

December 2025 Golden Age Newsletter

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
December 3, 2025



Golden Age Newsletter

December 3, 2025

Hello Goldies, Welcome! We hope you enjoy!

This month features a Message about How We Are Still Growing after all these years, AI and the Divine Principle, Poem about Peace Starts with Me, continuation of Mr. Downey's History of Korea, a lively Healing Suggestion and two tributes: one for Sandra Lowen and the other to Steve Mudget. Please view the Book reviews and the Bulletin Board for updates and requests.

This Month's Message

Awakening to Heavenly Heart in Our Later Years



by Stephen Boyd

In the fall of 1974, while a student in my senior year at the University of Kansas, I encountered the Divine Principle. I remember how naturally its teachings made sense to me and how impactful it was to realize that we are living in the Age of the Second Coming. The idea of True Parents was new to me, yet it seemed the logical culmination of everything the Principle explained.

The Divine Principle opened my eyes to a God who creates with purpose. We are not accidents of biology, but divine beings shaped in the image of our Heavenly Parent, with the capacity to uncover truth, appreciate beauty, and aspire to goodness. I learned that at our core, like God, we are beings of heart. Over the years, I continue to deepen my understanding of the meaning and practice of heart. We grow our hearts by giving and receiving love and by offering care and service to others, with God's Word as our guide.

In a 1973 address at Belvedere, True Father explained that the word "heart" in English does not fully convey the depth of the Korean term *shimjeong*. He taught that *shimjeong* encompasses heart, sentiment, and deep love. A person of *shimjeong* feels deeply, loves actively, and looks at God, people, and creation with affection, interest, and concern. Father said that this is the original standard of heart that Heavenly Parent has longed to share with us, and that we are called to return to the place of original heart where such love can flow freely.

In recent years True Mother is teaching *hyojeong* as central to Heavenly Culture. Like *shimjeong*, its meaning cannot be captured in a single English word. I invite you to read Dr. Thomas Selover's article "Heavenly Society (신사회) and the Development of Hyo Jeong (孝情) Culture," published in the *Journal of Unification Studies* in 2018, which I found insightful.

Dr. Selover explains that *hyojeong* unites two ideas: *hyo*, filial piety, which stresses respect, loyalty, and loving attendance toward parents and elders; and *jeong*, a warm emotional bond of affection, closeness, and shared life. *Hyo* brings vertical alignment with God; *jeong* refers to horizontal companionship. Together they form the heavenly energy that binds families and communities in God.

If you are like me, you struggle to capture *hyojeong*'s meaning. Like other teachings in the Principle, *hyojeong* is not understood merely in the abstract. It is an instruction on how to live. It is an experience we participate in and which we carry inside.

Prayer and meditation have always helped me move from intellectual understanding to living experience, and openhearted service to others helps make space within me to welcome God's presence. My attempts at active study, prayer, and service affirm for me True Parents' guidance that such daily practice

generates real change and allows for deeper communion with Heavenly Parent and an understanding of Heaven's Culture.

I believe the culture of hyojeong is something we are gradually awakening to. It grows out of our devotion to Heavenly Parent and is based on the inner work we do to align our thoughts, emotions, and choices with Heaven. When we taste even a small portion of Heavenly Parent's direct love, we are revived, uplifted, and filled with calm and joy. This vertical connection in love overtakes us and becomes the driving force around which our thoughts and activities revolve. I believe that this was the primary force behind the work of Jesus during his ministry and is the central force that drives True Parents in all that they do.

For me, True Parents are the embodiment of hyojeong. Whether we are fortunate enough to be with them physically or invite their presence as we read their words in the early morning, True Parents inspire in us the desire to love God, honor parents and ancestors, cultivate gratitude and humility before Heaven, and to practice kindness, patience, and affection in daily life. This growing presence in our lives is what strengthens our determination and gives us power to persevere. Growing in my understanding God's perspective shapes how I relate to my spouse, how I listen to my children, how I treat others. Hyo Jeong is practiced in our active public mission, but is also present when in the kitchen, the garden, the workplace, and in quiet moments of prayer and study.

Building heavenly culture means deciding to cultivate community rather than waiting for it to appear. Although we work hard to make our church a welcoming home, if we are honest, we still feel challenged to sit next to someone new or introduce ourselves to someone we do not know. Yet hyojeong encourages us to do exactly that. It invites us to take interest in families, youth, children, and elders, to appreciate pastors, volunteers, and musicians, and to give time to listen to a brother or sister in need. Hyo Jeong motivates us to notice those who may feel overlooked and helps create a culture that feels like family. When we practice

hyojeong together, polite attendance becomes heartfelt fellowship, and the church grows into a community of genuine love. As True Mother writes in her memoirs, hyojeong culture gives birth to a community that is a welcoming home for all who enter.

The vertical aspect of filial piety roots us in God's heart. The horizontal aspect, a warm emotional bond between humans, attaches us to God's heart and allows His love to flow through us to others. Together these two features engender a life of faith and service that is energizing, generous, and enduring. Heaven's love increasingly fills every aspect of our daily lives, and we more closely resemble the sons and daughters God intended.

