

## The Japanese Sisters' Mission to International Seafoods of Alaska (ISA)

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*True Father, Joo-chan Choi, president of International Seafoods of Alaska (in the dark blue jacket) and participants in an Ocean Training Workshop came to see the many halibut they had caught laid out together on the floor of Pacific Pearl. Keiko is in the pink sweatshirt.*

When True Parents came to Kodiak in 1983, True Father asked the leaders there, How can we make International Seafoods of Alaska (ISA) a successful fish plant? They replied, If Japanese members work in the fish plant, we can do it. True Father accepted that and gave the direction to bring fifty Japanese sisters, between the ages of twenty-three and thirty years old that were blessed to American brothers but had not yet started family life to work in the fish plant. [Forty had been blessed among the July 1, 1982 2,075-couple group in New York and ten were among the October 14, 1982 6,000-couple group in Seoul.]

The leaders in Kodiak were shocked and surprised because they had meant Japanese brothers. Originally, Father brought fifty Japanese sisters to Kodiak in order for us to long for the True Adam, namely Father, and to be born again as representatives of True Mother, being able to give rebirth to our husbands. Father had this hope and educated us. After going through various difficult situations, forty-three of the fifty sisters remained in Kodiak until the end.

### **A workplace to restore the world**

In 1983, the fifty Japanese sisters received assignments to go to Kodiak, Alaska, from all over the United States. Before going to Kodiak, we formed a few teams to do fundraising, and then in the spring of 1984, we came to Kodiak. Our first job was to process huge halibut, however, it was more like pushing and pulling them around. [Some exceed 400 lb.(180 kg.)]. In the summer, we processed salmon together with many non-member male workers. In the fall of that year, a few sisters stayed in Kodiak and the rest of us went fundraising again in the mainland US until the next spring.

We repeated this pattern for two years. From 1986, we all started to work year-round in Kodiak. True Father told us, "Cut fish and make the condition for the restoration of humankind." So, we considered our workplace to be an altar on which to make an offering to Heavenly Parent. We worked hard, overcoming our aching bodies and the coldness of winter.

### **Greater aspirations**

At some point in December 1988, if I remember correctly, True Father said at East Garden that he was going to send the Japanese sisters in Kodiak to the world as missionaries in fisheries in various areas. When I heard this, I was a bit shocked. I was wondering whether I had enough faith to go out as a pioneer. But at the same time, I thought, "If it's True Parents' wish, I would like to do it. If I can have a parent-child relationship with True Parents, I will go anywhere." So, I prayed, "Please let me deeply establish a parent-child relationship with True Parents." Heavenly Parent answered my prayer in the summer of 1989, when True Parents came to Kodiak several times.

I would like to share a few of my experiences with True Parents in that summer of 1989. I believe that it

was on True Parents' first visit to Kodiak in 1989 that True Father and leaders who were attending the Ocean Training Workshop caught many halibut in one day. That night I was cleaning those halibut with a couple of other sisters. From seeing so many halibut spread all over the floor in Pac Pearl [Pacific Pearl, the largest fish processing facility on Kodiak Island, which ISA bought in 1986] I was thinking to myself, "Wow, they caught so many! If True Father sees them, he will be excited and happy!" I was smiling to myself. Then there was a telephone call from North Garden [True Parents' residence when they were in Kodiak].

"True Father is coming to Pac Pearl right now to check the plant." True Father had already come to see Pac Pearl from corner to corner. Why was he coming in the middle of the night when the plant was not operating? I understood immediately that he had caught my thinking, How excited and happy he would be if he were to see so many halibut on the floor. True Parents know even the corners of our minds.



*The "tiny, tiny halibut" that made this personal photograph with True Father possible*

### **Fishing with True Father**

Before True Parents came in July or August, I heard that True Father had said, "Be a person who is able to carry the cross of the Lord during his Second Advent." Even though I did not understand how heavy the cross was and what carrying it entailed, I prayed, clenching my teeth and trembling.

