

Golden Age Newsletter for May 5, 2025

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
May 5, 2025



Golden Age Newsletter

May 5, 2025

Hello Goldies, Welcome to the new look! It's all the same content with a simpler format. We hope you enjoy!

This month features Bruce Sutchar's Personal Assessment, Unfication Thought Piece on Godism and the Future, Thoughts from Christine Libon and Michael Downey's Korean History!

This Month's Message



photo credit: Bruce Sutchar

My Personal Assessment

by Bruce Sutchar

As 2025 begins, I am finding that many first-generation members are feeling uneasy.

These are members who love God and True Parents very much. They are frustrated with their local churches. Many of them did not join a church, but rather a movement guided by and following the ideas of Rev. Sun Myung Moon. In San Francisco, there was not even a Sunday Service. Members either witnessed, fundraised or attended the weekend workshop.

They were willing to sacrifice tremendously, in hopes that their sacrifices would help rejuvenate the United States. Many had finished college, others had dropped out after meeting the Unification Movement, and most were concerned that their efforts might join those of other like-minded young people who stood against, not just what they viewed as an unjust war in Southeast Asia but also the corruption in the government and the violation of the environment.

They were willing to sleep in sleeping bags on the floor like caterpillars (from Mrs. Durst), foregoing restaurants, movie theaters, rock concerts and even going home for the holidays. Mostly “western” members, they came from nearly every English-speaking country in the world, albeit many with funny accents. But most valuable, they were willing to give up all their worldly goods and career paths (as Jesus had asked the rich man) to contribute their lives to fulfilling God’s dreams.

As the years progressed, they participated in all the providential activities involved in Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, Washington Monument, “three days of fasting for “Forgive, Love and Unite” and seven days at the UN for North Korean freedom, the founding of UTS, CARP, the Inchon Movie, signature campaigns galore and so many other projects initiated by True Parents.

The movement continued to grow in America, though not quite reaching its goal of 30,000 members. While so many other new religious groups faded out, the Unification Movement continued to grow. Yet True Father never claimed to form a church. He even changed the name from Unification Church to the Family Federation. However, as local centers across the country began to grow, they also began to evolve into traditional church structures.

Though today we have an American UC President and North American continental leader being Western for the first time, many of the church leaders and members are Oriental. They seem to be following the traditional ways of a church. This has frustrated many of the older American members who no longer participate in their regional church programs.

Most of the first generation’s children are millennials (born between the 1982 Blessing and 1995) and, with few exceptions, they are not involved in the church. Their values are significantly different from ours and from those of Generation “Z” (born after 1995).

The kids born since 1995 are now avidly attending the church programs, CARP and joining GPA at a significant rate. My doctoral dissertation has taught me that this difference is primarily generational. While the millennials seem primarily focused on their jobs, their houses, and their careers, they aren't into politics (most often they don't vote) and they don't seem enamored of American History, including the traditions of the Founding Fathers. They are family-oriented, may love God and have traditional family values that they were taught by their Unification parents, but their ideals are quite opposite from the early American members.

I always wondered where the early American members were (especially those who joined under Young Oon Kim), and now that we have been in the church for 50 years and are ourselves elder members, we are on our own and simply choose how much to involve ourselves in church projects. One seminary graduate I know, who had given numerous sermons over the years, is not even asked to speak in his own local church anymore.

So, on April 13th the Cheon Won Gung was dedicated and many first-generation members flew to Korea and attended the festivities with True Mother. Yet, many more did not. True Mother was accompanied on the stage by two of her grandsons, who were also anointed for a special position.

Where our movement will go from here is yet to be seen. The leadership of our church is changing, with more and more second-generation children taking leadership positions, while more and more first-generation members, although still faithful to God and True Parents, are stepping back from everyday church activities. This could be due to the fact that our movement is truly morphing into a "traditional" church structure. True Parents' theology and lifestyle is continuing to guide our lives and to be as strong as ever.

Bruce Sutchar

April 24, 2025

Unification Thoughts

Thoughts on Godism and the Future

Why this topic?

