

Sang-il Bang: The 8 Major Holidays are based on True Parents' realm of victory

Tomihiro Tanaka

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Pledge service commemorating the 61st True Day of All Things

Shoto Headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

Editorial Department



Welcome to the 61st True Day of All Things. I would like to extend my congratulations to all of you.

True Father proclaimed the Day of All Things on the sixth day of the sixth month of the Heavenly Calendar in 1963 (the dedication ceremony was held on July 26, 1963, and the Day of All Things was set for May 1 of the Heavenly Calendar). The Family Federation has the Eight Major Holidays. Let us review these days.

The earliest established holiday can be said to be True Parents' Birthday. True Father was born on January 6, 1920 and True Mother on the same day in 1943 of the Heavenly Calendar. After going through their personal courses, they were wed on March 16, 1960 of the Heavenly Calendar.

Some people think of the anniversary of the Holy Wedding as Parents' Day, but that is not the case. True Parents held an engagement ceremony on March 1 of that year, and proclaimed that the True Parents of humankind had been established. Since the following year, that day has been designated as Parents' Day.

Children's Day was proclaimed on the first day of the tenth month of the Heavenly Calendar in 1960. Three years later, the Day of All Things, which we are celebrating today, was proclaimed. On the foundation of declaring these Four Major Holidays, God's Day was proclaimed on January 1, 1968.

Incidentally, starting with Parents' Day in 1994, where it was changed to True Parents' Day, God's Day, Day of All Things and Children's Day were similarly renamed to include the word, "True." Furthermore, True God's Day was renamed to Heavenly Parent's Day on January 1, 2011 of the Heavenly Calendar. For many years, the Family Federation has celebrated and commemorated these five holidays.

On October 3, 1988, twenty years after the proclamation of God's Day, Foundation Day for the Nation of the Unified World (renamed Foundation Day for the Nation of the Unified Cosmos on October 3, 2004) was proclaimed in tandem with celebrations for the success of the Summer Olympic Games held in Seoul, Korea.

On July 1, 1991, Chil-il Jeol was proclaimed. True Parents, who had fulfilled the responsibilities of the eight vertical and horizontal stages, proclaimed the beginning of the providence allowing blessed families to inherit this realm of victory. This was a great opportunity for the church to undergo a great change. The providence of returning to our hometowns began (soon after), and the Church began to move in earnest toward the victory of heavenly tribal messiahship. They hoped that all members and blessed families would be victorious as heavenly tribal messiahs.

On the seventh day of the seventh month in 1997 of the heavenly calendar, the Chil-pal Jeol was proclaimed. God's realm of sabbath was established on the basis of the victory of the 360,000-couple blessing ceremony, which was the worldwide blessing ceremony on the completion stage. This ushered in an age where God could exercise His full authority. In this way, the Eight Major Holidays were established.

The anniversary of the Holy Wedding and the day of Father's Seonghwa will be the focus of commemorative events

After True Father's Seonghwa and listening to the voices from the field, True Mother thought that there were too many days to celebrate, such as the great holidays and anniversaries. These days are very noble because they signify the immensity of True Parents' realm of victory, but she was concerned about the burden this was placing on everyone.

True Mother considers the day of the Holy Wedding to be the most important in the history of humankind, and has begun to celebrate this day together with Heavenly Parent's Day and the Holy Birthday. The main events for the first half of the year are now held on the anniversary of the Holy Wedding.

In the second half of the year, we now hold the main events around the day of True Father's Seonghwa (July 17, Heavenly Calendar). True Mother decided to hold a grand celebration on the day of his Seonghwa as well as a blessing ceremony, so that we may welcome the day, with joy, when Father, the Messiah of humankind, the Lord of the Second Advent, and True Parents, went to the spirit world after being triumphant in his earthly course.

During True Father's lifetime, each holiday was held with leaders from all over the world. True Mother has instructed that the commemorative events should be held around two days: the day of True Parents' Holy Wedding and Father's Seonghwa festivities. The leaders of each nation should take the lead in celebrating the other church holidays.

