

## The Marriage Has Come: Holy Wedding and Holy Community

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Unificationists recognize the Holy Wedding of Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han on the 16th day of the 3rd lunar month (3.16) in 1960 as the long-prophesied Marriage Supper of the Lamb from the Book of Revelation. "Blessed are those invited to celebrate this great event," proclaims the angel in Rev. 19:9.

This year, 2020, marks the 60th anniversary of True Parents' Holy Wedding, a time to renew our understanding and celebration. In East Asian life philosophy, a 60-year cycle represents a full completion and a new beginning at a higher level.

At a special gathering to mark the 60th anniversary of True Parents' Holy Wedding, on May 8, 2020, True Mother announced a new name for our providential endeavors, namely "Heavenly Parent's Holy Community." At the same time, she also announced that from now on, our New Year will begin in the Spring. Heavenly Parent's Day (formerly 1.1) will be celebrated on 3.16 of the heavenly calendar, the anniversary of True Parents' Holy Wedding.

In the context of world religions, I offer some thoughts on these major announcements.



*Thomas Selover*

### **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb: From Persecution to Celebration**

In chapter 19 of John's Revelation, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is prophesied as a momentous event, accompanied by great rejoicing: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:6b-7, RSV).

Yet, as we know, that most holy event happened in the midst of terrible persecution. True Father explains: "Despite the global and cosmic significance of that ceremony, in reality it was held in the presence of a small number of people and amid persecution that was beyond imagination." (CSG, 1233-34)

True Father drew a parallel with the Passion of Jesus: "I had to conduct the Holy Wedding in circumstances similar to those when Jesus was arrested and made to walk the path to the cross. Indeed, at the time of the Holy Wedding, the nation opposed me and Christianity opposed me. They were united against me." (CBG, p. 87) Similarly, True Mother recounted at the 17th anniversary of the Holy Wedding, "...as much as Father walked the road of the cross and tribulation to be ordained in his position, I was also given an incredible cross to bear in order to become Mother."

By 1960, True Father had already been leading the providential restoration course for many years, such as fulfilling the condition of establishing 120 churches throughout Korea, and so on. In the past, the assumption has often been that all the merit of preparation for the Holy Wedding was on the side of True

Father. However, recognizing the differences between True Father's account of that preparation and True Mother's account, we can understand the event of True Parents' Holy Wedding more deeply (as Revelation says, "the Bride has made herself ready"). Both True Father and True Mother approached the Holy Wedding through their own preparation by God, Heavenly Parent.

The Holy Wedding itself became the central point of the re-creation providence, and so the event sheds new light and meaning on all of the previous, as well as subsequent, events of providential history. Many events which took place before True Parents' Holy Wedding, such as some complexities of True Father's course, have been transfigured by the Holy Wedding event. It would not make sense to be distracted by "what ifs" to a point of missing the reality of "what is." Former things have passed away, there is a new creation! (Rev. 21:4-5)

Birthed and raised in the pure love of God, True Mother represented all women in fulfilling the prophecies in the Book of Revelation for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Both True Father and True Mother had already established their absolute filial love for God, and experienced God's True Love upon them. So, the Holy Wedding itself, the central point when True Parents appeared, was the "mystery" of the two filial children, son and daughter, becoming one Heavenly Couple in True Love.

Children come to a new level of relationship with their parents when they come to understand that their parents' wedding anniversary is a deeper occasion for celebration than their own birthdays, because the very possibility of the children's birth comes from that sacred love and commitment on the part of their parents. All children of True Parents ought to be able to feel the sense of security that children feel when they know their parents love each other deeply. Through this love of True Parents flows the grace of Heavenly Parents' love, joy and commitment to us and to all humankind. Recalling and celebrating the foundational event of True Parents' love enables that grace to flow more freely and empowers us to feel and share that realm of grace.

### **Celebrating Our Blessings**

The Holy Wedding was the starting point, the beginning of the eternal True Parents, who were "born" through the Holy Wedding: "God has to find a new bridegroom and bride in the Last Days and prepare a supper to celebrate their marriage. That is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Through this supper, the True Parents will be born [탄생]." (CSG, 147) After their "birth," True Parents have proceeded to give birth to true children, as well as millions of blessed couples. True Parents have been replicated in miniature in the blessed families. Celebrating True Parents' Holy Wedding invites each blessed couple to reflect on the centrality of their own marriage blessing in their personal lives and in the lives of their families and tribes.