For those of us in our grandparent years, hyojeong can find joyful expression in everyday activities - telling a corny "grandpa joke," discovering a new tenderness for your spouse after decades of Blessed marriage, tending a vegetable garden, or feeling deeper appreciation and gratitude for a nearby mountain lake. My own attempts to practice hyojeong have rekindled my love for God, True Father and True Mother, for Jesus, family, friends, and Heaven's creation.

This love, concern, and appreciation arise from placing God at the center of our thoughts and actions throughout the week, not only during formal gatherings. Every day becomes a holy day—not through ritual, but through doing our best to see life more faithfully through the eyes of our Heavenly Parent.

Recently, a dear brother and I were speaking about past experiences with True Parents. As we recalled these special memories, I was taken aback when I unexpectedly felt again the atmosphere of heart I encountered in Father and Mother's presence. It reminded me of who True Parents are, why we feel so deeply attached to them, why we miss them, and why we long for them. Through them, God is teaching us about Heavenly Heart.

Hyo Jeong invites us to discover, perhaps more deeply than before, who we truly are: children of Heavenly Parent, created to love without limit and called to bring

warmth, goodness, and blessing to our families, our church communities, and the wider society. Hyo Jeong is also the source of our uncompromising determination to face with dignity and confidence the challenges put in our path as we seek to build Heavenly Culture.

For those of us in the latter years of life, perhaps Heavenly Parent is now granting us one of His greatest gifts—a new awakening to heart, a new fullness of love, and a new closeness to Heaven. In this latter season of our lives on Earth, our hearts can still grow stronger, broader, softer, more deeply anchored, committed, and attuned to Heaven.

Unification Thoughts

Reflections on AI through the lens of Unification Thought

In recent years, I've seen various professionals express their distress about advances in technology which demonstrate its capacity to replace them—Hollywood actors, luthiers, musicians, producers, service industry persons, auto fans/designers and others. Having a lifelong appreciation of painstaking design and hand-craftsmanship, I'd empathized with their plight on those occasions when I'd find such articles. But I'd not been disturbed enough to think more deeply about it.

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

Dawning of a New Age

Peace Starts With Me

© *by Jim Stinard*

What is peace?

Peace gives us release.

Peace, peaceful, pleasant, patience, and love,
and all of the above, and more.

An eternity of pleasantness and serenity.

Peace is filled with friendship, filial piety,
With festivity, with engaging and constructive variety
and especially with the joyfulness of family!

Filled to the brim with contentment;
there is no room for fear or jealousy or resentment.
No need for addiction, or conflict, only fulfillment,
no worry for derailment or going astray,
we are whole and complete in every way.

Flowing and filled.
Flying on a cloud of love, high, high above the petty
and perturbing storminess of the fray,
of the continuous frustration of hatred and temptation
that happens everyday.

Open your heart to the Creator of Peace, to the Lord of Love.
Open your heart to our God above.
Peace is possible, we shouldn't give up, we shouldn't stray.
However, we do need to pray.
There is hope. Peace is on the way.
Peace starts with you, peace starts with me,

open your heart so we all can be free!

Testimonies, Tributes and Thoughts

A History of Korea, Part 8

By Michael Downey



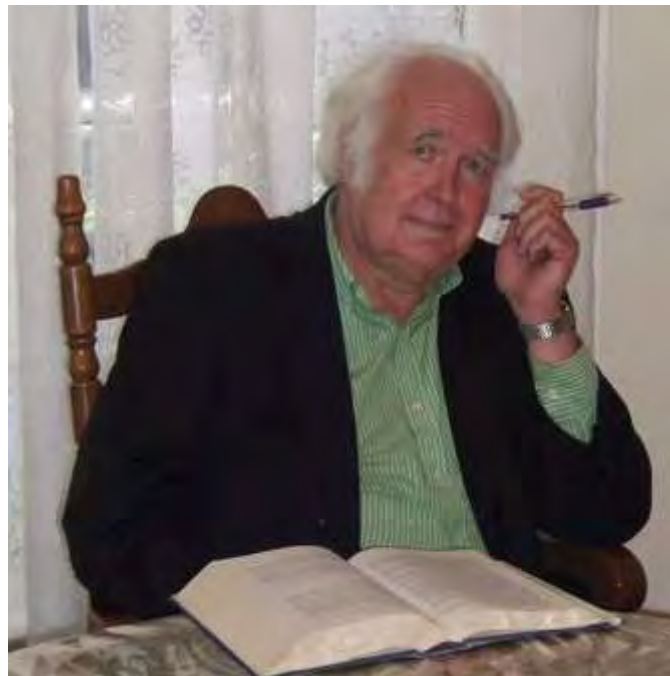
The Joseon Dynasty marked the beginning of modern-day Korea. At the same time, by adopting its name, it attempted to reach back to the original Old Joseon Dynasty for identity and legitimacy.

