

## Why do I love you? You are my child!

Setsuko Sakurai  
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In the evening of January 28, 1965, the doors to an airplane that had landed at Haneda Airport opened, and Father was the first to come out. Late in the evening of that day, a welcoming service was held at the church headquarters in Tokyo. Seeing Father in tears talking about God's miserable heart, I thought, "He is so crazily in love with Heaven!" I firmly resolved to take after Father and become his follower.



*Setsuko Sakurai*

Father shook hands with each person and when it was my turn, he looked at me and said, "Hello, Setsuko. Are you doing your best every day to give Divine Principle lectures?" He had remembered me! I felt as if I would fly into the skies.

During his stay, Father did not miss a single opportunity to speak to us. Around that time, I received a telegram stating that my father was seriously ill and I should come home immediately. My father had been sick in bed for five years and was now in critical condition. It was a great shock to me. Yet, I was entrusted with the responsibility to welcome True Father, so I could only pray for my father. In the evening of February 5, I learned of my father's death. I had prepared myself for this but the news weighed heavily on my heart. I had wanted to share God's word with my father more than anybody else. I silently prayed in my heart for my father's soul.

For the next two days, Father continued to talk about Jesus' suffering and about the pain in God's heart. Father appeared to me as the father of humankind. I realized, "Father is indeed our parent! I am alive today only by virtue of this parent." On September 29, 1965, Father visited Japan again after his world tour. He visited the major districts in Japan and spoke day after day. During this time, I was holed up at the Divine Principle lecture center and had hardly any chance to hear Father speak. One evening, mindful of my situation, Ms. Mi Shik Shin took me to see Father.

I was happy and yet at the same time concerned that Father might be displeased and make a bitter face if he saw my sinful and ugly appearance. I was tense when I approached Father but he welcomed me with a

warm smile saying, "Setsu-chan, you're here." He gave me some confectioneries, and asked me many things about the center with an affectionate gaze like a parent watching his young child.

"Setsu-chan, what do you usually think about during the day?" "Um... I am a heavy daydreamer."  
"Really? What do you daydream about?"

At first, I modestly replied to his questions but Father continued probing -- " And then?" "What next?" -- as if listening to me talk was his favorite pastime. He then told me, "I want to quickly give you, Setsu-chan, the blessing, and see you happily married." Hearing this, my heart was bursting with emotion.

After I returned to my room, I could not fall asleep. I kept recalling Father's expressions and each word of what he had said. I could not understand; I was not worthy of God's love. Looking up at the ceiling in the dark, I kept asking aloud, "God, why are you expressing so much love to me this evening?"

At that moment, I heard a response, "Why do I love you? You are my child! The true life that I embedded in you, who is my image, is something pristine, priceless, beautiful and endearing to me...."

How infinite and great is God's love! One usually finds salvation when one encounters a person that understands one's heavy baggage and carries it on one's behalf. When I understood the fact that the omnipotent God had understood my struggles and was walking at my side, I no longer had anything to worry about. All I had to do was discard my old and false self and make effort to manifest my original and true self. I found peace. Boundless hope and gratitude filled me.

On the day we sent-off True Father, Ms. Shin told me that Father had praised me saying that I was a "good child." Hearing this brought me to tears. I felt that he was referring to the true me. While facing Father as he boarded the plane, I promised myself, "I will become a true child that can repay this grace without fail."

Until then, I had been a reserved person, easily hurt by others and unable to candidly show myself or join in heart with my fellow brothers and sisters. After that day, I began to change. I learned to find joy in discovering God's precious life within my brothers and sisters. My hope was to invest my entire being until the day I perish in building the kingdom of God, in which all people can blossom as flowers of precious life. I could feel this hope spread throughout my heart.