No doubt, our understanding of the significance of the Blessing is insufficient, and our practice as blessed couples even more so. And yet, we are called to be representatives of True Parents. We can freely celebrate True Parents' Holy Wedding, as well as our own blessings. This is also the meaning of the Heavenly Tribal Messiah (HTM) blessing ceremonies that Unification blessed couples are conducting on True Parents' behalf.

True Parents' Holy Wedding is the foundational event for the various current understandings of the future of the Unification movement. Even if our theological understandings of True Parents' Holy Wedding may differ, that would be no barrier to celebrating together. Therefore, drawing attention to the celebration of True Parents' Holy Wedding may have the potential to promote unity among the blessed central families.

### **Parallels from World Religions**

The Christian religious calendar includes two main holy days, Christmas and Easter. Similarly, the Buddhist calendar marks celebration of the Buddha's birthday as well as the day of his enlightenment (Bodhi Day). The two birthday celebrations, Christmas and Buddha's birthday, are recognized as civil, public holidays in South Korea, for example. On some level, everyone celebrates both Christmas and Buddha's birthday, because they are national holidays. Looking into the hoped-for future, we can foresee a time when True Parents' birthday will also be celebrated in Korea and around the world as the birthday of great religious figures.

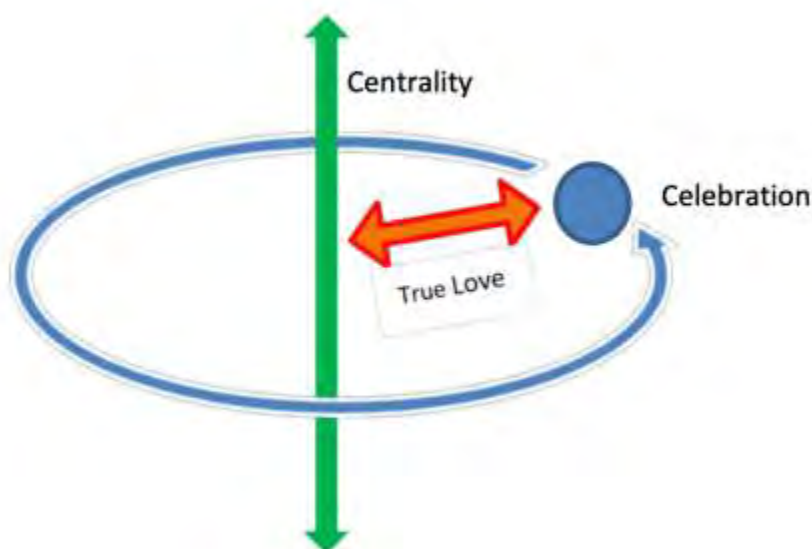
The other two holy days, Easter and Bodhi Day, are each deeply reflective of the achievements and breakthroughs proclaimed by their respective religious traditions. To celebrate them is to affirm the world-historical as well as personal significance of the events which these holy days honor. For True Parents' Holy Wedding also, those who celebrate this event are identifying themselves as beneficiaries of the grace that True Parents have brought into the world. Such celebration need not be exclusive, yet it still represents a faithful affirmation of the central significance of the Holy Wedding event.

Just as Easter celebrates a breakthrough event so does the Buddhist Bodhi Day, and both offer an important parallel for the Holy Wedding. The enlightenment of the Buddha demonstrated that cessation of

suffering is possible and that there is a pathway to arrive at that point. This is "good news" for those fortunate enough to be born in a time and place when they can hear about this truth. Similarly, the True Parents' Holy Wedding, and the marriage blessings that have flowed from it, has opened a pathway to the cessation of the cycle of suffering known as the fallen lineage. Through the inclusion of ancestors' blessings, the transformative power of this event can reach all of humankind -- past as well as present and future. As the center of history, True Parents' Holy Wedding is a transcendent event. Like the death and resurrection of Jesus or the enlightenment of the Buddha, its significance is always present, in the present. In light of True Parents' Holy Wedding, the world history of religion finds its axis of centrality.