The founder of the new dynasty was General Yi Seong-gye (temple name Taejo). He had been sent by the last king of Goryeo to the north with an army to battle forces of the new Ming Dynasty. On the way, he changed his mind and turned back to overthrow the Goryeo regime. Angered by the government's weakness and

inefficiency, he took action. After several failed attempts to place someone else on the throne—attempts that ended in bloodshed—he ascended the throne himself.

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

A Tribute to Sandra Lowen and Announcement of Recent Works



by Randolph Remmel

Sandra Lowen—surely one of the best writers any of us know, from any nation—is right here in the United States, with books that deserve to reach readers everywhere.

This message directly references her books *Great and Terrible* and *Chi-Chi's Song*, and just a couple of days ago, her newest work—*Unraveling Grace*—came to my attention. It's another sure winner.

To read more, please click here!

A Tribute to Steve Mudgett

by C. Ching

Here's a prayer and a toast to our elder brother, Steve! He was a good brother and good friend during my early years of spiritual growth at Belvedere Estate in Tarrytown, NY and one of the reasons I remember those years so fondly. His slow, deep voice admonishing me to have "patience and endurance." We both were denizens in the basement bowels of the Belvedere Main House.

To read more, please click here!

Health and Recipes

A Suggestion

Submitted by Christine Libon

Self-Care Isn't Selfish

- Saturday, January 17, 2026
- 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- Women's Federation for World Peace USA 481 8th Ave. Suite 1228 New York, NY 10001 United States ([map](#))

Register and zoom details coming soon!



Self-Care Isn't Selfish:

Heal Yourself, Your Family & the World

"Courage to be Yourself"

with Charlotte Gray

Sat., Jan. 17, 2026, 10-11:30 pm PT



"I teach women how to let go of the FEAR that has been keeping you stuck and holding you back from having the life you truly want, and I guide you back into a divine relationship with the magnificent woman that you truly are so that you can have the fabulous life you desire."

Visit Charlotte's website for more information:

<https://charlottegray.com/>

A Monthly Series for WFWP Members & Friends

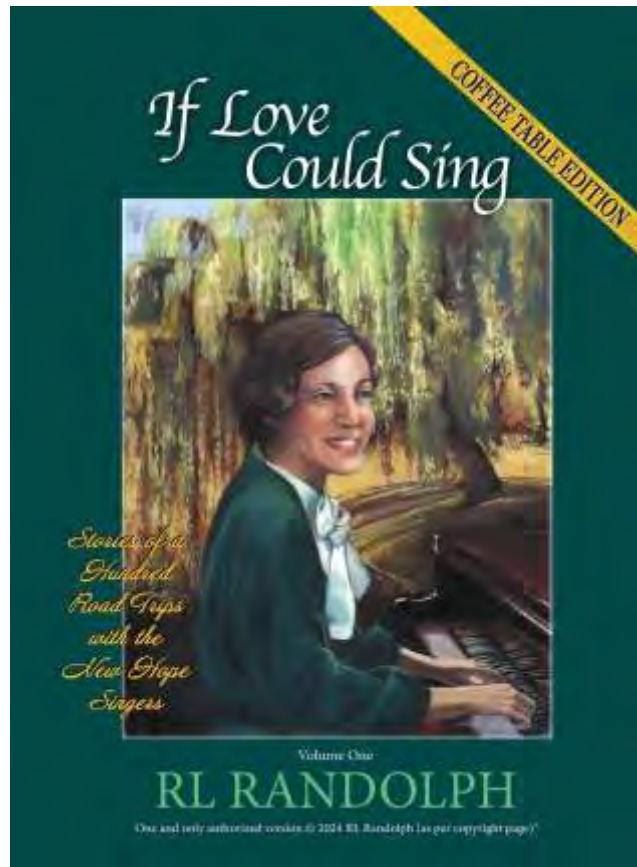
Sat., Jan. 17, 2026 PST, 10-11:30am PT/1-2:30 pm ET

Facilitated by Certified Coaches: RoseAnn Kennett, Liisa Freystaetter, Myrna Lapres, Donna Avey, Loretta Anderson, Kendra Stein & Shawna Kemp

A project of Women's Federation for World Peace, SR 5

Book Reviews

It's Just Like Christmas - When you can give a gift like this one!



About Dreams Waiting To Be Realized

Musicians from a dozen different countries sharing tough times while covering four hundred thousand miles in only three years.

www.iflovecouldsing.com/new-hope-singers-book--ab6a9

Announcing the publication of
*" The Hermeneutic Approach to
Mental Health:
Theory and Practice*