Due to some conversations, some assertions maintaining that the Unification Principle[1] (and Godism in general) is hard to read or even relate to anymore—especially for young adults[2]—plus one nation's dissolution of its Holy Community and its effect on the blessed children there, thoughts arise concerning how True Parents' teachings will affect the future. Acknowledging the

wide variances of perspectives within a family – let alone in a global community – there’s at least one important factor to consider. This article focuses narrowly on just that one factor. ...

[To read more, please click here!](#)

A Simple Inspiration

**“Never regret a day in your life.
Good days give you happiness
Bad days give you experience
Worst days give you lessons and
The best days give you memories.”**

Testimonies, Thoughts and Tributes



Photo credit: Christine Libon

We Are Guided

by Christine Libon

One thing that I continually request of God is: “Please lead and guide me.” For my life, this is of utmost importance. And it amazes me how the guidance manifests. I will get an inspiration to do something and, a year later, or sometimes in the next instant, that inspiration becomes a reality!

For example, I had an inspiration that if I gave a book to a specific person, it would help them. Circumstances changed and that book just sat on my shelf (what a waste) until I really wanted to give it away. I tried to give it to another person but somehow that didn't work out. Finally, the situation arose in which I could give it to the exact person about whom I originally had the inspiration.

So often I get thoughts that I consider to be like whispers of angels or guiding spirits telling me very specific small things I should do – for example, “Call them,” or “Pray for them,” or “Send them a photo, an email.” And I act on these thoughts. I was told that the more we act on inspirations, the more new inspirations will come.

Indeed, sometimes the inspirations come with urgency, a sense of desperation conveying to me that I *must* act now; my whole being senses the urgency so intensely that it almost controls me. I once told a friend that it feels “like holding back a team of horses” as I must sometimes wait for the right moment to act.

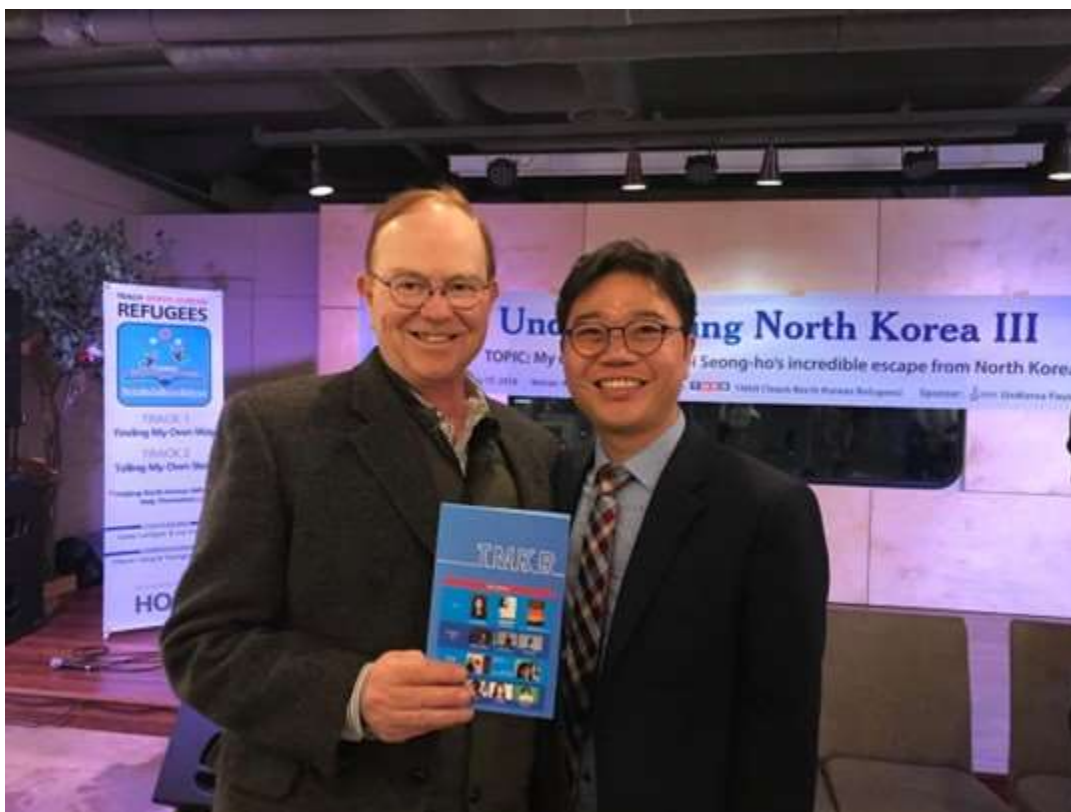
Whenever my inspirations manifest, I am greatly reassured that my prayers requesting guidance are indeed heard and answered. A sense of fulfillment comes to me as I later reflect on the occurrences of my day, and also a sense that things were meant to be. A sense of inner stability and peace comes to me, knowing that in this immense world with people going in so many different directions, my life is guided.



