

Korean Dramas: Shortcut to True Parents' Heart and Culture

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There is nothing more fulfilling and satisfying in relationships than to understand and be understood. And the best way one can accomplish that between people is to speak the same language – and the language of the heart.

As you know, our True Parents over the years have been asking us to study and learn Korean, not only because it is the native language of the Returned Lord and his wife, but also so we can understand directly and without interpretation his word, message, and heart that come straight from the Heart of God.

To me, a person who loves languages and speaks three more or less fluently (Western languages, I might add), it is a given that there are words and expressions that one cannot and will never understand fully in their nuance and feeling when they are translated into another language, no matter how accurate the translation may be. The German word *Gemuetlichkeit*, often translated awkwardly as “coziness,” is one example of that. Furthermore, we know that in various fields of expertise, a certain language is used worldwide for all to be on the same page. For example, French is the language of ballet and diplomacy, German is for theology and technology, and Hebrew and Greek are for understanding the Bible.

Therefore, in order to connect in heart to our founders, who are our True Parents and stand in a parental and therefore intimate position, it is imperative to study their native language, as well as their national culture and history, all of which are intimately intertwined.

I have tried over the last 30 years or so many different ways to study Korean, using different textbooks, videos, audiotapes and teachers. But for some reason, Korean words just did not stick in my mind, and I was not able to be consistent in studying.



Enter Korean dramas. One time after Sunday service in Maryland, one of our Japanese brothers very strongly promoted a Korean drama series called *Hur Joon* (pronounced “Ho Joon”), which I bought to help him out. After popping it into my laptop, I found myself drawn into the story, which unfolded slowly. For those who have been watching Korean dramas,

there is a reason for one website to call itself DramaFever, which I definitely caught after a few episodes of *Hur Joon*. Not only was I curious as to how the plot developed, but I also found myself deeply emotionally involved with the main characters and with the pain they had to undergo through being misunderstood, falsely accused, struggles they eventually overcame.

After the first drama, I began to watch another and another, and to this day I have watched about seven or eight of them (see list below). You might think, “What a waste of time!” However, not at all! The more I watched these dramas, the more I fell in love with Korean culture – the beautiful architecture, the gorgeous panoramas in almost every scene and the way the heroes and heroines overcame all kinds of odds, persecution, life-threatening situations and misunderstandings.

Needless to say, on so many occasions, the dramas reminded me of True Father’s course, with their backdrop of his own culture, which is very vertical and conscious of the preservation of the king’s lineage, but which also exhibits the endless fights for position and power among those around the king or queen. How many times did the king’s rightful son or daughter want to avoid being in that position, and rather live a “normal” life – the simple, undisturbed life of a commoner?

For me, the deepest dramas by far were the historic story and legend of Jumong, in the series by that name, and even more so the sequel *Kingdom of the Wind*, which tells the story of Jumong’s grandson Muyul. The latter, played by the same actor as Jumong, was born with a bad omen, but was able to turn around his destiny. It is very dramatic, almost like a thriller, and deeply reminded me of our True Father’s situation, life and challenges as the King of Peace. In fact, my heart was deeply moved to tears on so many occasions that I couldn’t stop watching several episodes at a time, which of course intensifies the experience. Talk about a virus!

There are so many lessons in these dramas, and I decided to list a few:

- * I learned from the good kings that they always take responsibility and blame for the mistakes of others in the position of a parent.
- * Respect is always expressed in the form of slight bows to the person, even to the worst enemy.
- * A good king or queen cannot afford to think of himself or follow his/her personal feelings in any given circumstance, but always has to consider the well-being, safety and happiness of his/her subordinates.



- * Some rulers, like King Yi San, decided to break the mold and learn from other cultures and give commoners a chance to take positions in his court.
- * Loyalty is a paramount virtue on both sides of warring parties. Clearly, the “good side” also needs a small group of people who, in many cases, based on their willingness to give their life for their central person, will win over many armies.
- * The virtue of utter sincerity and devotion is a part of life, especially of children to parents, and of beautiful loyalty between husband and wife. (After watching so many dramas, I almost completely lost interest in Western dramas and films.)

* I was deeply touched by the wisdom and heart of Jumong, who had the gift of seeing things differently than the “normal” way and thus was able to win his enemies over and unite the land.

* Some enemies can become friends if you show love and compassion.

There is only one thing that bothered me time and again, even drove me a bit crazy: the lack of open and honest communication, when sometimes half-truths were shared and assumptions made, and the other party decided not to speak up or correct them.

Well, all of that helped me to understand more how Koreans think and feel.

Finally, the dramas were indeed helpful in making some day-to-day phrases and titles stick to my mind, such as *Anjuseo*, “Have a seat” and *Oraboni*, “elder brother.” Hearing the Korean language spoken for so many hours endeared me more and more to the sound, especially when it came to love scenes. By the way, Korean men do show their emotions of tenderness and care in a very special way and also shed tears, which is not so common among Western men. Tears are what I remember the most when I think of all the dramas, and a good dose of sadness. Yet there is beauty in the sadness, a sense of longing and deep love. My heart was opened to yet another level of emotions and understanding of heart, or *shimjung*.

Every time I visit Korea since watching these dramas, something amazing happens. I feel I really am at home in Korea, when I see the beautiful mountains, the sea at Incheon airport and the Korean people. Most of all, as I saw True Parents during the God’s Day and birthday celebrations, my heart was overcome with deep emotions of love, appreciation and unspoken understanding, resonating with their hearts.

So is it worth it to get infected with the Korean drama virus? You decide!