The holidays and anniversaries are proof of True Parents' victory in their fight against Satan

The most important part of the Christian church is worship. Those who do not attend worship services cannot be called believers. It is that precious. On the other hand, in the Family Federation, the name of True Parents is more important than worship service. Why is that?

As time passed from the Old Testament Age to the New Testament Age, the Completed Testament Age, and the Age of Cheon Il Guk, the Heavenly Parent (God) has wanted to live together with humankind. The Bible makes this clear. The history of the providence of salvation began from the fall of Adam and Eve, the first ancestors of humankind. Noah's Ark, the symbolic offerings of Abraham, and the offering of Isaac. The national course to restore Canaan centered on Moses was prolonged to the second and third stages because of failure. Jesus' course was a similar process. The Heavenly Parent has guided humanity in such a manner.

Through the principle of restoration, we came to know the existence of the Heavenly Parent, who is alive and working behind the scenes, and learned of the magnitude of the mission entrusted to each and every one of the central figures. True Parents are the only ones who have stood as True Parents in the 6,000 years of human history, and the great holidays and anniversaries are evidence of True Parents' victory over Satan. Many members seem to think that all they need to do is to remember the dates and participate in these events, but if that's all we do, the tradition of the Family Federation will be lost. We must respect the Eight Major Holidays that True Parents - the culmination of human history - have restored to Heaven, above all else.

Japanese people love festivals, don't they. Every year, festivals of all sizes are held in various parts of Japan. In late May, a festival originating from Kagoshima Prefecture was held in Shibuya, Tokyo (the Shibuya-Kagoshima Ohara Matsuri). Dance teams were formed from different hometowns, schools, and other sectors, and 54 groups totaling about 2,000 performers danced in (this year's) festival. Seeing such a large-scale festival for the first time in a long while made me realize the importance of local traditional culture and the bonds between people.

I have lived in Japan for twenty-five years and have wondered, "Where does the strength of the Japanese come from?" I was given an answer, which was in festivities. As I watched the people of Kagoshima dance, I realized that this was true.

Japanese people cherish local festivals, where many people gather. By becoming one on such occasions, a lot of energy is generated. So, what would you call a festival in the Family Federation of Japan? I think it is the Eight Major Holidays. All members, from babies to the elderly, gather together and celebrate the day of True Parents' victory over Satan with a pledge service and memorial service. In this way, we inherit True Parents' realm of victory and fortune, and are able to connect these to each family.

True Mother has established an unshakable track record before Heaven

On True Mother's great command, brothers and sisters all over the world are now running full steam to bring victory in witnessing.

True Mother has asked us to create churches filled with the Holy Spirit and the truth, and assured us that

if we can do so, we will surely be victorious in witnessing. She encouraged us that through witnessing, all of the problems will be solved.

Lately, ninety percent of True Mother's words are related to witnessing. That is how much we must put our focus and attention on witnessing, and invest in it completely. All of the churches, all of the members, must go out and witness and save the lives of those who are in a position of death because they do not understand God's love. Witness, whether asleep or awake. The age of Cheon Il Guk is the age of achievement and there is no greater achievement we can offer to Mother other than the victory of witnessing.

Eleven years is about to pass since True Father's Seonghwa. During this period, how much has True Mother invested in heaven's providence? During the first seven-year course, True Mother restored seven religious organizations in seven nations, and based on that foundation, proclaimed the firm establishment of Cheon Il Guk.

True Mother has set the standard for a nation to be restored, which is when a leader representing the country, such as the president or prime minister, welcomes her to their country. However, due in part to a lack of explanation by the leaders, some members say that without restoring all of the nation's citizens, a nation is not restored. In addition, those who work in non-Principled groups such as UCI (e.g. the Kwak group and Sanctuary Church) completely deny the realm of victory that Mother has erected.

