

## Sang Ik Choi, the First Unification Church Missionary - Part 2

Bong-chun Choi

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*On December 16, 1964, True Parents, Ye Jin Nim, Hyo Jin Nim and church members seeing off the first missionary to Japan, Sang Ik Choi (Bong Choon Choi - Papasan Choi) (to Father's immediate right) who had started his mission there in 1958*

I was deeply interested in the Last Days. As God said his kingdom would come before too long, I believed that His will would be accomplished when the time was right. I wanted to do what I could to accomplish God's will. And so I earnestly asked Master to send me to Japan as a missionary.

The following year, he called me to him and instructed me to go to Japan.

I had an appointment to see Master in Daejeon, so I left Seoul station the morning of May 29, 1958. Elder Cheong, Mr Gi-joo Song and Gwang-yeong<sup>[1]</sup> saw me off.

### **At Gapsa Buddhist Temple**

May 29 - I arrived at Daejeon later than scheduled. Master had sent a church member to wait for me, but that person had left, so I visited Master at Gapsa Temple, together with Jang-lim and Gi-yong, the three of us. We arrived at Gapsa late at night. It was a quiet place in the mountains, a beautiful retreat. We met with Master, who was out taking a walk with the disciples, and I handed him the letter of recommendation that Mr. Eu had written him. He read the letter right away under the moonlight, and I was happy, because

I believed he would be pleased.

After the walk in the dusk to cool off, we returned to the retreat, opened a gift of food from Mr Gwangyeong, a Seoul member, and shared it. Thinking that tonight would be my last night with Master, I wanted to sleep next to him. Master did not say anything, and I was also silent, keeping calm in front of the others.

May 30 - When I woke up, Master was gone. I wanted to see him quickly before taking the morning train and went looking for him in the mountains. Master was there. Neither of us said much. We returned to the room, and had breakfast. I asked Jang-lim to take a photograph with his camera, and we took a final picture.



*Gapsa Buddhist Temple*

The last time I saw Master was at Gapsa Temple. I had fervently asked him to say a prayer for me, but since there was no response, I had repeated myself, assuming he hadn't heard me. He told me he wanted to pray for me and give me his blessings, but that if I wasn't able to go, he would have to pay indemnity. When I insisted I wouldn't cause any problems and begged him to pray for me, Master finally did so, as if he had no choice.

After saying my final greetings, I came down the mountain, singing the holy song He Has Called Me. "Without esteem, without renown, I only wish to follow," I sang. The weather was nice and warm. The trees and grass were a lush green, and I walked down the hill alone, in high spirits. I would take a few steps and look back, sorry to part with Master, but departed with joy, hope and determination. I thought, "Even if I die and die again and die a hundred times, I will never fail to go down the path I have chosen." In my heart, I made my pledge.

I was supposed to get on the train quickly, when the bus had a flat tire, leading to a delay. I barely made it to the train that was already moving, and overcame departure crisis number one, through faith.

I arrived at Busan late in the afternoon, but as I was keeping my mission to Japan a secret and didn't want others to know, I didn't stop by the Busan church. I didn't even go home, but stayed at my friend Nak-hee's home.

### **Smuggler's boat**

June 1 - I had an appointment to meet on June 1 with Captain Yong-geun Kim, who had promised me the trip before I left for Seoul, so I went to the Tabaek tea shop, discussed the trip to Japan with him and left.

The plan was that preparations for setting sail were all in place, but he had not prepared at all. He seemed to be a sincere man, so I had not asked others but had planned to go to Japan with him, had already paid him. Yet I discovered that his promise was not true, and struggled. Although postponing the trip meant more expenses, I tried to follow him with patience. He kept putting it off, one day, and then another, and I could not endure this.

I waited late into the night, but the ship never came. Around midnight, I was hiding in some trees looking out at the sea. Just then, the smuggling ship came, and I got on board, but the guide on the ship was a police officer. They seized me, beat me, and then let me go again. I would wait around for another ship to board, and the police would make another appearance, seize us, and beat us again.

After that, the Master sent a person with a letter he had written himself. In the letter, he told me to give up my trip to Japan and to come back. But how could I have faced the Master having departed with such firm resolve? Since I couldn't defy the command to return that the Master had given me, I had the following message sent to him: "Just give me three more days. If I can't leave the country within those three days, I'll keep my word even if I die trying to swim across the sea." Even if I were to die, I had made the decision, believing that fulfilling my pledge was for the sake of the Japanese people, and for the sake of the salvation of the world's people.

As I was so anxious, my mind and body were wasting away. The ship hadn't left Korea, but why hadn't I returned to Seoul? The Master's order pierced my heart and I suffered each day.

Then I heard that a ship was coming, and waited overnight on a small island. Outwardly, it was a trade ship with the proper documents, but it was actually a smuggler's boat. I tried to sneak on under the strict eyes of the authorities, but could not.

June 15 - A ship came. I bought food and finally got on board at night. As it was waiting for other passengers, it stayed until the 16th, and departed about 1:00am. I was finally sailing toward Japan, which had been my dream. I had made it past the strict watch of the authorities thus far, but it was not safe until we were beyond the maritime boundary line. As I had absolute faith, I believed things would be alright, but there was still man's portion of responsibility of wisdom, and because the people around me were not cooperative, what would heaven do? If the police caught me, all would be in vain. I asked the captain, how much longer until the Lee Line. He said about five more hours, and it seemed like a full day. Finally, when the day began to dawn in the east, we were safely past Korea's maritime boundary and had now entered the territory of the Japanese authorities. Out of the frying pan, and into the fire!

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[1] Presumably three early members