Sunghyon. I remember it was around February. This time I was visiting in order to set the wedding date. Because of the bus schedule, I couldn't get there until it was already evening. It was about six when I got off at Kwaksan. The sun was already setting slowly. It was a fifteen *li* [1 *li* is equal to approximately 0.4 km] from Miss Choi Sun-gil's house. It was early February and there was snow. It snows until March in Pyong-an Province.

My oldest brother-in-law came out and said to me: "In our family, there is no such thing as a bridegroom-to-be coming and behaving like this before the wedding." He meant his family couldn't welcome me, and I had to go back home. This shows that his family was a good one, because what he said was based on the traditional standard. So, I had to go back down the seventy-*li* (twenty-eight-kilometer) road to Chongju with the snow coming down in large flakes. It was a poetic scene.

After I left, my mother-in-law-to-be returned and an uproar ensued. From her viewpoint this had created a big problem. Thinking the engagement might be broken off, she criticized her son. "How in the world could you do that?"

That was the situation, and Sung-jin's mother heard about it while visiting her uncle's house. She got dressed and left the house immediately. She caught up with me and insisted that I go back to her house, asking me how I could have just left. She said that she would take responsibility for whatever was happening in the house. I came to understand her character at that time. Oh, this woman was unusual—most unusual. Nevertheless, how could I possibly return to her house under those circumstances? So I told her I wouldn't go. She insisted she would go with me the remaining twenty kilometers to Chongju. She thus traveled with me the whole night, all the way to Chongju, telling me about her life on the way.

My uncle lived in the rural town of Chongju. We went

<sup>4</sup> Kwaksan is Choi Sun-gil's hometown.

there and I asked for breakfast for her. My intention was to send her back by bus. Still, she would not go back on any account. She asked my uncle's mother to be a witness and take her along to my father's brother's house, would you believe. There was no choice, so my uncle's mother took her to my house, where she stayed for a week. During that time, my father and mother saw her as affable, sensible and broad-minded. So, everybody including my parents, older sister and younger brother were taken with her. In that way, she mapped out her plan.

#### Kashima-gumi Construction Co., Seoul (around March 1944)

Kashima is a big Japanese construction company. I got a job working in their Electrical Department. I was the earliest to arrive in the office in the morning, and I worked the latest, too. In this way, I trained myself. It's pleasant to be the first one in the office. In the long run, it is a valuable experience. A person who works in that way becomes a successor and a master. Likewise, a person who gets up early in the morning because of Heaven's will and continues to do so all throughout his or her life is a master. That person becomes a master of the heavenly nation.

#### Marriage (May 4, 1944)

I married prior to Korea's liberation from Japan. I did so in response to Heaven's command. As you know, my bride became Sung-jin's mother.

Since the marriage was sudden, my mother and father had to prepare more than ten rolls of cotton cloth within two months. There are many stories I could tell about all the preparations. My whole life was pioneering. Everything I had done up to the time of getting married was pioneering. Even finding a horse.... Taxis were not available at that time. In order to fetch a wife living seventy *li* [28 kilometers] away, one had to go by horse. That was prohibited at the time of Japanese rule, but as I couldn't do that on foot, I got the horse myself.

We arranged the wedding date, but then my father-in-law passed away a week before the marriage....

We had observed Easter on April 17. On May 4, the wedding day, it poured with rain! As you can see, there was a great deal of difficulty in everything. It was a road of indemnity, full of twists and turns.

I knew many famous Christian ministers very well, including Rev. Lee Ho-bin, Han Jun-myung and Park Jaebong. They were quite close to me. So before I married Sung-jin's mother, I went to the New Jesus Church and got Rev. Lee to officiate for us. We were that close to each other. We were close because every time I dropped by his church in Pyongyang, which had a Sunday school membership of about a thousand, I taught that Sunday school. The Sunday school students thought I was famous. Since I had become close to ministers in that way, I Rev. Lee Ho-bin was well known to me too. That is why he officiated at the wedding. **TW**

*Note:* Father refers to Choi Sun-gil as "Sung-jin's mother." Koreans might refer to or address someone as their child's parent.