

Father's Life in His Own Words - Part 8

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Republished by International HQ Mission Office May 11, 2021



I'm a very tough man. I'm a person who absolutely hates losing.... People said, "The younger son of that family that came from Osan, once he determines to do something, he will definitely do it."... If I said I would do something, I did it. People all knew that. If I got involved, for anyone who stood against me, there was no alternative but to give up. My mind was satisfied when three generations, including the person's grandparents, submitted to me. ... Once, someone made my nose bleed and then ran away. I waited in front of his house for thirty days and at last, his parents gave in to me. They gave me a steamer full of rice cakes, which I took home. [Laughter]

People of my generation, in those days, played Ttag-ji a lot. Do you know what [Ttak-ji](#) is? [Yes.] I played it very well. Also, penny pitching: you pitch coins against a wall and whichever one lands farthest from the wall wins. I used to play using a hole in the ground with the winner being the one whose coin got into the hole or closest to it. I was a champion at that.

When I was young, when I arm-wrestled with anyone my age, I never lost. I never lost at wrestling either. If a man can do those things, he is very useful. Don't you think so? [Laughter]

To give you an example, there was a boy in my village who was three years older than I. I wrestled with him once but lost. I'm sure those who have experienced living in a rural area would understand. When spring comes, acacia trees suck up water, and if you peel the outside layer, it peels off completely just like pine tree bark. The peeled off layer of that tree is very tough. With the guy who had beaten me in mind, I wrestled against an acacia tree, saying, "Oh that guy! I'm not going to eat until I sit on him." For the next six months, I couldn't sleep well until I had knocked that boy down and sat on him. Until then, I forgot about eating and sleeping. I'm a person with that kind of determination.

A sense of justice

When I was young, I often fought in one place or another. If I came across a big boy punching a small boy in my village, I exchanged places with the small boy and fought for him.

Whenever I came across boys fighting, I watched them fight for a while. If the bad boy was winning, I went in and fought for the losing boy. I went into the fight saying, "Hey you! You are wrong." If I thought it was the right thing to do, I was a person who would fight at the risk of my life. Everyone in my village was afraid of me....

Before I was ten years old, all the kids within twenty li [about 8 kilometers] were my followers. I said, "Hey, I'm going to be in your village on such and such a day," and with all the other kids we went and had a group fight. We engaged in that kind of roughhousing. If a boy came to me in tears, saying he had been beaten up and told me who was responsible, I went, "Oh, yeah?" and confronted the bully myself, even if it meant having to go without sleep that night. When I found him, I'd call him out and protest against his behavior. "Hey, you!" I'd say, "You beat up my friend, didn't you? How many times did you hit him? I'll teach you!"

When young unmarried men harassed young women passing by, I stood up to them. I'd say, "Could you guys do that if she were your sister?"...

I had a very impatient and stubborn temperament. If I thought I was right, I never hesitated. I could only sleep if I had settled everything I'd intended to. If I hadn't, I just couldn't sleep.



Full of curiosity

When I was twelve years old, I visited the grave of my great-grandfather. I saw his corpse when it was dug up and moved to a different location. I was very surprised. I thought, "When a person dies, he becomes like that. The eyes and flesh have all disappeared, only the bones remain."

You have all seen a skeleton, right? When I saw the skeleton, I felt, "Oh, are those the bones of a human being? My parents or my grandparents explained to me what my great-grandfather had looked like, but looking at the bones, he looked terrible. I thought that if my parents look

like that, I must also look like that. I agonized over this a lot.

If an old man in the village died, I had to ask why he had died. I just could not live without knowing. If I did not know why he had died, I was so curious about it that I always went even to the funeral and asked how he had died. That sort of behavior led me to know very clearly what was happening in the village.

I was so curious about everything that was going on. When I went to another village and saw an old man shoveling dung, I did not just pass by. Other people all held their noses because of the smell, but I was curious to know what kind of nose the old man had that kept him from being bothered by the smell. What had happened to his nose? I was so curious about that. I thought it was strange, so I had to go and ask.

When my mother gave me an apple or a melon, I always asked where she got it. My mother would say, "From where? Your brother brought it from somewhere." Then I'd asked, "Which field did it come from?" If he had brought it from a field, I'd ask if an old woman had picked it, a man, a young man, or a young woman? I was so curious about these things.

I had many sisters. There were six of them. There were six young women in my family, and they each had a bag. [Laughter] We all lived in the same house, but they all had individual bags. My elder sister's was the biggest. It was this big. The younger they were, the smaller the bag. I was in the middle. It was so interesting to find out what was inside those bags. [Laughter] If you look inside an owl's house, everything is there. My sisters' bags were just like that.

An eight-year-old matchmaker

When I was small, if I said it would rain that day, it did. Once I sensed that someone in our village would die within a week, and an old woman from the village actually passed away. There were many episodes like this.

I was already different. Sitting in my village, if I sensed that some old man from a particular family from the upper village was not feeling well, he would become sick. I was right. I knew everything.

Since I was eight years old, I've been a champion of matching people. If someone brought two pictures for me to look at and if I predicted that the couples lives would not go well were they to marry, it proved to be correct. When I threw a picture away, it was because that couple's fortune was bad, and they would go wrong. If I just put it down, it meant things would go well. Those who married all had children and lived a good life.... I have been doing this since I was eight years old. I'm now close to eighty, so I must be a professional by now, right? Just by looking, or smelling, I understood. By simply looking at how a person sat down or smiled, I understood everything clearly.

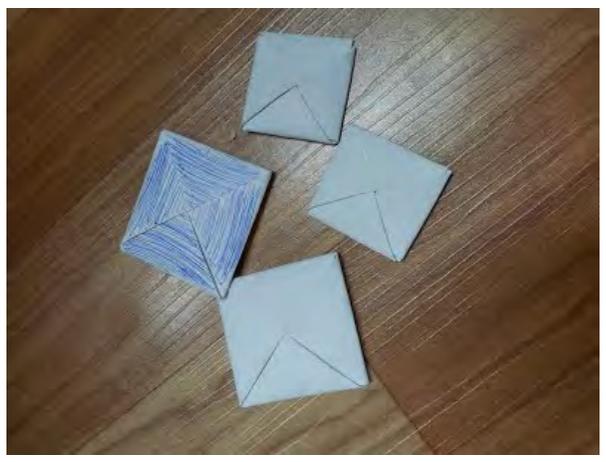
I was the younger son of a family from Osan. I was the second son, born as Heaven's beloved who would be the savior and pride of the Moons.

Ddakji (딱지)

Rule of Ddakji

You can play ddakji with many other people.
First, put other ddakji on the ground and hit it.
If you turn ddakji the other side, you can get other ddakji.

- [Home](#)
- [Ddakji \(딱지\)](#)
- [Hopscotch \(사방치기\)](#)
- [Jack \(공기놀이\)](#)
- [Korean hacky sack \(제기\)](#)
- [Yut \(윷놀이\)](#)
- [Sitemap](#)



How to make a ddakji.

YouTube Video



See how to play ddakji.

YouTube Video

