

The Providential Significance of True Mother's Leadership - Part 2 of 2

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Many factors can be identified as contributing causes to the direct challenges that True Mother's leadership has faced. Here I will focus on two elements of East Asian culture, the concept of filial piety and the Korean royal tradition.

The Problem of Filial Piety



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One of the issues concerns the strength as well as the limitations of the traditional concept of filial piety (孝). The centrality of filial piety in East Asian culture is widely recognized. Moreover, there are many passages in True Father's teachings that emphasize the father-son relationship, particularly toward God as Heavenly Father.

A specific Confucian requirement of filial duty relevant to understanding the present controversies in the Unification movement is that a filial son should not make changes to his father's ways for three years after the father has passed on. According to Confucius, "If for *three years* he makes no *change* from the ways of his father, he may be called filial." Therefore, according to this tradition, it is a son's duty not to make changes for at least three years. Thus, from a son's point of view, objections to changes that were made during the three-year mourning period for True Father would have the backing of centuries of Confucian moral sensibility.

Filial piety is indeed a strong cultural virtue in East Asia, especially in Korea, and is good as far as it goes. But, in contrast, the classical Confucian tradition offers very little content on the husband-wife relationship. At best, the ontology of East Asian philosophy supports a concept of reciprocity between husband and wife, based on the yin-yang model, but reciprocity by itself can be emotionally cold. The Buddhist tradition also, with its emphasis on celibacy as a path of spiritual discipline, is lacking in persuasive accounts of relational love and virtue between husband and wife. The way that True Parents teach about the relationship between husband and wife, emphasizing true conjugal love as the core, is a missing ingredient in East Asian tradition.

The lack of attention to the married couple relationship, along with a one-sided emphasis on filial piety toward the father (rather than toward both father and mother), produces the well-known patriarchal pattern in East Asian culture. The gospel of True Parents, with its emphasis on the fulfillment of true love in the oneness of husband and wife, is the needed corrective to restore true filial piety. Based on that gospel, when the husband-wife relationship is properly placed at the center, a new understanding of both filial and conjugal piety will be realized. It was actually True Mother, rather than any of the sons, who performed the graveside ceremonies at True Father's *Bonhyangwon*, as well as other remembrance rituals, during the three-year mourning period.

The Problem of the Royal Model

Another powerful and relevant component of East Asian culture is the royal tradition. In the royal traditions of Korea, as elsewhere in the world, the kingship passes to the crown prince when the king passes on. The traditional royal paradigm of succession — from father king to crown prince — generally bypasses and sidelines the queen. The queen is primarily the mother of the heir; as mother-of-the-heir, she may have some status, but is not supposed to meddle in the affairs of governance. This is essentially the view held by some who have been opposed to True Mother’s leadership.

This royal tradition has been so firmly entrenched in the culture of Korea that its re-enactment in the Unification movement seems to some to be a matter of natural succession. If so, any resistance to that re-enactment would be seen as a crime of violating majesty. Thus, the fundamental point of the objections voiced by some to True Mother’s specific actions (changes to the Family Pledge, new scriptural compilation, etc.) is not to the actions themselves, but to the very fact that she is taking any actions at all. Emotional arguments over specific actions may tend to obscure this fundamental point.

The issue is the entrenchment of that traditional royal paradigm, which has been in existence for hundreds or even thousands of years. If the True Parents brought nothing new on the level of society, if they were simply refilling the old model by seeking to replace older royal families with a new one, that model of messiahship would be seriously flawed. By contrast, once the providentially essential point of the unity of True Father and True Mother in absolute true love is recognized and upheld, we can see that True Mother’s leadership does not represent a succession at all. It is the continuation of True Parents’ fulfillment of one true kingship.

If there had been no period of True Mother’s reign, that is to say, actual leadership of the providence, then Unificationists could very well have misunderstood this aspect of the significance of the True Parents. In most kingdoms within the fallen world’s history, only the King really counts, and the reign passes from father to son to grandson under the best of circumstances or otherwise to another male heir. That fallen system is already well-represented in the kingdoms of this world. Instead, the true model for true kingship is the one found in the original ideal of the Principle of Creation:

Adam and Eve would then be elevated to the heavenly palace and heavenly throne where God would dwell in their hearts as the King and Queen [*wang gua wang hu*, 왕 과 왕후] to rule over [*tongchi*, 통치 (統治)] the earthly and incorporeal worlds. In other words, God’s kingdom is established. This kingdom is the kingdom of love. (CSG, p. 58)



This model is clearly expressed in True Parents’ teaching, but its realization seems to be a process of understanding and overcoming many challenges.