### Centrality and Celebration

The centrality of True Parents' Holy Wedding, in love, life and providential history, is the vertical axis that links directly with Heavenly Parent's heart and original love. Celebration of True Parents' Holy Wedding is the horizontal orbit that connects with, and responds to, that centrality. The power of attraction which sustains the orbit is True Love, coming from both the central axis and the orbit.



The Holy Wedding was and is worthy to be celebrated with more worldwide attention and joy than any other occasion, far surpassing the celebratory attention given to the British royal wedding of Prince William and Catherine (Kate), Duchess of Cambridge, for example. Since that has not happened yet, we have a mandate to expand the celebration of True Parents' Holy Wedding.

### Reasons to Celebrate

Chief among the reasons to celebrate is to offer congratulations and praise to God, our Heavenly Parent. It was Heavenly Parent who blessed True Parents with joy on their Holy Wedding Day. Heavenly Parent was and is the chief celebrant of True Parents' Holy Wedding. Our Heavenly Parent looked forward to the Holy Wedding of True Parents with such anticipation. Beginning from the Holy Wedding, Heavenly Parent has been working together with True Parents to re-connect the human family through True Love.

Second, the Holy Wedding anniversary is a day to celebrate victory and overcoming, like Easter or Bodhi day. True Parents' Victory made the Holy Wedding possible against all opposition. As True Mother explains, "True Father passed through a providential course of immeasurable indemnity prior to establishing his position as a True Parent through our Holy Wedding in 1960." True Mother also came to the Holy Wedding through the sacrifice of so many prepared saints.

True Parents' Holy Wedding consummated all that went before and has decisively shaped everything that comes after. True Father said, "The paramount significance of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is that the Returning Lord and his Bride receive the Marriage Blessing *at the time of God's choosing* and in the right environment, whereby they become the true ancestors of humankind who can inherit heaven and earth." (CBG, p. 71)

Celebrating True Parents' Holy Wedding stimulates each blessed couple to celebrate their own marriage blessing. True Parents' Holy Wedding is the source of our authority and joy in the lives of our families and tribes. It is also the ultimate source of our anointing as heavenly tribal messiahs. All of the marriage blessings, as well as all of the vast projects of our movement, are rooted in True Parents' Holy Wedding. All of these are manifestations of the working out of the grace that springs forth from the central victory of True Parents' Holy Wedding.

Why should True Parent's Holy Wedding day also be celebrated as Heavenly Parent's Day? God, Heavenly Parent, is the one who most proudly and joyously celebrates True Parents' Holy Wedding as the chief celebrant. Normally, at a wedding, who are the chief celebrants? The parents of the bride and groom. In this case, the parent(s) of the bride and groom are the same, Heavenly Parent. In other words, for God's Day (Heavenly Parent's Day), we not only celebrate God but also celebrate *with* God. As the portal through which all of Heavenly Parent's multitudes of children are being re-born and re-connected, the Holy Wedding has cosmic significance.

Because True Mother proclaimed "Heavenly Parent's Holy Community" at a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Holy Wedding, we can better understand the internal connection. "Heavenly Parent's Holy Community" is a name that reflects the centrality of Heavenly Parent, our Creator and sustainer. It also focuses on the holiness of the worldwide community that has the Holy Wedding as its starting point.

There is much more to be said about the significance of the new name for our community, but if we view it in light of renewed emphasis on the Holy Wedding, it will be easier to appreciate this new name and recognize it as also something to celebrate.

Going forward, let us celebrate the True Parents' Holy Wedding along with our Heavenly Parent, inviting one and all! How? With dancing and singing! We can start with the words and music of that great Unification holy song by Dan Fefferman, "The Marriage Has Come!":

*"People listen!  
God's will has been done.  
The Marriage has come;  
Earth and Heaven shall be one."*

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*Photo at top: Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han at True Parent's Holy Wedding, April 11, 1960 (3.16 on the lunar calendar), Seoul, Korea.*