

[Daniel Lee] Hello, please introduce yourself.

[Eun Ja Kim] My name is Eun Ja Kim. I am 57 years old.

[Daniel Lee] When and where were you born?

[Eun Ja Kim] I was born in Mokpo on 1969.

[Daniel Lee] What was Mokpo like when you were young?

[Eun Ja Kim] Mokpo was a port city by the sea. It wasn't industrialized, so it wasn't very developed, but it had a somewhat rural atmosphere.

[Daniel Lee] What was your family situation like?

[Eun Ja Kim] My family consisted of eight members: my mom and dad, my older sister, older brother, and three younger siblings.

[Daniel Lee] What do you remember about your parents' lives and work when you were young?

[Eun Ja Kim] My father was a diligent man who worked hard at his job. He was so dedicated and earnest that if an emergency call came in the middle of the night, he would answer it and get to work even then. He had good friendships and was popular, so he had many external social gatherings and activities that he attended.

My mother was a devoted homemaker who lovingly raised six children. When we came home from school, she would prepare delicious snacks for us. Above all, she nurtured us to grow as people of faith from a young age, and I remember going to church together on Sundays to worship.

[Daniel Lee] How did your parents talk about the importance of education or school?

[Eun Ja Kim] My parents were very passionate about education. They wanted me to be dedicated to school life and actively participate in my studies to achieve good grades. They wanted me to never be late for school and placed great importance on showing proper respect towards teachers. They often told me that doing well in school was essential for achieving my dreams in the future.

[Daniel Lee] What did your parents want most from you?

[Eun Ja Kim] My parents were very passionate about education and wanted me to study diligently at school. They also wanted me to live a faithful life at church. They emphasized proper manners and respect towards elders, and if I used bad language, they would

severely punish me. They wanted me to use proper language and get along harmoniously with my siblings.

[Daniel Lee] Did your parents have different goals for your siblings?

[Eun Ja Kim] That seems to be the case. Given Korean sensibilities, there was a lot of enthusiasm for the eldest daughter to succeed, and great hopes were placed on the only son to set an example. On the other hand, they supported each child according to their individual aptitudes and made accommodation for the younger siblings with artistic talents.

[Daniel Lee] How did you spend time with your family?

[Eun Ja Kim] My father was busy with work outside the home, so we didn't spend much time together, but the family had many happy times with my mother. My siblings and I were very close; since there wasn't much age difference, we played a lot together, cooked meals, and ate together. There were many good memories that shaped my growth.

[Daniel Lee] What is your earliest memory of school?

[Eun Ja Kim] My earliest school memory is probably the day of my elementary school entrance ceremony. I was holding my mother's hand, gathered on the playground with a handkerchief pinned to my chest, and attended with my parents.

[Daniel Lee] Can you describe a typical day in elementary school?

[Eun Ja Kim] In the lower grades of elementary school, I think we usually had school until 1 PM after lunch. After school ended, I remember participating in special activities based on our talents. In my case, since I was taller than my friends, I ran for the *yuksangbu* (track team) and remember representing the school as a basketball player.

[Daniel Lee] Did you and your siblings ever feel pressure to attend a university in Seoul?

[Eun Ja Kim] My father was very passionate about education and wanted to raise his children well, so he desired for us to receive our education in Seoul. However, going to college in Seoul from the very end of the Jeolla region wasn't easy. My siblings failed to get into universities in Seoul and ended up attending colleges in nearby areas.

[Daniel Lee] How did Mokpo change as you grew up?

[Eun Ja Kim] Mokpo's urban development was slow. It was politically marginalized and didn't see any noticeable progress. After graduating high school, I could see the roads expanding. Around 1998, before I emigrated, I saw the shipyards gradually expanding.

[Daniel Lee] What do you remember about your relationship with the local neighborhood and community?

[Eun Ja Kim] I grew up in a neighborhood with many *Hanok* (traditional Korean houses), where the community felt like family. There were many people around my age, and we influenced each other like friends and family, leaving me with fond memories.

[Daniel Lee] Were you proud to be from Mokpo?

[Eun Ja Kim] Both my *Chinharabeoji* and *Oeharabeoji* (paternal and maternal grandfathers, respectively) were in Mokpo, so I have many memories of growing up feeling loved and secure. Also, because I love the sea, I remember Mokpo as a beautiful and felt proud of the city I lived in.