by Edmond M. Charley

By Jennifer Tanabe

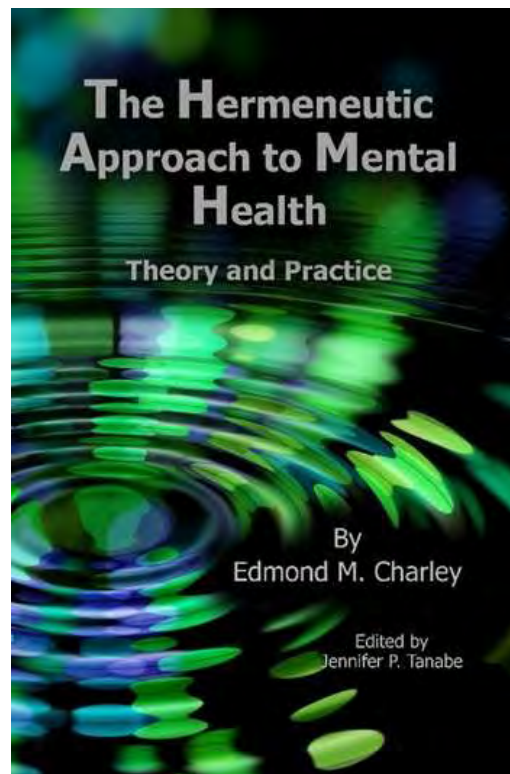


I am happy to announce this new publication, which I edited.

The Hermeneutic Approach to Mental Health: Theory and Practice bridges the gap between philosophical reflection and the lived realities of mental health care. Drawing on the insights of Gadamer, Heidegger, Jaspers, Foucault, Szasz, and Laing, this book offers a practical framework for understanding and treating mental illness without reducing the person to a diagnosis.

Through interpretive listening, case applications, collaborative treatment planning, and structured exercises, Dr. Edmond Charley guides clinicians, caregivers, and those living with mental illness toward a shared language of recovery and meaning-making.

At its core, this is not just a book about mental health. It is a call to meet the human being behind the illness, and to walk alongside them toward a renewed horizon of understanding and care.



[Print copies](#) of this book are available to purchase from Lulu.com. Ebooks ([ePub version](#)) are also available now.

Coming to Amazon and other online distributors soon, in both print and ebook formats.

Jennifer P. Tanabe, Ph.D. jenniferptanabe.com/

Bulletin Board

UTS/HJI Announcement

Dear former UTS/HJI graduates,

Greetings from HJI! We're reaching out to all of our UTS/HJI alumni at this time in order to update our contact directory and strengthen our growing community.

As part of this effort, we're launching an alumni newsletter that will include HJI news, announcements, alumni updates, and opportunities to stay connected.

We'd love to include you! With this in mind, we very much hope you will reply to this message by providing your preferred email address and phone number, and confirmation that you'd like to receive the HJI Alumni Newsletter.

Your information will only be used for HJI alumni communications and event updates.

Below please a hyperlinked text leading to the [form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnDebUcTqXDQzbjrlT0lQEQBzOVMTKwvfYLXbgFctOFUOf7Q/viewform).
docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnDebUcTqXDQzbjrlT0lQEQBzOVMTKwvfYLXbgFctOFUOf7Q/viewform

Thank you for all that you do and are!

Youngsoon Winter – I am a subscriber to the Golden Age Newsletter. I truly appreciate its purpose of keeping our elder generation connected — every edition is a joy to read. Currently, I am working with HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership (formerly Unification Theological Seminary, UTS) and assisting with alumni relations.

Looking for more Articles

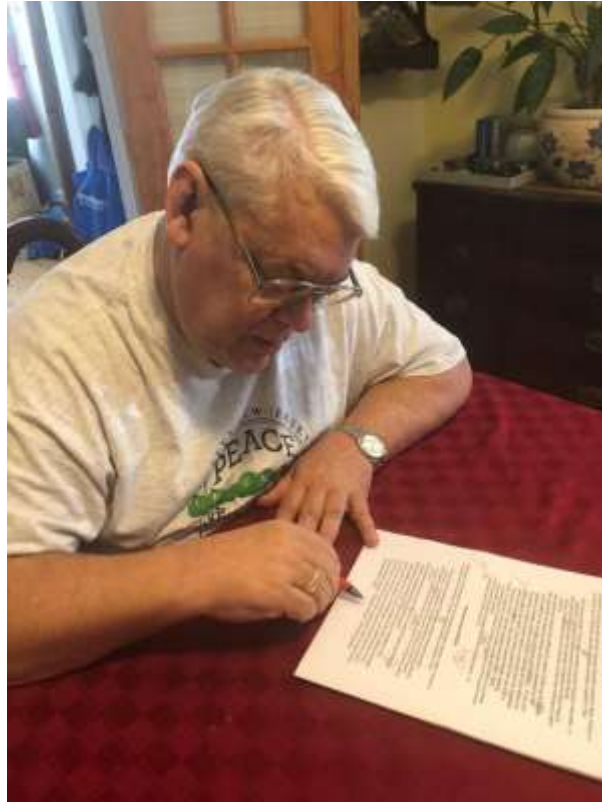


Photo credit: Carol Pobanz

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
Newsletter [here!](#)*



Reflections on AI through the lens of Unification Thought

In recent years, I've seen various professionals express their distress about advances in technology which demonstrate its capacity to replace them—Hollywood actors, luthiers, musicians, producers, service industry persons, auto fans/designers and others. Having a lifelong appreciation of painstaking design and hand-craftsmanship, I'd empathized with their plight on those occasions when I'd find such articles. But I'd not been disturbed enough to think more deeply about it.