A History of Korea, Part 1

By Michael Downey

When studying the history of a people or territory, there are usually a lot of events and dates involved. The longer the period of time under consideration, the more dates, events, and people have to be memorized. The history of Korea is such a long history. Said to be 6,000 years long or longer, it has plenty of memorable items. For me, such events are needed to form a framework. The real interesting thing is the people and whatever meaning can be derived from their lives as they played out long ago. . . .



To read more, please [click here!](#)

Bulletin Board

Dear Golden Age Members

After a devastating illness to her husband 2nd generation member, Yeol-Shim Francesca Bell-Miller has taken on the sole financial support of her couple. Please consider helping them by employing Yeol-Shim's service to help on your memoir, manuscript or other written materials. She has written to me:

"I've been posting about my current situation on my Facebook and the Love & Support for Sunhyun Miller Facebook page. I have mentioned my recent circumstances and subsequent shift to becoming the sole income earner of my and my husband's household. I ask for just a few minutes of your time to help me

support Sunhyun and myself. Please post this ad:"

Thank you so much,
Francesca Bell-Miller



***"A Philosophical Approach to Mental Health Based on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics"* by Edmond M. Charley**

I am happy to announce this new publication, which I edited, is now available on [Amazon for Kindle](#).

Responding to the need for innovative and holistic interventions to address mental illness, Edmond Charley reviews a novel approach based on philosophy, specifically Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics. While conventional approaches to understanding and treating mental illness tend to overlook individualized experiences and experiential dimensions this approach prioritizes and values professional empathy, interpretation, and interactions between caregivers and patients.

Charley's analysis offers valuable insights that will benefit mental health professionals and practitioners, including social workers, nurses, patient advocates, and more.



[Print copies](#) as well as [ePub version](#) ebooks are also available to purchase.

Jennifer P. Tanabe, Ph.D.

jenniferptanabe.com/



The Golden Age Newsletter began as a small Clifton Senior newsletter about 3 years ago.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Golden Age newsletter has been created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles are not in any way meant to proselytize or push a point of view.

It is a place to share God's Love – what is positive in our life as a result of finding our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Motto: "This is the Dawning of our New Age" – We are always in the process of redefining ourselves as we grow older and as we add experiences to our lives. Therefore, we must consider how God can use us even when we may be decreasing in our physical capabilities.

The e-newsletter is broken down into eight sections:

1. A Featured Message of Inspiration – Helping others to feel hope and inspiration for the establishment of CIG.
2. "Unification Thoughts" – any educational article on the "Fifth Realm of Heart" – Grandparents' heart
3. History Byte – A short article on a positive memory, a funny or affectionate story about experiences in the church with True Parents or with brothers and sisters or an article about the development/experience of helping to develop one of True Parents' providential projects or events.
4. Arts and Culture – A sharing about one's talents, hobbies or interests and how this relates to sharing God's love (to family, community, nation or world).
5. Tributes and Testimonies- a personal testimony of one or more life learning experiences or a Tribute to a spouse, friend, or leader
6. Health – An article that relates to health (physical or mental), possibly providing a link to an article you think might be interesting or important to other seniors.
7. I Love being a Grandparent – stories about grandparenting or about things to do with grandchildren
8. Recipe – Preferably a healthy recipe along with 2-3 paragraphs about what makes it a good or memorable recipe.
9. Book Review – report on a book that inspires thoughts toward a world of peace
10. Bulletin board – reports on personal activities, or request help on a project

*Did someone forward this to you? Subscribe to the Golden Age
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Thoughts on Godism and the Future

Why this topic?

