

A Personal Testimony: On the Suffering Path of the Lord - Part 1

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I was born into the Oh clan of Dongchon Village in South Pyong-an Province, in 1914. My father was Oh Deok-je, and my mother, Kim Deok-hong. My father was the oldest of six siblings, and the one who was to carry on the family traditions. As a young man, he had studied modern sciences and done well for himself. At the time, he was staying in Seoul.

In accordance with the custom of the time, by which the wife did not accompany her husband wherever he went, my father lived in a small house and came to visit my mother now and then. My mother gave birth to two girls; I am the younger of the two. Since my father was the oldest son, for years, my mother prayed every day for a son, but my father only came home once a year and stayed only two days at that.

The Oh clan had converted to Christianity early on, and we went to a church that was about four kilometers away. My mother would carry me on her back.

We lived in a farming village just forty kilometers from Pyongyang. It was made up only of members of the Oh clan, about forty households in total. None of the families were poor. It did not have an actual school, only a village school where children learned to write Chinese characters.



The year I turned six [by Korean reckoning], the March 1 Independence Uprising[1] took place. I remember seeing people shouting Mansei while being carried on my mother's back.

Fortunately, there was a church in a village called Gamsan, and a school of the modern sciences was established there. To get there, I had to walk four kilometers. At the time, women were not allowed to go out of their homesteads, but my parents allowed me to go to school, saying that I was like a son to them. Worried that I might get hurt or become sick, my mother swept the road every morning when it snowed, and in the evening she came out to meet me and carried me home on her back. Six years passed in this manner.

The road consisted mainly of a ridge between rice fields and vegetable patches, which became muddy when it rained, the mud sticking relentlessly to my shoes.

I also had to pass along a narrow trail, which in spring was so dewy that the bottom half of my clothes became wet and in winter so buried in snow that my feet froze. My feet would become so numb that I lost all feeling in them but would thaw by themselves and become warm, by which time I would arrive at school. My school was founded by Christians, and except for Japanese language classes we did not speak Japanese. All the teachers had gone to college in Japan, but they had lost their jobs when they participated in the independence movement. My class was the first to graduate from that school.

The people who taught us had been college professors at one time, but they taught us without receiving a salary.

When I turned fifteen, I graduated from elementary school.

I was intending to continue my studies at Pyongyang High School. On the morning of the entrance exam, my grandfather said that it was enough for a girl to know how to read a newspaper and that I should not do something that no one in the clan had yet done. I had no choice but to give up higher education. I stayed in my room for a whole year, in complete seclusion. My mother, worried that I might become ill, thought that I would forget about studying if I married. It was customary then for people to marry young, so she hastily prepared to marry me off. Thus, I came to be married into the family of a church elder in Anju[2] in the year that I became eighteen.

Anju was about thirty kilometers from my parents' home by train. My father-in-law was a church elder, my mother-in-law a deaconess. Though theirs was a headstrong and strict clan, it was also one of the earliest to be enlightened. My father-in-law had been accused of being one of the ringleaders in the independence movement[3] and had suffered long imprisonment in Pyongyang. He viewed all Japanese people with a mortal hatred, but he was very intelligent and kind. I thus became the wife of the oldest son of five brothers. Though my husband's family was rich, they had strict rules in housekeeping and for eighteen years I learned endurance. I was highly praised for maintaining a harmonious and peaceful household. During those years, I gave birth to and raised six children.



Mrs. Oh remembered the March 1st Movement, a nationwide uprising against Japanese domination of Korea. The photo shows a rally in central Seoul during the uprising and the text of the Declaration of Independence.

The Spirit-led Christian Movement

Some time back, after I was married, my parents learned about the new truth.[4] At the time, Rev. Lee

Yong-do performed many works of the Holy Spirit, and they were greatly influenced. Having received grace through Rev. Lee, his followers built a temple and lived in joy. At first, the denominations other churches seemed to accept them, but later they accused the followers of heresy, and in time the followers formed a separate denomination. Reverend Lee died at the age of thirty- three.

A while later, Mrs. Kim Seong-do (mother of Jeong Seok-on, who was the father of Jeong Su-won, later one of the 36-couple husbands) of Cheolsan appeared as the "New Lord" and performed many works of the Holy Spirit, and all the followers shared whatever they had or did not have and experienced miracles. The Oh clan also shared this joy with them, though they were called heretics. Mrs. Kim, however, passed away. When the New Lord passed away, all the followers were devastated. They wept in sorrow and offered deep prayers.

Then a miracle happened. One of Mrs. Kim's followers, Mrs. Huh Ho-bin, received grace, and the works of the Holy Spirit recommenced. The "Inside the Belly" Church was founded through Mrs. Huh. Their doctrine taught that the returning Lord would not come on a cloud but as a person, that he would come to Pyongyang, Korea, and that whereas the Lord who came two thousand years ago came as a baby to Israel, the returning Lord would come as an adult. It also taught that the Fall had not occurred as the result of eating a certain fruit but that the Fall was sexual, and that the entire Bible was made up of metaphors and symbols.

My mother had not studied much; at best, she knew how to read hymn lyrics, but she confidently made effort to witness to me. At first, I thought that it was the traditional faith to believe the Bible literally, and I did not obey her. My mother grew impatient and called me stone-headed. When I opened my mouth to oppose her, she covered it, lest I sin through it.

She loved me best of all her children, and since I did not relent she had no choice but to offer bows incessantly for my sake every night, facing east. Not only that, but she said that when the Lord came the first time, he was born in a manger, did not dress well, was not believed by the Jewish people and suffered all his life until he died in wretchedness. Hence, we needed to do our best to serve the Lord at his Second Coming well and do everything for him that had not been done for the first Lord when he came. Thus, I became connected to the Inside the Belly Church.



Civilians desperate to get away from conflict during the Korean War clamber onto a southbound train at Gaeseong, near the border. Mrs. Oh travelled all the way to Busan in this way.

Escape from Communist Domination

Though Korea was liberated on August 15, 1945, Kim Il-sung followed the Russian army into northern Korea.[5] Our joy at being liberated was short-lived; everyone soon began to tremble in fear. During the night, Russian soldiers turned into thieves, and during the day they forcibly took whatever precious objects they could find, such as watches and so on. The communist ringleader first got rid of the landowners and made their servants the new owners. If you said one wrong word, you were arrested for being a reactionary or pro-Japanese.

Pandemonium reigned. Japanese people were killed on sight, and we had cause only to sigh deeply. At the time, those who were quick enough fled south. Thankfully, we were not purged because we owned many factories. I however, was so anxious all the time that I could not go on living in this way.

[1] The March 1st Movement (1919) was a peaceful but vocal uprising of the Korean people against Japanese annexation, and included a declaration of independence proclaimed in Seoul (the text is visible in the photo below). Yu Gwan-sun became famous as a patriot due to her role in this. The uprising was ruthlessly crushed.

[2] True Mother's hometown; but her marriage would have taken place some twelve years before True Mother's birth.

[3] That is, against Japanese domination of Korea

[4] Seemingly a reference to new understanding being brought by certain among the Korean spiritual Christian groups

[5] Through a decision reached at the U.S. Pentagon on August 10, 1945, Russian troops entered northern Korea and effectively created the Russian zone of occupation down to the thirty-eighth parallel. On September 9, American troops landed at Incheon and took control of the southern zone. This division was intended to be valid for only as long as it took for the Japanese army to be disarmed and for all Japanese people to be repatriated.