However, I recently listened to an audio rendition of written reflections by folks I knew that was generated by running a text file through an AI program. I was surprised that not one, but two narrators had been added, whose appreciative dialog thoughtfully grouped similar reactions, analyzed them, and drew interesting conclusions from them. The rawness of each person's individual written thoughts was transformed into a very polished and convincing podcast. If I'd not been told that it was AI, I'd assume that it was an actual recorded, post-event conversation between flesh-and-blood male and female analysts.

But knowing the original text, I eventually identified what I missed: the raw immediacy and individuality of each person's unfiltered, immediate thoughts—my sense of emotional connection to each of them through what they'd spontaneously expressed. That caused me to reflect more deeply on this matter than I'd ever done before. Then, one early morning before dawn, I sat up in bed to write down what had suddenly come to me:

In the Unification Thought theories of *The Original Image* and *Original Human Nature*, the **Divine Character**—which we have inherited from our Heavenly Parent—has three characteristics: *Heart*, *Logos* and *Creativity*. These three and their relationships manifest throughout Unification Thought's theories. But that material is too extensive for the purposes of this article. So we'll aim for brevity and simplicity here.

1. Heart

This is "the core of the attributes of God" according to [*Essentials of Unification Thought*](#) (p. 23). A later text adds this:

Heart (is) the emotional impulse to seek joy through love... the irrepressible desire that wells up from within...

it is not possible to repress the impulse to seek joy... the impulse to seek love is stronger than the impulse to seek joy... the impulse of love is primary... Thus, God's Heart can also be expressed as the emotional impulse to love infinitely. • [New Essentials of Unification Thought](#), p. 23–24

And another text points out that Heart:

...wells up from the bottom of the mind; it is irrepressible, even for God Himself. • [Explaining Unification Thought](#), p. 21

Such statements profoundly altered my notions about God and the value of human beings.

2. Logos

Though not disputing John's gospel, Unification Thought naturally also speaks of logos in terms of philosophy:

Traditional systems of logic have focused primarily on the laws and forms of thought, but Unification logic begins by considering, first of all, the starting point of thinking itself. Unification logic starts from the question as to why thinking takes place at all... The reason is that, prior to the creation of the universe, God engaged in thinking. That is, prior to the creation of the universe, God established the purpose of actualizing love based on Heart, and then made plans in accordance with that purpose. That constituted His thinking, or Logos (Word). – [New Essentials of Unification Thought](#), p. 458

The stunning conclusion about thought is (put simply): the very *purpose* of thought is *the actualization of love*.

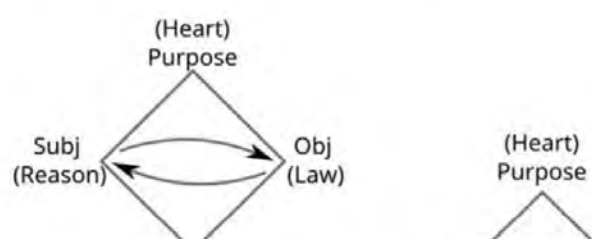
3. Creativity

This attribute of our Divine Character is for the actual realization of love:

True creativity originates from God's Creativity, which is based on heart and love. (it) should be based on heart and love, should be pursued for the realization of love—the Purpose of Creation. – [Explaining Unification Thought](#), p. 43

These quotes are mere snippets from the various chapters on Original Image, Logic, Axiology and Art. In the effort to keep things short and simple here, we can summarize the essential relation of these three attributes of Divine Character:

The first (Heart) is the *driving force* behind the second; the second (Logos) *applies reason* to logically fulfill the first; and the third (Creativity) is the deeply considered and careful result of the first two. The accompanying figure is a simplified version of the idea, compiled from several that were created by Dr. Lee and which appear in his handouts.



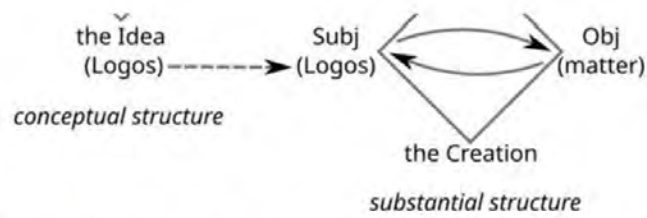


Fig 1: The Two-Stage Structure of Creation

Conclusion

In this light, I could clearly identify what the cause of my intuitive unease (with the podcast I'd first mentioned) actually was: The problem with AI is that its programmers don't know these defining characteristics about the Divine Character of both the Parent God and we human children. Heart gives rise to purpose; this purpose drives thinking; and the logically created result reflects this.

If the Purpose is true, beautiful and good, the outcome reflects this. If the purpose isn't, neither is the outcome. History is full of examples where logical reason and creativity have been harnessed to accomplish all manner of ends—from the most sublime to the most appalling. Unification Thought stresses that the parental heart of *benevolence* is the true and original guide of original thought and creativity—its "north star" as it were.

