

A Pearl Of Great Price -- Testimony Of An African Missionary To Uganda - Part 4

Hideaki Kamiyoshi

June 1981

Republished by FFWPU International Headquarters September 5, 2023



That night, our I.W. prayed again for Uganda. She decided that we should do a 40-day witnessing condition in Uganda in case we would be unable to continue much longer in the country, and that each of us should put our hearts into it. She told us that if we did, we would not have to leave with regret.

When we arrived back in Uganda, we witnessed with fierce determination. Yet, trials were waiting for us. Without notifying us, our landlord sold our center. Since the housing situation in Kampala was bad, it was extremely difficult to find houses for rent. We reached the limits of what we could do to resolve the situation. At that time, an opening became available in the apartment house of the Church of Uganda. We learned about the human portion of responsibility and God's portion of responsibility.

Each of us felt God's unlimited guidance and blessing when it became possible for us to send one of our native members to the very first 40-day training in America. Because God could do this through us, I felt that some part of our missionary task had been accomplished.

Thus the first three years ended; none of the missionaries had been expelled even once. The

American brother and I left Kampala for the first time and made a trip around the eastern half of the country. Everything seemed so beautiful. I felt it might be the first and last time we could do this. We visited Murchison Falls, National Park. We had experienced many hardships in the city of Kampala and could not imagine that Uganda had such a beautiful place. We saw elephants, bison, antelopes, zebras, among other animals. The Nile River was immense and to our surprise was home to many hippopotami. It flowed as if it were lord over the land. Murchison Falls is the largest falls along the Nile, and it draws many tourists.

In the daytime, adult and baby elephants walk around the hotels, and at night the hippopotami come out of the river and sleep on the hotel lawns.

"Woh! Woh!" Their bellows echoed everywhere. We visited a hotel called Chobe Lodge; this was a favorite spot for a number of baboons. They even came into the hotel rooms. When I looked out of the window one day, I saw a big baboon running away with a bed sheet on his back, and one small one running after him. The hotel had a rule that we could not leave the windows and doors of the hotel rooms open, because of the baboons.

We went fishing on a rocky spot along the upper reaches of the Nile and saw about four large hippopotami coming in and out of the water. They didn't bother us, but rather looked bored by our behavior and simply yawned. On the left bank, two tall and beautiful giraffes were quietly eating their breakfast of leaves. Waterbirds swooped over the river and flew around us. I was so impressed by the greatness of God's creation that I felt I had entered Nirvana. At that moment, I totally forgot all the suffering I had experienced. It was peaceful; I felt as if I were in a trance.

As long as I live, I shall not forget the African nights, especially those experienced during this one-week refuge. The calling of the hippopotami sounded like a symphony when accompanied by the chirping of crickets and grasshoppers. Numerous fireflies winked around us. I could understand why Uganda was called the "Pearl of Africa." And I had a vision of the future; once she becomes stable politically and economically, I know she will prosper and draw people by the vibrance of her beauty.

One day there was a phone call from headquarters for the American brother. He came to me and said, "Hideaki, Father decided I should go to the Seminary." At that moment, I could not stop my tears. I could not believe it. Honestly speaking, I had felt so close to him, especially after his wife left our church. I felt

that we didn't have to hide anything between us at all. All of us recognized how much this brother had contributed and how hard he had worked for the restoration of Uganda. Our hearts were reluctant to see him go.

Persecution against the Christians began to worsen. Many church buildings became empty and Christians had to work underground. At that time, I had a close relationship with one group which was banned. I often attended their meetings and taught them some of our holy songs. On my way to attend their meeting one day, I saw a few Christians in front of the African market preaching about Jesus. Even though this kind of activity was banned, they used a megaphone and looked like they were not about to stop. Later we heard that one of them was arrested and imprisoned. Yet the leader of the group said, "Don't worry! God is with us. Let's pray for our brother." All of us prayed together for his safety. Yet it became a serious commitment to all who attended: we again had to risk our lives in order to come. Two days later, the Christian was released. However, one day soldiers armed with guns stormed the church. There was gunfire and some of the leaders were arrested and imprisoned.

I felt that since I was in Uganda as a representative of the True Parents, it was my duty to visit them, and I tried always to comfort and encourage them. I found that the word "hope" had become totally meaningless to them. I made efforts to meet as many earnest Christians as possible. I visited many places and actively contacted people. I studied the Bible with them and spoke some words of encouragement whenever possible. I often spoke to them, emphasizing the mission of Christians in Uganda. Because of my situation, I could not mention the Unification Church.

To our surprise, in the middle of November, a round-trip ticket between Kampala and Kinshasa was sent to me from New York. We were not able to find out why it was sent, so I went to Zaire [now the Democratic Republic of the Congo] in faith, not knowing what to expect. Gregory and Pamela phoned New York to ask why I was coming, and we found out that headquarters had not sent such a ticket. In fact, they called everywhere, for two weeks, to try to find out who had sent the ticket, but no one knew.

However, the two weeks I was in Zaire was a totally wonderful experience for me. I especially cannot forget the relationship I had with Pamela Stein. I listened to the severe challenges she had to go through in Zaire and sympathized with her from the bottom of my heart. We prayed together in tears. We had no missionary sisters in Uganda, and I didn't know their heart. But through my relationship with Pamela, another world of the heart opened for me. I believe it was under God's guidance, and I am grateful for it.

I also talked with Gregory Novalis for many hours every day. I was really moved by his parental heart and could see how warmly he embraced each one of his members. Through him, my pessimistic view turned a bit more optimistic.

Seeing that the Zaire family was developing, I felt hope for the future of all Africa. Until then, I had been bound by the idea of martyrdom. However, Gregory always gave many testimonies as if he were encouraging me. I also gave testimonies of the Uganda mission and delivered Sunday sermons. For me, it was really an experience of the Kingdom of Heaven. Except for Heavenly Father, to this day no one knows why I went to Zaire.

After I returned to Uganda, I invested myself in my business with even greater vigor. We started to sell women's blouses, skirts, and dresses. I became a popular figure. Wherever I went with my big vinyl bag full of women's clothes, they stopped me and looked at the goods. Of course, there were many temptations. Since Africans are very open people, right in front of me the women would take off their clothes in order to try on a blouse or skirt. Since I had gone through such trials with my housemate when I had first arrived, I was trained against such temptations and only thought about my mission to sell clothes.

The war continued to escalate, and the German missionary urged me to go to Nairobi and get out of danger. I thought that he might die if only he and one other native brother stayed. On the other hand, I felt that as a blessed member, I should continue God's lineage. However, when I even thought of what might happen to them, I felt I should share their destiny. I told my German brother, "I will not leave Uganda unless there is an instruction from headquarters."

Meanwhile, Entebbe closed. Kampala was surrounded by Tanzanian troops. Amazingly, the city itself was calm. Therefore, we continued our business and witnessing activities. Our Ugandan members could not stay in Kampala and either returned to their homes elsewhere or went to other countries.