

Father's Life in His Own Words - Part 45

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The sudden influx of half a million Chinese troops late in 1950 drove the UN Forces back south of the thirty-eighth parallel

Taking the Refugee Trail to Begin Anew

Immediately after getting out of the Hungnam labor camp, Father had travelled to Pyongyang to look for any remaining followers after his almost 3-year absence. He invested himself for many weeks, but then he reluctantly decided he must move on, and go south where there might be the opportunity to make a new start even though his country was still embroiled in the terrible civil war, that ironically had rescued him from the death camp. Now that he had survived almost certain death in prison, Father was determined that he would succeed in his mission.

The search and inspection of the Homeland Defense Corps

Many things happened as we fled south. Won-pil wore a winter cap and an overcoat. Because it was very cold, he tucked it in and followed behind me. He looked like a woman. His face and voice were also feminine. At the time he did not even have a hint of a mustache.

You may not know it, but I keep him near me because there is some element of his ancestral background that matches the providence. This aspect of his background is known only in the spirit world.

A relentless march to the Imjin River in the dead of night

We came out of the North, experiencing all these hardships on the way, and when evening came all the refugees were worn out from walking. It is extremely tiring. That being the case, the others in my group wanted to go into a village and sleep, but I insisted we cross the Imjin River even if it meant walking all night. The others all went to sleep. Because I insisted we go on, my companions must have felt how obstinate Rev. Moon is!

Don't you think so? They were downhearted. It was night and everyone else was sleeping, but we three all came down to the Imjin River, pushing the bicycle. When we reached the banks of the river we slept there. It was about half past one or two in the morning.

It is about thirty kilometers from Cheongdan to the thirty-eighth parallel. We followed that road on a

moonlit night. I'll never forget that. We were so tired that Kim Won-pil dozed as he walked, carrying his bag. Someone who isn't aware of the situation might behave like that, but I went faster with every step I took. Something told me we needed to reach the banks of the Imjin by that evening. At times like that, I'm on full alert and implement an emergency plan of operations. I extend my antenna to its fullest.

There was a house there, and just a step away from it was South Korea. No one lived in that house. Though it was ripe with all kinds of smells, I thought it was the blessed land. In an emergency, we'd only have to take one step to reach South Korea.



A UN forces checkpoint overlooking the Imjin River (near the border between North and South Korea) during the Korean War

Across the Imjin River and on to Seoul

My next worry was that the Imjin River would not be frozen and we wouldn't be able to cross, but the weather turned cold and it did freeze. So we awoke at the break of day and set out. The Imjin River was frozen and we could finally cross it. Those behind us were all intercepted by withdrawing UN troops and all of them were sent back. We were the last ones to cross the river. That is how we came to South Korea.

If we had delayed for even a minute, what would have happened? A person's fate can be determined by time; sometimes it can even be ruined by it. Things like this happen all the time in our everyday lives; how much more would they happen when following the path decreed by Heaven? It was such a serious situation! None of you understand this.

If climbing over a hill meant salvation, should you persistently push others forward, or not? If they don't want to go, you should force them to go, even if that means seizing them by their necks and dragging them onward. That is love.

Prayer at the thirty-eighth parallel

I cannot forget the prayer I offered as I crossed the thirty-eighth parallel:

"Heavenly Father! I am going to South Korea. I came to North Korea but failed to fulfill Your will, and with the sorrow of a someone who couldn't succeed, I was confined to a prison here. Now I am going down to South Korea with others who are also pursued. I know even as I go down this road, I will have to come back up some day, and if I cannot cross the thirty-eighth parallel to visit North Korea, I will instill my ideology in my descendants and make them go in my stead. If they cannot go, I will have to send my followers."

I am made this resolution before I left. I have fought my way through until now, repeatedly living that same day for a decade. The steps I took after making my pledge before Heaven were different from yours.

I held soil from the thirty-eighth parallel in my cupped hands and resolved, I will demolish communism with these hands, and within a few years I will return.

It seems like yesterday that I prayed that I would get the free world under control and rally the free world to liberate North Korea. Standing with both two feet on the thirty-eighth parallel, I pledged through tears to unite North Korea and South Korea with my own hands.

Not even those who came with me knew that I had prayed with tears. I had left my sadness behind me, along with my parents and siblings. I have still have not forgotten that as I left behind me my mother and father, who had devoted themselves to me in my hometown, I told them to wait for the day this disloyal son returned, to not die but to continue waiting for me.

Called up for military service and physical examination in Seoul

I had cut my hair short before I left North Korea, and when I came to Seoul I passed through Chang Gyeong Won.^[1] There were young soldiers there, who were (now that I think of it) in the Marine Corps. One of the young men would stop the men passing by and tell them to go here or there -- here if he was small and there if he was not. I had recently been released from prison, but I was still stout. I didn't look emaciated at all.

They were determining my fitness for military service, and since my hair was cut short they asked, "Where are you from?" Having short hair usually means you've been in the army, or you are a deserter. They were suspicious.

"Where are you from? Aren't you a deserter?" they asked.

Nowadays there are ways to find out if someone is a deserter or not, but back then who knew?

"Where did I come from? North Korea, of course," I answered.

"North Korea?" they responded.

Because of my short hair, they thought I was a spy. At that time, everyone was fleeing for safety and you could not tell spies and soldiers from ordinary people, so they thought I was a spy.

But the man questioning me felt that if he took me in and I turned out not to be a spy, he would lose his job, so after examining me, he pronounced me Class C. In other words, he stamped me as having failed. After that, wherever I went everything was all right, because that certificate was an identification paper (the only one I had) and being Class C, I was allowed to pass anywhere I went.

Afterward, I was registered as a resident of South Korea and everything was fine for while until problems arose and I was confined in prison.^[2] How hard do you think they investigated to implicate me in all kinds of ways? They said, "Oh, he evaded military service. Does he claim he was categorized Class C?" Did he steal the Class C certificate, or did he just pick it up off the ground? Do you think they could implicate me? All kinds of harsh rumors began.

Three months later I was found innocent and acquitted.

^[1] The public gardens of a historic palace in Seoul

^[2] The South Korean government incarcerated Father July 4–October 4, 1955.