Due to some conversations, some assertions maintaining that the Unification Principle^[1] (and Godism in general) is hard to read or even relate to anymore—especially for young adults^[2]—plus one nation's dissolution of its Holy Community and its effect on the blessed children there, thoughts arise concerning how True Parents' teachings will affect the future. Acknowledging the wide variances of perspectives within a family – let alone in a global community – there's at least one important factor to consider. This article focuses narrowly on just that one factor.

The transformative power of God's Word

One thing that human history documents is that there's a spiritual thirst within many peoples that seeks a better way of life. God has responded to that thirst by providing special individuals who receive revelations of God's Word and who then devote their lives to sharing these revelations. Even if those people are not flawless, and when they eventually die, the teaching can often live on and can transform the behavior of at least some segment of humanity for hundreds and even thousands of years, across the globe. Those expressions of God's Word can even become the basis for the worldviews and actual governments of societies.

For the purpose of this article, we will refer to the sum of True Parents' teachings using a term that Father Moon coined, which can express the scope of all his teachings. That term is "Godism". And regarding it, this is the scholarly assessment of Dr. Sebastian Matczak^[3], who was the first professor whom Father Moon selected to teach philosophy at the founding of the Unification Theological Seminary:

"... Unification philosophy is ... a mixture of Taoism and Confucianism. Taoist influence is seen in the conception of the constitution of being (ontology); Confucianism in the concept of ethics. Both these influences are mingled with Christian ideas, brought to Korea by missionaries. As the result, the Unification philosophy somewhat resembles Platonism and to some extent Aristotelianism. ...All these influences, however, are united in one organic philosophical body, bringing new valuable elements to Western philosophy, and possibly offering solutions to the problems which have tortured Christian theology for centuries. ... The novelty of the Unification philosophy and its application to Christian teaching lies first of all in its new ontology resulting from the concept of man. For Unificationists, man becomes the starting point for our knowledge of the whole of reality. He becomes also a creature of supreme dignity, second only to God, and the relative center of the whole of reality, God being its absolute center. The Unification understanding of man, therefore, leads to understanding of the whole or reality, even of God, and therefore of all Christian teaching." - Unificationism, a New Philosophy and Worldview, pp. 39-40

Though you may not agree with every point of Dr. Matczak's assessment, the points he made about the significance of Father Moon's teaching in the history of thought are not to be taken lightly. In short, Godism is not just another inspired perspective that God has given to the world; to this scholar who has devoted himself to the study of world theology and thought, it is rather singular in importance. He saw that it was capable of changing humanity's understanding of itself and of God. Whenever that has happened in history and souls were illuminated, societies could be influenced to strive for something higher. There are many records of a "golden age" in the world's societies. One remarkable example is the Axial Age that Karl Jaspers identified as a worldwide occurrence between

egg that ran deeper, defined as a worldwide occurrence between 800 and 200 BCE.

Spiritual nurture

The next connected idea about Godism and the future is an old familiar one that goes back to the Principle of Creation in the *Exposition of the Divine Principle*. It's one that elder members have heard hundreds of times and that young members might recall hearing in weekend or summer workshops.