True Mother has invested a lot in Africa. You all remember Prophet Radebe (founder of the Revelation Church of God) from South Africa, who was honored by Mother as a filial son? He is the head of a religious organization with a congregation of four million. On June 8, 2019, he welcomed Mother in South Africa and gathered 50,000 of his followers to the blessing ceremony. I was there and can still vividly recall such an inspiring scene.

How difficult it must be for the president or prime minister of a nation or the head of a huge religious organization to accept True Mother. I am sure you are well aware of the great impact their words and actions have on the people and their congregations. No one is qualified to deny the standards set by Mother, for the restoration of a nation or religious group, as an offering to the Heavenly Parent and True Father in spirit world.

Renewing the system to face witnessing with a concerted effort by all members

We are currently in the middle of the second seven-year course. True Mother reflected back on the past ten years since True Father's Seonghwa and realized that we must quicken the pace to advance heaven's providence. That is why she requested a reshuffling of the worldwide structure. "We cannot go on like this." This is what she sincerely felt.

There are some of you that may ask, "Are we really okay with getting rid of the sub-regions and districts?" Some people may be concerned about losing this structure. It is understandable that people are worried about losing a familiar system. However, was it possible to achieve a tenfold increase in witnessing with the existing structure? We had been under the sub-region and district structure for a long time, but we have not been able to bring in witnessing results that meet True Mother's expectations.

This year marks the 64th anniversary of the founding of the Family Federation in Japan. The foundation of today's organization was laid by the efforts made by our senior families. I am filled with gratitude and admiration for their achievements. However, the simple fact is that if we continue on the same path as before, our foundation will only double in size in another 60 years. Is that enough? We must reform our structure and go about witnessing with a concerted effort in which all members can participate in.

In Korea, one of the churches is currently the talk of the town. This church is located in the countryside, and before the current leader was appointed, it was only able to collect about a million won (about 100,000 yen) per month in tithes. Now, however, the church receives 4 million or 5 million won, which is more than some of the churches in urban areas.

An offering will not be given until the members' hearts are revived. Offerings of thanksgiving are made with gratitude after being touched by heaven's love and grace, aren't they? What happened to that church?

The church leader was not a good preacher. He was even aware of this. He thought that he needed to settle his own heart before leading those who did not want to do witnessing, so he prayed fervently every day in the morning and evening at the special prayer room at Cheon Shim Won. Understanding his own shortcomings, he thought that the only way to create a church filled with the Divine Spirit and truth, as emphasized by True Mother, was through prayer at Cheon Shim Won. He visited the homes of the members and prayed hard for them.

A month or two passed and the tithes doubled. This leader who had never been good at preaching, began

to attract the attention of other leaders all over Korea. When asked what his secret was, he replied that all he had was prayer. All he did was pray fervently at Cheon Shim Won and visited the members. He testified that the results came when he was united in heart with the members. There was no special strategy. The other leaders who heard this testimony seemed to be empowered and said they could do that too.

You do not have to pray at Chung Pyung's Cheon Shim Won in order to receive grace. Every church has a special Cheon Shim Won prayer room, which is connected to Chung Pyung. You can receive heavenly works anywhere, just like that church in Korea's countryside.

Going through the same hardships, allows us to share the same heart

There are wonderful testimonies all throughout churches in Japan. Please be confident. Some of you may wonder if such can even be called a testimony, but when I share such testimonies to leaders of other countries, they are often impressed.

Yesterday, I was watching the Witnessing and Education News that is broadcasted by the Witnessing and Education Department, and one couple's testimony struck a chord with me. The husband, who had opposed his wife attending church, was exposed to reports by the mainstream media and felt it was a big deal that he had to visit the church and check how things were with his own eyes. As he listened to the church staff, he was moved and said, "I didn't know that the Family Federation was such a good place." He even took the holy wine and received a blessing.

After traveling around the country for the past year, I have noticed a steady increase in the number of second generation gathering at youth and student meetings. One second generation who had been staying away from church, saw the news reports and said that even though his parents had made donations they did not do anything bad or strange as reported in the mainstream media. He said he would speak up for his parents, and that he will do his best to make up for the time he was away.

