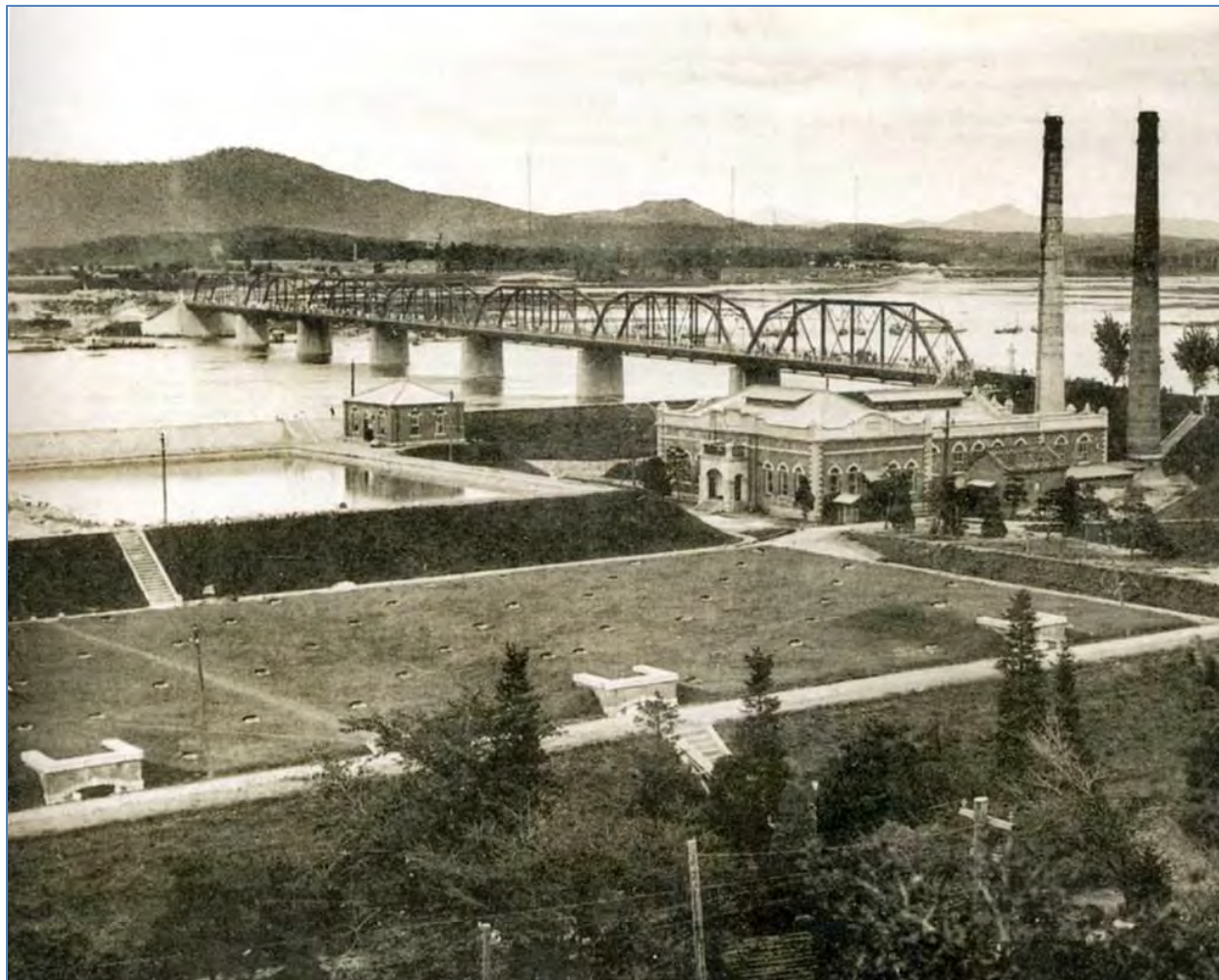


Father's Life in His Own Words - Part 15

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The Han footbridge seen from the Noryangjin Reservoir

Investigating back-alley life

Don't you think there were things that I was envious of when I was your age? You often go to movies, don't you? You should know that there was a time that I did not see movies at all and would not even walk past one. Why? This is because I had to cross the line to where it was impossible for me to fall into sin if I were to go into such places, or even sleep or live there. Nowadays I can permit you to go to movie theaters on the condition that you maintain the standard at which you cannot be corrupted. After you achieve that standard, everything will be fully open to you.

In the old days, Jongro 3-Ga^[1] was a red-light district. I thought I should investigate it. Why must beautiful women have to do such things with just anyone? If they were your sisters, what would you do? What if they were your daughters? What would you do if you were their older brother or father? That is a serious question. I am thinking of how I talked with those women during the night. Everyone should pass through that. We should love our country, shouldn't we? We need to love our fellow citizens; isn't that so?

I needed to understand that world. How could I save them if I do not understand what that world is like? You should understand their sorry situation and the whole story behind by talking to those involved, in order to save them.

What are leaves without roots? When I went to that kind of place, I made an internal determination beforehand, so that I could not be snared by anything that goes on there. Members of the Unification Church should go through such a training process. You need that kind of training.