Briefly put, the idea explains that our inner health and well-being is nurtured by elements of a *yang* type and elements of a *yin* type. The one passage that mentions this states:

"The spirit grows through give and take action between two types of nourishment: *life elements* of a yang type that come from God, and vitality elements of a yin type that come from the physical self." – *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 48 (or online [here](#); use the browser's search function to locate "life elements")

There's no further explanation of the *life element* in the book, but there is a little more in the *Outline of the Principle, Level 4* book. There, it states simply:

"The Life Element from God is the basic element that develops Heart within a person and develops him as a being of truth," – *Outline of the Principle, Level 4*, p.34 (online [here](#); use the browser's search function to locate "life elements")

Thankfully, a more definitive explanation of the *life element* came from Rev. Ken Sudo during the 120-day trainings that Father Moon created for America back in the mid-1970s. The exact passage is this one:

"... in order for the spirit man to grow, it ... needs positive and negative nutriments. The positive nutriments are God's truth and love. ... When this *life element* is given from the spirit body to the physical body, the physical body will work very hard and do good deeds. These good deeds will be given to the spiritual body as objective nourishment – this is called the vitality element. ... (it) is the negative element." – *Principle of Creation, Part 2* (online [here](#); use the browser's search function to locate "life element")

So the nature and content of the *life element* is "God's truth and love." And the most direct expression we have of this divine truth – and the love within it – is in the *Words* that God has given to us in our scriptures. And so it has been the faithful practice of religious people throughout history to study with filial devotion the scriptures they were given.

This is the reasoning behind Father Moon's insistence on our study of the Unification Principle. And since the book concludes with events up to its publication in the 1960s, Mother Moon completed Father Moon's plan to publish the three *Holy Books*, which contain much new material that True Parents taught in the 50 or so years after the *Exposition of the Divine Principle* was published. As the *Introduction* to the *Divine Principle* states:

"The words proclaimed on these pages are only a portion of this truth. This volume is merely a compilation of what his disciples have hitherto heard and seen. We believe and hope that when the time is ripe, more profound portions of the truth will be published." – *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 12

Consistent with those words written in the late 1960s, Mother Moon said in 2013:

"It is good to educate ambassadors for peace. We need to give them Divine Principle education. Actually, teaching Divine Principle is not enough now. We need to teach them Father's words. They need to do *Hoon Dok*. Don't you think so? Divine Principle was revealed in the 1960's. After that, we need to study Father's words, don't we? We need to publish (*Cham Bumso Gyeong: Teaching of True Parents*), and together with Peace Messages and *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, we need to educate them." – *Message on Parents' Day*, May 8, 2013

Essences of a movement's long-term power

We are now to the next point: One key observation about a spiritual movement is that its driving power—its *fire*—directly reflects the strength of its members' connection with its founder's *heart*.

Thorough grasp of a movement's source documents is very important, but for many members, that by itself may not bring passion and fervent devotion to a faith. And realistically, regular in-depth scripture study isn't something many people do, especially when the movement's writings are voluminous. Many good people are busy grappling with life's challenges and so it's common practice for them to rely on learning largely from the sermons of their pastors, who do the deep studying and interpretation for them. Experience or research suggests that's an interrelationship that's common to congregations of many faiths. In the histories of many faiths, there's frequently been a core of specially focused people. In Judaism, there was the tribe of Levi^[4], who was specially anointed and entrusted to maintain the faith. In Christianity, the 12 apostles weren't deep students of the scripture; it wasn't they who wrote the gospels. Other, later followers wrote them, and still later were monks who created the illuminated manuscripts, as well as a few Church Fathers^[5] who were scholars. So, as long as at least some part of the community studies, values and is committed to the preservation and transmission of its scriptures, that community can survive the trials of the ages.

And most importantly, if one meets fervent believers – sincerely religious Christians, for example – one trait is evident: *they love The Lord*. Their hearts have somehow been touched, moved and broken open to *feel* that Jesus took on the weight of their sins—indeed of *all* humanity's sins—so that they would not be condemned but instead could be reconciled to God and have a miraculously graceful second chance to do their best in this life. Such people are fully aware of their profound indebtedness to this supreme love of Someone who was fully, unreservedly willing to endure the most public humiliation and horrific torture, and then to “lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). It's *that* kind of “fire” that's kept the purest forms of Christianity strong for over two millennia, even despite the repeated missteps and serious mistakes that mar its history.