In Korea, there is a saying, "A widow's sorrow is understood by a widower." It is the same as the Japanese proverb, "Snakes follow the way of serpents," meaning that those facing similar situations can easily understand each other. True Parents themselves have endured thorny paths because they understood God's 6,000-year history of suffering. We can share our sufferings and troubles with our brothers and sisters and seek a way to solve them, but True Parents could not consult others in this way, but overcame them by looking to God.

Because True Father understood God's feelings, he prayed, "God, I will be all right. Please do not worry about me," even though he was in prison. He tried to comfort parents when they were in pain. This is Father and True Mother's spirit.

We have studied True Parents' life course. We can only understand the heart, that the two of them went through, when we experience the same thing. I believe that our brothers and sisters in Japan have been attacked from all sides for almost a year and have been able to grow immensely in their faith and in their hearts. The members in Japan and blessed families, who are persecuted the most in the whole world, are the flock that is most in tune with the Heavenly Parent and True Parents' hearts.

We must know the true nature of God, Jesus, and True Parents

True Mother often tells us that we must know God's true nature. In the 2,000 years of Christian history, God has been called Heavenly Father, but God's essence is Heavenly Parent, who is both paternal and maternal. Mother also calls on us to know about the essence of Jesus and True Parents. When Mother first mentioned heaven's only begotten daughter, some members were against this. However, the more some of them listened to Mother's words, the more they understood, but there are still those who do not want to understand.

Some of the members may not have strong feelings against Mother and may say things like, "I have heard a load of things about True Father, and I accept him as the Lord of the Second Advent and Messiah without being told again. But I don't know much about True Mother..." Some members may feel emotionally distant from Mother in this way.

From 1990 until his Seonghwa, True Father repeatedly told us that if he went to the spirit world, we should move the providence forward centering on Mother, and after 2010, he stressed that True Parents had attained ultimate oneness. Prior to his visit to North Korea in 1991, True Father called some leaders and four women representatives from Japan to Clearstone, Canada, and made the Declaration of the Oath of Gomyeong. Gomyeong (願命) means "the King's testament." If anything should happen to Father's life, he asked True Mother to unite with him and fulfill heaven's mission. And just before he went to the spirit world, he founded the Abel Women's UN. That was the last providential institution that Father established.

Unfortunately, members do not know much about the fact that True Father has borne witness to True Mother for 20 years.

Become one with True Parents and inherit God's power

If you tackle witnessing by being one with Mother, you would be able to bring a tenfold increase with the help of heavenly works from the Holy Spirit. Mother spoke about the Apostle Paul. Paul originally persecuted Christians, but after receiving a revelation from Jesus, he made great contributions to the development of Christianity as an evangelist. Mother affirmed that even those who opposed the Family Federation will receive revelations and come to visit the church.

A Christian pastor, who read journalist Masumi Fukuda's article Making up victims, the National Federation of Bar Associations' trick in the July 2023 issue of the monthly magazine Hanada, has published his thoughts on the internet. This person stated, "If a Christian pastor is involved in kidnapping and confinement, it is an outrageous story. If this is not an issue in the Christian community, then it can only be said that the Christian community is rotten." More of these pastors will appear in the future.

Today is True Day of All Things. Because of the absence of a true master, all things have been in a lonely state for a long time, but they have been liberated by True Parents' love and realm of victory.

What represents all things is money. Then, which do you think has more power, money or God? Secular people may think that the greatest power is in money. People who do not understand God's power think that way. God has power that is tens, hundreds, or thousands of times greater than money.

It is True Parents who came to this earth as God's representative. If all of you become one with True Father in the spirit world and True Mother here on earth, you will inherit God's immeasurable power. There are only six months left in the year 2023. Let our lives, which are precious and has been given to each of us, burn with passion as we dash with all our might toward the fulfillment of heaven's will.