Some Consequences

There are many reasons for describing True Mother’s leadership at this time as providentially necessary. The argument here is not that women should be in leadership as a matter of “fairness” or “equality,” but rather is based on True Mother’s personal preparation and providential capability. True Father predicted (or proclaimed) the age of women’s leadership, including but not limited to the Women’s Federation for World Peace. The following is an example from True Father’s words:

We live in a time when women can move the world for God’s providence of restoration ... Eve is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit and the representative of all women on earth. She must become a true wife and a true mother; then she must become a true queen. Therefore, she will be

equipped with the qualities to become such a person. Her character will be such that she can take responsibility for all three of these roles, and more. God has sought for such a woman, who can become a true mother, a true wife, a true queen, and more. (*Cham Bu Mo Gyeong*, p. 45)

Even though True Father spoke of it many times, apparently some Unificationists did not expect women's leadership in fact to happen, and were not expecting a woman to lead the movement.

If we did not have this period of True Mother's actual leadership, then the nature and strengths of her leadership would not ever be known. As a corollary, the long-established pattern in both religious and political spheres of the domination of women by men and the assumption that women are not capable or deserving to be leaders, would not have been broken through and transcended. Unificationists would have been stuck with something like the ancient Hindu Laws of Manu, wherein a woman is controlled by her father, then her husband, and then her son.

True Father said many times that one of his major providential accomplishments was to raise and establish True Mother. Does it make sense now to try to undo that accomplishment, to set us back into the New Testament age, or even the Old Testament age? The point of today's providence is to establish a different platform, one which is not based on the consequences of the Fall.

In this respect, the Unification movement is better off now under True Mother's leadership than it would be under any of her sons' leadership, as capable as they are. It has to be so, for otherwise an essential dimension of the teaching and example of True Parents would be missing. Just as in a nuclear family so in the universal family encompassing heaven and earth (천주대가족, 天宙大家族), with the passing of one parent, the other parent picks up the responsibility, solely and fully. We should all be very grateful that True Mother is still with us, healthy and strong.

It is time for the Unification membership to develop "personal" relationships with True Mother, just as we have with True Father. Many of those personal relationships with True Father were not built on direct physical contact, but rather on spiritual or heartistic contact through study and prayer, which also led to dreams and other manifestations of spiritual connection. Our personal relationships with True Mother may be of a different quality than our relationships with True Father, because their personal styles are very different. However, the point is to experience aspects of divine love in and through both True Parents. The more fully we are able to do this as a spiritual community, the more smoothly we will pass through the current turbulent period in our history.

Oceanic Leadership

True Mother's leadership, as she explains, fundamentally consists in embracing everything:

My life has been like an ocean. The ocean can generously embrace and unite with the sky and resemble its color. It is in the lowest place, where it accepts all the water of the world. The ocean embraces everything and conceives all life. In the ocean all varieties of living things are born and raised in abundance. Its tides ebb and flow in response to the pull of the moon and the changing seasons. It responds to the rays of the sun, creates water vapor and influences the weather. A calm ocean is peaceful on the surface, but deep inside enormous currents that move the ocean are constantly surging. When waves of a tsunami rage, they can swallow everything.

People cannot see the whirlpool beneath the surface. Heaven's providence has surged like a typhoon, and my life has unfolded in the midst of it. There are so many circumstances that cannot be spoken of, which only I understand from the center of the providence. Crossing over that whirlpool, not allowing it to pull me down, I joined Father in the work to complete the providential history of restoration. (*Cham Bu Mo Gyeong*, 1577-78)

True Mother's description in this passage can be likened to a Taoist understanding of leadership, which explicitly recommends leaders being like the ocean, excelling by taking the lower position and receiving the waters from all rivers and valleys.

True Mother has urged us to become more loving families and communities. In this way, she expresses her most basic and enduring leadership role, as True Mother of Heaven, Earth and Humankind. The opportunity provided by the current challenges to True Mother's leadership can stimulate the Unification community as a whole to proclaim True Parents all the more vigorously. Through all this, True Mother's position and her providentially necessary, legitimate, appropriate, and beneficial leadership shall be clarified, elevated and declared.

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