An important way this pure fire is kindled occurs when a sincere and open-minded seeker devotes him- or herself to studying the words of Jesus in the Bible record with a prayerful heart. The words aren't read speedily in order to cover a large number of pages or finish quickly. And if the language is a bit archaic—as in the King James version, for example—the content isn't dismissed as too difficult to read or understand. Instead, the earnest searcher persists, in faith and in trust; he or she patiently and earnestly reaches deeper to extract the meanings and the *heart* behind the words.

Judging from the Christian record, that condition of sincerity and effort has apparently helped bring about epiphanies and transformations for people the world over, for the past two millennia. And, given that track record, there's no indication that such a condition of sincere study and prayer will ever run out of transformative power.

How TP's heart will be known by future generations

Then, if that works for folks who've studied God's inspired Word in the Bible, and if that's one apparent way for them to connect to the heart of one Singularly Remarkable Young Man who lived on earth two thousand years before them, it stands to reason that sincere and earnest study of God's Word as given to True Parents could connect people of this and future centuries to *Their* hearts.

And if that happens on as widespread a level – just as it clearly had for Jesus – then it's reasonable to expect that the spiritual movement that True Parents initiated will continue into even the distant future. The fact that Jesus was killed so young, clearly hasn't dimmed the transformative effect of God's Word and God's Love through him. That's the evident **power** of God's Word: it is demonstrably undiminished by time, especially as long as there are those who love, study, and preserve it faithfully for future generations to discover and also cherish. One only needs to look at the *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology* or the three volumes of *World Religions*^[6].

Conclusion

This article began with the question of how True Parents' teachings will affect the future. And it ended with the critical role that a movement's *scriptures* plays in connecting the *heart* of its members to the *heart* of its founders. Also, the article was the outcome of many months of thought about comments and opinions that seemed to diminish the value of scripture study. While admitting the

seemed to diminish the value of scripture study. While admitting the difficulties of language and also the sheer volume of available material, this article suggests that the power of God's Word can touch the souls of sincere searchers for centuries and even millennia after the earthly lives of a movement's founders have ended.

When True Parents created the ideas of Home Church, Tribal Messiahship, Hook Dok Hae, or when they published the Holy Books, they clearly didn't want only seminarians and pastors to have direct access to the Word. Rather, they hoped that *all* their children – including their descendants and even distant generations – would have direct access to God's life-giving love and truth therein.

It's the nature of the human soul to search for deeper understanding. So, even though that need comes to different people at different times, the historical record shows that it persists through the ages, as does the transformative power of God's Word.

[1] Dr. Lee explained that *Tongil Wollli* is most accurately translated as the *Unification Principle*.

[2] See the thought-provoking [Patient Love is More Important Than Doctrine](#).

[3] Dr. Matczak was a Polish Jesuit who taught philosophy at St. John's University in New York. He authored [many philosophical treatises](#).

[4] Learn about the identity and special function of the Levites – [online here](#).

[5] These historical individuals are the intellectual leaders of the church; [learn about them](#) – [he, re](#).

[6] This is a remarkable trilogy written by Dr. Young Oon Kim, who was the very first missionary whom Father Moon sent to the U.S. She could speak, think and write in fluent English and she made the very first English translations of the *Divine Principle*. When UTS was founded in Barrytown, she was its professor of Theology and also Comparative Religions. Her love of the voice of God in great scriptures of the world empowered her to train seminarians to dialog with sincere understanding and respect with people of many different faiths. Her *World Religions* trilogy is available [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

< A History of Korea

Godism on Conflict and Strength >

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A History of Korea

PART ONE

By Michael Downey

When studying the history of a people or territory, there are usually a lot of events and dates involved. The longer the period of time under consideration, the more dates, events, and people have to be memorized. The history of Korea is such a long history. Said to be 6,000 years long or longer, it has plenty of memorable items. For me, such events are needed to form a framework. The real interesting thing is the people and whatever meaning can be derived from their lives as they played out long ago. I would like to know who the Korean people are, where they come from, and how and why they came. Many Koreans today, that I've talked to, believe that they are a people of destiny, a chosen people. Surely the belief that all things Korean are best is a common Korean point of view. I'm looking to find out why.