So, in the medium- to long-term, AI guided by true purposes can help end cancer, poverty, drought, famine, disease and many other malaises that plague our world. But driven by false purposes, it might divide humanity between a tiny, competing, enormously wealthy ruling elite, a mercenary class of technologists whom they utilize, and everyone else. For decades now, there have been books and films about dystopian societies which depict this.

But what worries me in the short term is that our children and their children will be lulled into *complacency* and too much *dependency* on AI. Such a scenario would be *crippling to their innate Divine Character*—their Heart/Purpose, their Divine reason and their Divine Creativity—thereby stunting the growth of their own *eternal and uniquely individual soul*. They could be misdirected from fulfilling their First Blessing... No need to mention what that would mean for the providence and HP's hopes.

When one of the world's most prominent technologists[i] was asked what development *excites* him most about the future, he answered "AI". And when asked what he *fears* most in the future, he answered "AI". He's repeatedly explained that the *value biases* that are programmed into AI by its coders is where the danger lies. Those biases are imbued into their work and thus its influence on the minds of the consumers who use it, knowingly or unknowingly. His conclusion was that AI must be guided by true **values**[ii] and that's an issue that has driven our Movement from its outset.

[i] There are many results which crop up in a search for the risks of AI. But two years back there was

already a meeting at the US Senate with technologists which was a good indicator. See: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/big-tech-ceos-ai-meeting-senators-musk-zuckerberg-rcna104738>

[ii] Please see the Abonim’s extensive guidance on this matter of original values.

Frequently Asked Questions

Registration Questions

Q: I don't see any welcome email, did my registration go through?

Find the answer

Airtable Questions

Q: I registered but it says I need to create an airtable account, how do I do that?

Find the answer

System Questions

Q: I forgot to bookmark my dashboard page! How do I find it again?

Find the answer

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[@Fukuya.Sano](#)



History of Korea, Part 8

by Michael Downey



The Joseon Dynasty marked the beginning of modern-day Korea. At the same time, by adopting its name, it attempted to reach back to the original Old Joseon Dynasty for identity and legitimacy.

The founder of the new dynasty was General Yi Seong-gye (temple name Taejo). He had been sent by the last king of Goryeo to the north with an army to battle forces of the new Ming Dynasty. On the way, he changed his mind and turned back to overthrow the Goryeo regime. Angered by the government's weakness and inefficiency, he took action. After several failed attempts to place someone else on the throne—attempts that ended in bloodshed—he ascended the throne himself.

At first, he was not inclined to make major changes and tried to maintain continuity. His new dynasty was largely dominated by the same ruling families and officials who had served the previous regime. However, succession issues among his sons and rivalries among factions quickly ended his reign. After six years on the throne, he abdicated in favor of one of his sons, went into semi-exile, and never saw any of his sons again.

During his short reign, he encouraged the people to identify as Korean again after the long hiatus under the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. He improved relations with the

Chinese Ming Dynasty, and although he had fought against Japanese Wokou pirates, he also strengthened ties with Japan.

Confucianism vs. Buddhism

During the Joseon Dynasty, conflict between Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism reached a peak. Neo-Confucianism, developed in Song China, was based on traditional Confucianism but absorbed ideas of self-cultivation from Buddhism and concepts such as Ki (material force) from Taoism. While Neo-Confucianism emphasized duty and family obligations, Buddhism taught detachment from worldly ties—including family and social position—making the two natural rivals.

The new Joseon leadership admired Chinese culture and Confucian ideals. They envisioned a society built on order, duty, and moral cultivation. When founding the new capital, Seoul, King Yi Seong-gye brought both Buddhist and Neo-Confucian advisors. Buddhists were closely aligned with shamanism. A key question was where to place the western city wall. After much consultation, it was decided to exclude Mt. Inwang (인왕산 법 바위)—home to Buddhist and shamanistic shrines—from the city limits. This symbolically established Neo-Confucian supremacy and the persecution of Buddhism.

Buddhism was banned from the court, temple construction was restricted, Buddhist lands were confiscated, and limits were placed on the number of monks who could take vows. Under heavy pressure, Buddhism became more intertwined with shamanism, its followers increasingly came from lower classes, and temples moved deep into the mountains.

Social Classes in Joseon

Life for about 80% of the people remained much the same as in Goryeo. Most were farmers, fishermen, or merchants (sangmin). The nobi (slaves) increased in number, and several underclasses existed, including the baekjeong—hereditary butchers, leather workers, itinerant entertainers—and the kisaeng (기녀).

Kisaeng were enslaved women from outcast families trained as courtesans, skilled in music, dance, and poetry. Although of the lowest class, they played notable cultural roles. Their poetry—often about love, loss, and heartbreak—left deep marks on popular culture. Many themes in today's Korean popular music reflect these roots.



photo credit: Michael Downey

King Sejong the Great

The most famous Joseon monarch was King Sejong, known as Sejong the Great. He ascended the throne at age 22 when his father (King Taejong) abdicated.

His greatest achievement was the creation of Hangul, the phonetic writing system of the Korean language. Before Hangul, Korean was written using Hanja—Chinese characters that were difficult to learn. Hangul made literacy accessible to ordinary people.

