

## I Always Offer My Dedication

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*Photo date and location unknown*

I enjoy listening to other people talk about themselves. When people open up to me and talk about themselves, I don't even realize the passing of time. I listen to them for ten, even twenty, hours. People who want to talk have a sense of urgency. They are looking for solutions to their problems. So I feel that I need to listen to them with my full dedication. That is the way to love their life and repay the debt that I owe for my life. The most important thing is to think of life as precious. In the same way that I listened with sincerity to what others had to say, I also shared with them my sincere heart with fervor, and I would pray for them in tears.

How often I prayed with tears through the night? Blood and sweat saturated the floor boards where I prayed, with no chance to dry.

I have lived my entire life praying and preaching, but even now I tremble when I stand before a group of people. This is because to stand in such a position and speak about public matters can mean that many lives will be saved or that many will be lost. It is a matter of utmost importance to me that I can lead the people who hear my words onto the path of life. These are the moments when I draw a clear line on the

crossroads between life and death.

Even now, I do not organize my sermons in advance. I am concerned that doing so might allow my own private objectives to enter into the content. With such preparation I may be able to show off how much knowledge I have stored in my head but not pour out my earnest and passionate heart. Before I appear in public, I always offer my dedication by spending at least ten hours in prayer. This is the way I set my roots down deeply. On a mighty tree, even if the leaves are a little bug-eaten, the tree remains healthy if its roots are deep roots. My words may be a little awkward at times, but everything will be all right so long as a sincere heart is there.

In the early time of our church I wore an old U.S. military jacket and fatigues dyed black and preached with such fervor that I dripped with sweat and tears. Not a day went by without my weeping out loud. My heart would fill with emotion, and tears would pour from my eyes and stream down my face. Those were times my spirit seemed on the verge of leaving my body. I felt as though I were on the verge of death. My clothes were soaked with sweat, and beads of sweat rolled down from my head.

In the days of the Cheongpa Dong church, everyone went through difficult times, but Hyo Won Eu endured particular difficulty. He suffered an illness in his lungs and it was difficult for him, but still he lectured our church's teachings eighteen hours a day for three years and eight months. We could not afford to eat well. We ate barley instead of rice and sustained ourselves with two meals a day. Our only side dish was raw kimchi that was left to ferment for only one night. Hyo Won Eu liked to eat small salted shrimp. He placed a container of these small shrimp in one corner of the room, and once in a while he would go over with a pair of chopsticks and eat a few. That was how he endured through those difficult days. It pained my heart to see Hyo Won Eu lying exhausted on the floor, hungry and tired. I wanted to give him salted conch, but this was much too expensive for us in those days. It still pains me to think of how hard he worked, trying to record my words that flowed like a waterfall, even as he was ill.

Aided by the hard work and sacrifice of members, the church grew steadily. And we all redoubled our determination to accomplish the will of God, even if we had to sacrifice our lives.