I'll use a framework as a time line while pursuing my interests. The more than 6,000 years of Korean history is complex. The first humans that migrated out of Manchuria and Siberia were Tungusic speaking people linguistically related to other tribes in Siberia and parts of China that have historically been known as Manchuria. They were Stone Age people who learned Bronze Age technology from contact with Chinese tribes. The earliest known Korean pottery dates to **around 8000 BC** and the Neolithic period began thereafter, followed by the Bronze Age at 2000 BCE. But humans have inhabited the Korean peninsula from as early as the Pleistocene era, about 500,000 BCE.

As Steppe people, they were assuredly mounted archers. Artistic works of mounted archers on the hunt exist from the Koguryo period. Their religion was shamanism, characterized by a belief in spirits, or animism, and the role of shamans as intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds. The playing of the drum is central to many rituals in shamanism. Two of the most enduring images of South Korea today are the drum and the archer and both are deeply embedded in the culture.

The earliest inhabitants on the Korean peninsula arrived around 500,000 BCE. Among the tribes who migrated into what is today Manchuria and North Korea, the most prosperous collectives established towns and built walls around them. They struggled to survive against Chinese tribes and other Steppe tribes. They also fought and, when possible, absorbed their neighbors. The tribes were ruled by leading men and later in the walled cities these men became known as king and were known by the Chinese word for king. The Chinese word king was "Wang". From the earliest times these migrating tribes had to deal with encroachment by the Chinese dynasties. The early walled town countries, including Old Chosun, were Bronze Age civilizations. Through trade with the Chinese Han, they acquired some iron forging technology but iron implements were only for the elite. The early Koreans got social and political ideas as well as iron technology from the Chinese. Their genius was to get these cultural technical improvements from China while maintaining their political independence. They learned to bend to the realities of power but to never give up their unique (Korean) identity.

Old Chosun was prominent among the walled towns and their foundation myth became the founding myth for a whole nation. Until today, South Korea commemorates that myth with a holiday called Foundation Day. Apparently there was a bear and a tiger that lived in the neighborhood of Old Chosun and both wanted to become human. They took their request to the local sky God, named Halmunim, and were told that if they passed a test, they could become human. The test was to spend 100 days in a cave with no food or water and with only mugwort (쑥) to eat. They agreed and entered the cave. They both had a hard time, but it was the tiger that gave up and went out. The bear was able to endure and emerged victoriously. The bear became a woman and fell in love

with the son of Halmunim. They had a child and they named him Dan Gun. Dan Gun grew up to be the founder and king of the nation of Gojeosun or Old Chosun.

Is it history or mythology? History is made up of facts. Here are a few facts. What does Dan Gun mean? You might think it is a guy's name. But people don't call their parents or their kings, for that matter, by their first names. Actually, Dan Gun is not a name at all but a word that meant king. Until the Chinese word for king, wang, was adopted, all the walled city states used the word Dan Gun for their chieftain or king. Most scholars nowadays say that Dan Gun refers to as many as nine kings of Old Chosun. Since before time began, the ancestors of Korea practiced animism, totemism and shamanism. In the practice of totemism, a tribe will take as their totem or protector a powerful or magic animal. Hence, the tribe folks might be known as snake, eagle or bear people. The totem poles of the Native American people illustrate this well. Of course, the bear and the tiger in the story represent the bear people and the tiger people, two competing Stone Age tribes. Or, as some say, it describes a Stone Age tribe's encounter with a newly arrived tribe with bronze tools and weapons. The population was made up of the blood of successive waves of peoples that drifted out of northwest Asia into the peninsula. Were these Korean people? They were the ancestors of the Korean people and finally came to exist as the Korean people.



photo credit by Michael Downey

Thoughts on Godism and the Future >

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