Sejong also sponsored scientific and technological advances, including rain gauges, sundials, water clocks, and celestial globes and maps. His curiosity and innovation greatly improved the lives of his people.



Political Factionalism

Throughout the Joseon era, political factions—regional and ideological—struggled for dominance. Succession disputes often led to fratricide and even matricide. Factionalism split elites into north-south and east-west power blocs, leaving the government unstable and often ineffective.

Imjin Wars (Japanese Invasions)

The Imjin Wars were invasions by Japan, whose main goal was to conquer Ming China, with Korea as the first step. Joseon was unprepared, and Japan captured Seoul and Pyongyang. Ming China provided military aid, and with the brilliant naval victories of Admiral Yi Sun-sin and his turtle ships, the Japanese were driven back.

A second invasion came in 1597, but this time Korea was ready and repelled it quickly.

Qing Invasion and Manchu Pressure

The Ming Dynasty struggled against Manchu Qing forces for a decade and was toppled in 1644. When Joseon supported Ming, the Qing invaded Korea in 1636, devastating northern and central regions. Cities were repeatedly pillaged, and Korea was forced to pay tribute. In 1643, Korea and other tributaries of the Ming Dynasty were forced to

tribute. Still, Joseon elites regarded themselves as heirs of Ming civilization and rejected the “barbarian” Qing.

The first Europeans arrived during this era—a Spanish priest serving with Japanese troops and Dutch sailors shipwrecked on Jeju Island.

Isolationism and Christianity

After the Manchu invasions, conservative Neo-Confucian elites embraced strict isolationism. In the West, Korea became known as “The Hermit Kingdom.” Christianity entered via Qing China, brought by Jesuit missionaries. While Neo-Confucian elites rejected Christian ideas—especially the banning of ancestor worship—many of the lower classes embraced it with hope.

The government saw Christianity as a threat. Brutal persecutions followed, and over 20,000 native and foreign Catholics were martyred. Yet the religion survived and later flourished. Protestant missionaries, particularly from the United States and Britain, arrived later, building schools, hospitals, orphanages, and universities. The most famous was Horace G. Underwood, funded by the Underwood Typewriter fortune. Many Koreans today call Presbyterianism the “original church” of Korea.

East Meets West

The most important turning point in Asian modern history was the encounter between East and West. When Europeans arrived, all three major East Asian nations—China, Japan, and Korea—were in decline politically, socially, and economically. The industrialized West arrived with ships, guns, cannons, new ideologies, and new religions—claiming superiority.

This pressure triggered internal upheavals:

- China: Taiping and Boxer Rebellions
- Korea: Donghak (Dan Hak) Rebellion
- Japan: Meiji Restoration

All were responses to Western imperialism and the collapse of traditional power structures. The Pacific War (World War II), the division of Korea, and the rise of Communist China were long-term results of this historic encounter.

Donghak – ‘Eastern Learning’

In the 19th century, Korea faced famine, oppressive taxes, corrupt politics, and ruling families that seized power through young puppet kings. Discontent grew across the country.

Many turned to religion. In 1860, Choe Je-u, a failed yangban scholar, founded Donghak (“Eastern Learning”) as a counter to Seohak (“Western Learning” – Roman Catholicism). Donghak blended Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shamanism, and Christianity. It was anti-dynasty, anti-landlord, and anti-foreign, appealing strongly to the lower classes.

Choe Je-u taught that God exists within each person, making each individual divine. His message of material and spiritual healing spread rapidly. Alarmed, the government executed Choe Je-u and 20 of his top followers in 1864, but his ideas lived on and sparked further uprisings.

The Donghak Peasant Rebellion (1894)

In 1894, Donghak followers raised a large peasant army in the southwest and defeated government troops. Seoul panicked and called on Ming China for help. Japan responded by sending its own army. The rebellion was crushed—but this sparked the First Sino-Japanese War, after which Japan expelled China from Korea and began 40 years of colonial rule (starting in 1905).





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A Tribute to Sandra Lowen and Announcement of Written Works



photo credit: R Remmel

By Randolph Remmel

Sandra Lowen—surely one of the best writers any of us know, from any nation—is right here in the United States, with books that deserve to reach readers everywhere.

This message directly references her books *Great and Terrible* and *Chi-Chi's Song*, and just a couple of days ago, her newest work—*Unraveling Grace*—came to my attention. It's another sure winner.

Please don't miss any of her books (she has also written four more, which I am certain are equally outstanding). Some people simply *have a gift*—Sandra is certainly one of them.

I first met Sandra in Washington, D.C., in late December of 1970, after a very small group of us had made our way to the nation's capital for what was to be the very first “three-day workshop” of its kind in the nation. It presciently spoke to the profound transformation already underway across the awakening earth. Upon encountering Sandra and hearing her original song *The Bridegroom's Face*—which she sang for the few of us while accompanying herself on guitar—I knew we were in the presence of genuine greatness.

She also wrote the song *White Lily of the Valley* and a couple of others that were featured at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center when the very first series of public speeches of their kind were presented in 1972. These events amounted to something of a “pilot program” that would set the tone, protocols, and priorities for the subsequent four-year series of nearly “other-worldly” inspirational public speeches that established the unfolding earthly transformation as a major subject across the United States, Japan, and Korea.

