

Memories of Fishing with Father in Kodiak, Alaska in the Summer of 1996

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January 20, 2017



I was vacationing with my family at Rehoboth Beach, DE when the call was sent out, but fortunately, I called our home answering machine (you do remember the pre-cell phone days?) and heard the message from Kevin McCarthy, then DC church leader. True Father was calling all seminarians for a DP workshop and fishing in Alaska!

A few days later, on Aug. 25, I was on a plane to Seattle with several other seminarians from Washington, DC. We had a few hours of layover before the next flight, so we left the airport (this was pre-9/11 so fewer security restrictions), shared a taxi, and visited Pike Place Market in downtown Seattle.



Late that afternoon we flew from Seattle to Anchorage and then boarded a smaller plane for the final leg to Kodiak Island. The entire flight was a non-stop landscape of beautiful snow-capped mountains. At about 11 pm, we arrived and were picked up by Joachim Becker. It was pitch black; no street lights. We zoomed down the narrow road but after a long day of traveling, I was too tired to be scared.

As late as it was, especially for us jet-lagged East Coasters, Father was up so we stayed up with him. We sat on the floor with Father and watched the Il Hwa soccer team play Japan. There was a cozy feeling; everyone seemed to be dressed in flannels; a fire burned in the fireplace. Father watched the game intently until late in the night, now and then speaking quietly to our group. I remember Father speaking with Dan Fefferman at some point. Meanwhile, I sat in the back of the room trying to keep my weary body awake.

We slept in a building next to True Parents' house. It was sort of a multi-purpose dorm, dining room, and lecture hall facility. With so many people I found it too noisy to sleep so I found a closet with a door, which I called home for the week. It was just big enough for me to stretch out.

For the next four days, we sat in the lecture hall and heard our dear Rev. Ken Sudo give lectures on Divine Principle and internal guidance. The lectures began at 5 am and would last until late at night, but Rev. Sudo was at his best and shared deeply and heartistically about the Principle.

Interestingly, what I remember even after all these years and what brought tears to my eyes then, was a talk about Father and his first wife, Choi Sun-gil, and their son, Sung-jin. Father had traveled to North Korea (1946) leaving behind his wife and 3-month old son and did not see them again for several years. Rev. Sudo said Father truly regretted leaving his family behind and not being able to express his love but that he was duty bound to follow the “principle of restoration of elder sonship,” which demanded loving the enemy before loving those closest to him. Father said this was the only way to subjugate Satan and bring Satan to God’s side.

From his many meetings at East Garden, Rev. Sudo related an experience. Father was late to catch a flight but was desperate to continue delivering his message. Meanwhile, the True Children wanted to say goodbye. At the last moment without saying a single word to his family, Father ran to the car and sped off to the airport. Father later explained that if he hadn’t gone this way, loving the members before his own children, then the Movement would have perished and the providence been prolonged.

It’s interesting that this story has stayed with me all these years. Maybe it helps me to understand the actions of some of the True Children today: that they felt so rejected and still carry that hurt in their hearts. Rev. Sudo said Father had many tearful prayers of repentance about this situation and the providence, which demanded following the principle of restoration of elder sonship.

Back to 1996. We were taken on a tour of the island, which included a visit to the fish processing plant (Ocean Peace, Inc.). At that time, they were experimenting with fish protein powder, which Father saw as a viable means toward ending world hunger. We also celebrated the Day of the Settlement of Eight Stages on Aug. 31.

After days of lectures, breakout groups, and long walks in the nearby woods and to downtown Kodiak, it was time to go fishing. We were divided into several small groups, piled onto “Good Go” boats, and headed into the Shelikof Strait, which separates the island and the mainland.

We spotted seals, whales, and lots of marine wildlife. After a while, we stopped and put our lines over the boat’s side. One Japanese brother immediately caught a squid and enjoyed sushi for a snack. I didn’t catch a fish at that time though others were catching halibut, sea bass, and red snapper. After awhile, all the boats were directed to a beach where we gathered for an early dinner with True Parents.

There was a nearby stream and so I dropped my line in the water and thankfully caught a beautiful King Salmon. I brought it to Father who nodded his head approvingly and decided its fate by pointing to the barbecue.



Brothers and sisters all sat on the logs on the beach with our True Parents surrounded by Alaska’s magnificent beauty before a fire cooking freshly caught fish. The meal was totally delicious and our hearts and minds bursting with contentment and satisfaction. Soon there was singing and testimonies. True Parents were completely comfortable in this rugged setting and clearly relished being with the seminarians.

Looking at the video 20 years later brings back many memories and is a wonderful reminder of the amazing adventure we’ve had with our True Parents and especially their love and fondness for UTS.