

Preforming at True Parents' birthday celebration 2017

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I looked forward to going to this three-day workshop. When I arrived, fitting in was somewhat hard at first; I was a foreigner and though I was with other foreigners, there were many Koreans. As soon as we started the songs, I started getting into it. I enjoyed the singing. The rhythms were unique, and learning the songs was fun.

Mealtimes were a time to rest our throats and get our energy back from using it all on singing. That night, we had our regular closing and sang as usual. We had Korean roommates, who were nice. Talking in both English and Korean was fun.

The next day we awoke early and had Hoon Dok Hae in Korean. I read it along with everyone else. We read about fifteen to twenty paragraphs from Cheon Seong Gyeong and sang songs. Then we went for breakfast, our holy food. After breakfast, singing practice resumed. For the song "Tongil

Arirang," we learned sign language, which was not easy to learn, especially since it was in Korean. Even the Koreans were having a hard time with it. We sang and danced the rest of the day between meals, breaks and snacks.

Then closing happened, and closing was something else. I got separated from the Western program brothers as I came in. I sat with a loud *hyeong* (older brother) on one side of me, and the wall on the other. All I remember about that closing were the special parts. I remember the singing, the individual prayer and the atmosphere very well. The atmosphere was amazing, something I hadn't felt before. I felt the atmosphere when we were all singing holy songs. Everyone's spirit was strong; everyone sang loudly. I felt tears coming, because it was so nice to sing all together.

Those around me singing loudly, especially the *hyeong* next to me, made me sing louder and with more spirit. You'd think it wouldn't sound nice, but it sounded beautiful. I felt my spirit grow while singing. I hadn't heard those Korean songs before, but I was able to sing with the Koreans with barely any hesitation. We then had individual prayer. I prayed deeply about all those around me in the workshop, being grateful for all who have cared for me and for being able to perform for True Parents.

The next day, I tried to sing better, to focus more, keep my back straight and sing loudly, because the night before I realized that even small things you do can affect other people to do well, or not. I tried to do well so others might feel inspired to sing well, too. We sang until 5:00 and went back to our dorm. I felt we all improved so much in just a few days. We sang very well before we left, which made me have a good feeling about the performance.

Our performance

Then True Parents' birthday celebration came. We arrived at the stadium very early. Increasingly, I felt nervous, but I still felt happy about singing in front of everyone including True Parents. When True Mother arrived, my eyes were watery again. I love it whenever Mother comes out to see all of us. I could feel her good spirit and I felt grateful for being able to sing for her.

When our performance came, we all stood, and I became nervous. My hands and legs were shaking. As soon as we started, I sang the best I could. After we sang a bit, I forgot how nervous I was. I just kept singing.

When we ended, I felt we all did fantastic. I was happy I was able to do something for True Parents on their birthday, knowing they have done so much for us. I never imagined being able to do something like this: coming to Korea for GOP and then performing for True Parents. The meal we received was delicious. I was glad to eat it with Korean brothers next to me, conversing in Korean. Overall, I am grateful for being able to see True Mother with my own eyes and to sing for her on her birthday.