[Daniel Lee] Have you ever thought about living somewhere else?

[Eun Ja Kim] Mokpo was my hometown, a stable place where many relatives had settled down. But in my twenties, visiting friends who had gone to Seoul for work or school, I sometimes felt the desire to go to a big city like Seoul and pursue my dreams.

[Daniel Lee] What role did your family expect you to play as their daughter?

[Eun Ja Kim] I was the second daughter among five sisters. Given our family environment, my parents hoped I would grow into a quiet, well-behaved, and proper daughter with good manners. This was connected to my father's educational philosophy. He wanted me to grow up with good manners, polite disposition, and proper language habits. So, I tried to live up to those expectations, striving to align with my parents' teachings and standards rather than pursuing my own desires.

[Daniel Lee] How did your mother's life and sense of responsibility influence your views on women's roles?

[Eun Ja Kim] She seems to have had a profound influence on me. Reflecting now on how my mother raised six children, I feel proud of her as a fellow woman. She raised all six children without discrimination, ensuring none felt neglected, nurturing them with love to provide emotional stability. Her strong sense of responsibility meant she excelled at providing for our basic needs. Having grown up witnessing this as a woman, I believe I reflected her example in raising my own two children. As a mother in my own household, I approached my role with sincerity.

[Daniel Lee] Did you feel you were given different opportunities compared to your male siblings or male classmates?

[Eun Ja Kim] When I was in school, Korean society was an era that prioritized male superiority and male privilege over women. I grew up in an environment where the mindset and atmosphere assumed that leadership roles such as *Banjang* (class president) should naturally be filled by men. At home too, my father played a dominant role as the head of the household, so I grew up taking that for granted. In our family of one son and five daughters, my brother received many advantages, so I felt a sense of discrimination growing up and remember often yielding my place to the men.

[Daniel Lee] What specific reason led you to immigrate to Pasadena, California?

[Eun Ja Kim] I came to the U.S. after getting married. My husband was studying at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, so we lived in the school dormitory.

[Daniel Lee] How does your experience as a Korean immigrant compare to what you expected or hoped for?

[Eun Ja Kim] Since I came to the U.S. because my husband was a student, initially I lived only as a student within the school rather than deeply engaging with American society as an immigrant. It felt stable and welcoming.

[Daniel Lee] While living in the U.S., did your specific moral concepts or values change? Or did you start acting "white" to adapt?

[Eun Ja Kim] I'm not sure if I understood the question correctly, but I learned many things while living in the United States. I learned that within the diversity of American society, there was order; that people showed consideration for one another and tried not to cause harm to others; and that they had the patience to stand in line and wait for what they wanted. Furthermore, witnessing the culture of giving to those in need and seeing people share what they had inspired me greatly and taught me many precious life values.

I didn't try to act like a white person to fit in. I wanted to learn the good things about white people like manners and how considerate they were.

[Daniel Lee] When you first came to America, did you ever feel like your life was an island separated from your family, friends, and community back in Korea?

[Eun Ja Kim] I came to the U.S. in my early-30s, leaving behind my entire family, workplace, church, and community. I arrived filled with fear and a sense of overwhelming anticipation. Not being able to spend time with family and acquaintances back in Korea brings

increasing regret and emptiness as the years pass. Now, Korea itself feels unfamiliar, and the relationships I built over time also feel disconnected from the communities there. Even when visiting Korea to see family, I experience within the family itself that there is little common ground. Because so much has changed over such a long time, there are moments when I feel isolated, like a solitary island.

[Daniel Lee] Could you explain how you overcame that?

[Eun Ja Kim] At first, I thought I wouldn't feel isolated from people in Korea, but as time passed, I naturally came to acknowledge that sense of isolation and disconnection. It took a long time to overcome it, but to restore that sense of connection and shared understanding, I tried to stay in touch through phone calls or KakaoTalk, sharing photos, sharing news from daily life, and tried to have lots of conversations.

[Daniel Lee] Have you or your family ever traveled to or worked on any of the islands around Mokpo?

[Eun Ja Kim] Ever since I was young, my parents took us on family trips every summer, often taking a ferry to islands around Mokpo. We would rent houses for about two nights and three days with extended family and relatives or sometimes pitch tents. And throughout my church life, I frequently attended retreats on nearby islands during middle school, high school, college, and my young adult years. However, I have never worked on an island.