I was assigned to clean North Garden before True Parents came. When True Parents arrived at North Garden we greeted them in the entrance area of the house. I bowed to True Parents, looking downwards, while waiting for them to go upstairs. I felt Father's gaze. When I lifted my face, I found that True Father was looking at me. I thought it was my misunderstanding and looked down again, but True Father was still gazing at me. "Why me?" I thought. I felt a desire to hide in some hole. I thought later that True Father must have heard my prayer. That evening I felt a longing for True Father and wanted to see him very much. So, early the next morning, I went to the ISA dock to catch a glimpse of him before he left to go fishing. When True Father was preparing to leave with Mr. Joo-chan Choi and David Rogers (who was the driver of True Father's boat),

True Father asked Mr. Choi if I could go fishing with them. From the boat, Mr. Choi shouted to me, "King-san, can you go fishing with Father right now?" I hesitated for a moment. It is cold at sea even in summertime. I was not wearing proper fishing attire. What would I do if I needed to go to the bathroom on the boat, etc.? But I brushed off those ideas and thought that I would regret it all my life if I said no. I answered immediately, "Yes I can." I ran and picked up rain gear and boots, and even went to the toilet.

When I got to True Father's boat, the other boats had left the dock and were waiting for Father's boat to leave. The Japanese leaders in the other boats were all wondering whom True Father was waiting for, and who was the guy that came to his boat. I was wearing a rain gear jacket and hat. I do not think they recognized me at all. In the boat, I did not know how I should act in front of True Father. However, True Father was in a picture with me when I caught a tiny, tiny halibut, so I have a keepsake.

### **An intense fishing tournament**

On Aug 31, 1989, True Parents held a ceremony, *Pal Jong Shik*, in Kodiak, Alaska. Due to True Parents' victory, we received the grace that we could participate with them. At the end of the ceremony, True Parents posed for pictures with Japanese sisters in groups of three or four at a time. After my opportunity to go fishing with True Father, he decided that he would take twelve sisters to go fishing with him, one at

a time. He held a lottery to pick the twelve. One Sunday morning, we were listening to True Father's speech after Pledge Service. That day, one of those twelve sisters was going out to fishing with True Father. Somehow, I wanted to go fishing again with True Father that morning. I felt bad because I thought I was greedy to want to go again. Then, True Father said, "OK today, Japanese sisters, have a fishing tournament. Go to the river and catch two silver salmon. I will give a prize to the sister who catches two silver salmon and has the biggest one." I thought he knew my heart and let us have a fishing tournament. I was happy.



*Keiko receiving the prize money for having caught two silver salmon and the largest salmon*

Fortunately, that day I did not have work, so from the morning I was very enthusiastic about fishing and decided to go to the Buskin River. I went there by van with the other sisters. I was planning to fish in the river, so I wore hip boots. But soon I found my hip boots had a hole in them and I had to go back to the bunk house to change my clothes. I returned to the Buskin River, and around 2:00 pm, I finally caught my first fish. After that I tried and tried, but I could not catch a second one. I desperately wanted to catch two silver salmon, because True Father said so. I went to different spots on the river, but I still could not catch my second fish. It became dark and the moon rose over the river. Now they told us that the last van to go back to the bunk house was leaving soon. I was walking along the river, carrying my fishing pole on my shoulder, somehow still hoping. Then I heard the splashing sound of fish coming up the river. OK, this was my last chance. I cast my line. I got a fish on and I caught my second one at the very last moment as True Father had instructed. It turned out that one of my two salmon was the biggest one. So, I received the prize from True Father at midnight a few days later. Through this experience, I was taught that when we give 100 percent to follow True Parent's directions without giving up, Heaven helps us and we can bring the victory.

Recently, I found out from the sister who went fishing with True Father that day that he himself invested so much effort to catch two silver salmon. When True Mother sent Mr. Yoshihisa Inoue [who ultimately was vice-president of ISA] to ask True Father to come back to North Garden by midnight, he did not move an inch and just continued fishing. I now understand that because of True Parents' most sincere dedication, I could catch two salmon. My effort was 5 percent and True Parents had already prepared everything else in order to give grace to their child. I repent now that I did not understand True Parents' hearts very well.

During True Parents' last visit in 1989, True Father gave us money to help us to go our mission countries. True Parents' parental heart toward the sisters was incredible and amazing. To my wonder, I felt True Father's love coming like heat from a stove or direct from the sun onto my skin. The more I recall, the more I remember that our True Parents came into contact with each one of the sisters very personally and spiritually to bond with us as parent and child.

We were eye-witnesses to True Parents' dedication to the ocean providence, and we received an ocean providence mission from them. Therefore, wherever we go, we have been interested in the ocean. I feel now that even though True Parents poured abundant love upon me, I had such a small container to receive it. I am still striving to grow.

We are truly grateful and eternally indebted to True Parents who have brought all the victories. And thank you, True Father -- for having True Mother remain with us right now on earth.