When I was living in Heukseok-dong, though a streetcar ride downtown cost only five jeon,^[2] I walked. It took forty-five minutes to the Hwashin Department Store^[3] on foot. I walk fast. It took an hour and a half for an average person. On a hot summer day, I walked to the city in my school uniform, sweating. What did I do with the money I saved? I gave it to the poor. I said, "I'd like to give you a thousand tons of gold and help you immediately. For now, though, I'll give you this on behalf of the whole nation. I hope this will be the seed of good fortune."

I lived in Noryangjin for a while then. It cost five jeon to go to school by train, but I walked and donated

the money. I did the same with the money saved by walking home. I remember patting the trees while walking, saying, "Grow well until I become someone in this country. Don't die; let's grow together." Those trees are all gone now, though.

When you take a train, bus or taxi, you should remember the standard I set as I walked from place to place. You should have the same attitude of heart toward this nation and people as I did, anxiously longing for the day when God could embrace the country.

When I received tuition from home, it was gone within a month. I just gave it to poor people. I could tell many stories like that. How did I pay for my schooling? I did several things, including newspaper delivery and sales. I remember those days very clearly. I have also experienced living in a slum, in rags, with lice crawling everywhere. I have had that kind of experience.

One time, returning to Seoul from home with tuition money in hand, I met a dying person. I spent all the money I had to put him in a hospital to make him better. I cannot forget the fact that that situation made paying my tuition only possible with the help of my friends. I know how much of an impression the experiences I had during that short period have made on my life. I emptied my wallet of my tuition, lodging fees and money to buy books that time. I vividly remember carrying him a mile on my back to the hospital.



One of the houses in Heukseok-dong where Father lodged as a student. The opposite side of the facing wall in the photo above. Father stayed in the end room.

Anguished, tearful prayer

When you pray, you should pray so hard that your back is bent and calluses form on your knees. There still remains a callus on each knee that formed when I was praying in the old days. Prayer should be offered on a hardwood floor. You should shed tears as well. I would experience a peak several times in prayer; I shed so many tears the tearstains didn't have time to dry.

Knowing that so many people pass away without coming to understand the purpose of life, I offered tearful prayers every day to solve that issue. While I prayed, I shed so many tears that I could not even see the sunlight. That is how I found this path.

My prayers lasted twelve hours on average and sometime seventeen or eighteen hours. I was on my knees and did not have lunch. I wept loudly. I could not have continued without this prayer. It would seem that all sides were blocked and there was no way forward. I saw the pin-prick sized opening only when I prayed. By undergoing such trials, I found the Principle.

There is a saying that hard work is never wasted. Isn't it true? You should labor hard for God. You need to enter into a state where you yearn for God so much that you would go crazy without Him. If God dwelt on earth, He would visit us a thousand times a day. However, since that's not the case, God sent me.

Because I have some mysterious quality, you cannot help feeling love for me. Do you feel affection for me for no reason?

There was a time in the cold winter when my cotton clothes were soaked with tears from prayer. Think about how astounding that is. I offered many serious, sharply penetrating prayers.

I cried for the nation under Japanese occupation... I shed more tears for the nation than any patriot. Even now, the streets in Heukseok-dong... Although the road to Yongsan[4] is now paved, I feel as if something is missing. There were trees such as poplars in those days. I still cherish the good impression I had of the area then. Myungsudae, the river...

When you cross the Han River, you can see an island in the center of the river. On that island, I would lament and speak to the river, saying, "Although you have been flowing for thousands of years, do you flow with the single-minded desire to embrace this nation and people? Water can be a lifeline. Han River, you should be a stream decorating this beautiful and fertile land like a rivulet of mother's milk. If you do not do that, I will." This is vivid in my memory. There was only one bridge across the Han River then. I would stop at this island while walking across the bridge.

You students who are studying hard! When I was studying in the old days, I cried even after reading one page because on every page I was looking for secrets that might save the nation. I prayed in the same style. Make your hand into a fist. When I was praying in those days, I clenched my fist so tight, it hurt when I opened it. Can you imagine how tight a fist I made? I was making pledges, clenching my fists tight, regardless of how much I was sweating.

Myungsudae and Seobingo

There was a sandy beach along the Han River at Seobingo[5] in the old days. It is sad to see the beach is gone. Don't you feel that way? It's good to see buildings standing on that spot, but I deeply miss the beach. I have many memories from there. The Myungsudae Worship Hall,[6] which my friends and I built, was in Heukseok-dong. On many Sundays, the church in Myungsudae and one in Seobingo held a joint service on the beach. When the wind was blowing, it would stir up the sand and small pebbles. It was bad, so we found a place in between piles of pebbles to sit closely together to offer our Sunday service.

Notes:

[1] A borough of Seoul

[2] A defunct monetary unit equal to one-hundredth of a won

[3] This four-story building, the first Korean-owned department store in the country, was a landmark said to be at the center of Seoul.

[4] A borough in central Seoul

[5] Seobingo was almost directly across the Han River (on the north side) from Heukseok-dong, which is close to the south bank of the Han

[6] The name of the church of a breakaway Christian group, the Jesus Church, led by Lee Hobin