

## Sang Ik Choi, the First Unification Church Missionary - Part 9

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*Witnessing, April 1968*

At 6:30am the siren rang. Yamaguchi was cold as expected. When it snowed, the water froze. The beds were narrow but no matter if you got used to it. It was the same each morning, hard to get out of the warm covers. Put on the wretched blue uniform. Do the morning cleaning. I wore my old knit underwear inside, and the cotton vest outside. We went barefoot in the morning to the factory. On the way, at inspection point we had to undo the buttons again for a body check. After that, we ran to the factory, on boards that were frozen with snow and ice, entered the factory, and then we could put on socks.

Soon there was roll call, followed by breakfast. Nothing was as enjoyable as the meals. I got level 3 meals with ordinary labor, and felt a bit envious of those at hard labor who got level 2 meals. It was plain mixed-grain rice and miso soup but very tasty. After breakfast, we had a 5-min. break, roll call, and then started working.

The factory had no heating and was cold. There was a charcoal brazier only in front of the staff up front, and we couldn't even see it. At times I missed the fire of the briquette factory as we went for a bath, and those working there seemed happy. Just watching the smoke from afar, it felt warm. We worked all day, shivering. This might be called hardship. I was a little better off as I moved my body some. Work where you sat all day and moved your hands only was hard with the cold. We took a 10-min. break in the middle and continued working. Our greatest wish was that time would pass. There was no clock so we couldn't tell the time. We made a rough guess by the amount of work done. If we had to return to the room during work, we couldn't say a word. It is really hard for humans not to talk. If you spoke, a member of the prison staff yelled, "Hey!" We tried to hide from them and talk.

When lunchtime drew near, everyone said it's noon, it's noon...we listened closely for the wheels of the food truck and sound of dishes. We were all happy when we caught these sounds. We had fun trying to guess what was for lunch. The taste of food was truly appreciated here. We were grateful, and the food was tasty. At first it was the enjoyment of eating, but afterwards came the sorrow of it disappearing. Following lunch there was a break but those who exercised, those who got some sun, all had hands and feet swollen with frostbite. We got some ointment to put on it.

In the afternoon, work started again. Done at 4:30pm, and after dinner, on the way back to the wards, we had to go through a body check again. Back in the cells, we cleaned again and there was about an hour until 6:30pm bedtime. For those who studied this was fine but for those who didn't, it was a boring time. At 6:30pm there was a time for meditation in which I prayed. After getting to bed, I entered my land of dreams. The frostbit parts got itchy under the covers. I went over the day quietly, thought about Father and the Lord, closed my eyes and quietly prayed before sleeping.

We spoke about hardships but it wasn't as bad as the monastic life of the past. I felt sorry for my trinity brothers who may be more worried than me here. I felt I should face more suffering. Through the Divine

Principle, the Lord's words, when I thought of Father's heart, the Lord's heart, the course of saints and sages, I always felt sorry for my shortcomings, pettiness and tried to comfort Heaven with a single-minded, unbending spirit.

### **February (before my release)**

As I waited for a reply to the letter I had written to Korea on January 1, a letter did come from Mr. Jeon around the 8th, but I was now worried that nothing had come since. Even if my letter didn't get there, I was expecting a letter and each evening I would return to the cell, waiting. Around February 6, one was handed to me and I read it with excitement. Each character overflowed with brotherly love, which moved me. I held back tears, feeling sorry that they were suffering more in heart about my trial than I was. They had even sent me clothes from my distant homeland for my release. Oh, they were more to me than my own family. I was amazed by the greatness of the Lord's words. Such true love emerged from the Principle. I read the letter, again and again, overcome with thankfulness. I made a firm resolve to fulfill my mission whatever happened, on the honor of our trinity as well.

Three days later, after returning to my ward, an inmate friend said I had a letter at mail distribution time. I couldn't believe it, and seeing a white envelope, even less so, because there were no white envelopes in Korea. I found the name Song, and realized it was finally a letter from Brother Do-bin. Brother Do-bin did not write well in Japanese so I wondered how he had written it. It wasn't written by someone for him, but his feelings were clearly expressed. I read it again, and was overwhelmed. How did he study enough Japanese to write me a letter? I closed my eyes, and then remembered that soon after I joined the church, the two of us saw a movie called the "River of Wrath" at the Joong-ang Theater. Brother Song had said, that movie symbolizes Bong-choon (me) bringing the food of life to the Japanese people, and a vision of him rose before me.

### **Final day in prison**

February 17 - I woke about 5:00am and waited for dawn. The fact that today was the last day brought joy and my heart was full. Normally, I resented the morning siren but couldn't wait today. The skies began to get lighter, and that hateful siren now sounded in my heart happily. I received my final body check in the morning. I could never stand this. What were they doing to a child of God...but had endured as part of my course and now it was the end. I walked the hallway, over the boards to the factory. Knowing it was the last time, I wanted to savor each moment. I had waited so much for this day.

After breakfast, I started on the tasks but of course my heart wasn't in it. Still, working to celebrate my last, I waited for security to come pick me up. Those in the finishing section and the factory said, It's finally time! Enviously. I only thought about being picked up. Friends teased, saying, "They should hurry and come pick you up, from paradise!" I heard at times they came in the morning so I waited, but there was no word.

After lunch, someone from security came so I gave my farewell greetings, but the staff said, "Not so fast," sarcastically. He said I was to have an interview, so I thought it strange and asked the security, who didn't know. When I went to the security office, there was a young man waiting. I said, Immigration? And he said yes. But my goal was not to return to Korea; I had to stay in Japan.

Around 4:00pm, someone came from the security section. My heart danced, my face became hot and I was happy, the time had finally come. A handyman took my cap. I collected as many personal belongings as possible. I knew that when Jacob and Moses left the satanic world, they restored many things, so I imitated them, to restore things. Carrying the old eating utensils, I received the last body check. He praised me, saying I had served my time well. I was happy, that just as in the Lord's course, I had brought Satan to surrender.