Following this remarkable marathon of public events—covering 400,000 miles in just three years—there would be very few in many nations left unaware of the beginnings of a new era of human experience destined to elevate awareness in virtually all directions.

Sandra was there from the beginning—and she is still very much with us. Thank God for Sandra. And thank *Sandra* for recording the wondrous insights she has gained through what must have been truly extraordinary inner efforts—and for the courage, strength, and generosity she has shown in sharing them far and wide. Very few can do this. We should be proud to know someone who can.

And just *by the by*—you couldn’t go wrong giving one, two, or all three of the Sandra Lowen works mentioned here as Christmas gifts that are sure to please.



photo of Sandra and John Lowen, her husband

Heaven already knows of Sandra. It’s time the people on earth hear the exceptional news of an author whose works may well become classics of their kind.

Have a look—and make a purchase. You’ll be glad you did.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=sandra+lowen&crid=1FES3RWK1O06R&srefix=sandra+lowen+books%2Caps%2C193&ref=nb_sb_ss_saint-en-refocus-candidate_6_18

She has the love of her husband...

What follows here is an excerpt from ‘Chapter 2’ of Sandra Lowen’s Book *Great and Terrible* *

It records things she learned in 1967 from one 'Mrs. Lee,' one of the instructors of the 'Little Angels' dance troupe, which had been founded by Father Moon then only relatively recently in the interest of promoting international understanding through culture. Mrs. Lee had many stories of experiences shared exclusively by women, including herself, who had joined the movement very early.

Sandra writes:

One of her most captivating stories was that of their preparation for Father's upcoming matching and Blessing in 1960. Many eligible women had been summoned to the church to be considered for the incredible honor of becoming True Father's eternal bride, the True Queen of heaven and earth. They all knew True Father well: at 40 years of age, he was still slender, with a handsome face and a shock of black hair. His spirituality and dedication were renowned: he studied and prayed long hours at the Center, and the saga of his early years establishing the movement. Under the hostile eyes of the negative spirit world forces, communists and rival Christian pastors, enduring the prison camps and beatings, bombings and the flight to the south carrying a man with a broken leg on his back, living in the hut he constructed with his hands out of corrugated cardboard and tin, and through all that not once being dissuaded from disseminating the vision of a world of hope, peace, and happiness.

The local young women...

The local young women were so excited! How they preened and primped in front of their mirrors! How they made the most of the paints and rouges available to them! How they stitched their fabrics and seamed their best silks, going over again and again with their mothers and best friends how their outfits and new hairstyles brought out their best looks.

They were not counting on their looks alone. They believed that a world leader such as Father was destined to become must have a wife that was college-educated. There had been, two or three years before, a mission to South Korea's top women's college, Ehwa Womans University, which had brought many young ladies from the cream of Korean intellectual and cultural society, as well as several well-known professors, to the movement. Surely, they would be the ones most likely to be chosen. Particularly fortunate were candidates that had been trained as well in the housewifely arts: cooking, sewing, and the like. Certainly, these sterling traits would be taken into consideration when he looked for someone not only to complete himself, but also to help him to carry out his worldwide mission. As they queued for their interviews with him, each one of them could not help but feel that she would be the chosen one. How could they not feel that way, with their sterling college educations, impeccable housewifely skills, and perfect beauty?

And yet, when the day was over, none of them was the chosen one. Hak-ja Han, the cook's daughter, a young girl still in pigtails that they usually walked by without seeing, as she scrubbed the pots or swept the floors: she was the one he chose! She was the one to bear the title and tasks of Heaven and Earth. They watched in disbelief as she was prepared for her ceremonies to

stand eternally beside True Father.

Did the women change their view of her? Did they realize that, because she had been chosen, they owed her their respect? Did they provide her with attention to her needs, or with their companionship and assistance in carrying out her new tasks?

No.

They still could not bring themselves to say even a kind word to her. They were being jealous and petty, and they knew it, but they just couldn't - or wouldn't - bring themselves to get over it.

Finally, some of them went to True Father and confronted him: "What is it," they asked, "that she has that we don't have?" Father did not hesitate. 'She has the love of her husband,' he responded. That silenced them, Mrs. Lee had to admit.

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A Tribute to Steve Mudgett

By C. Ching

Here's a prayer and a toast to our elder brother, Steve! He was a good brother and good friend during my early years of spiritual growth at Belvedere Estate in Tarrytown, NY and one of the reasons I remember those years so fondly. His slow, deep voice admonishing me to have "patience and endurance." We both were denizens in the basement bowels of the Belvedere Main House. As the Treasurer and Controller for International One World Crusade, Inc. (IOWC), his office was the former wine cellar for the former Bronfman family owners. As the assistant bookkeeper for the Belvedere Estate property, recruited after completing two-thirds of my training of the last 100-day Belvedere training program (which moved to Barrytown, NY and became a 120-day training program), my office was across the hall in the former linen closet. I would eventually succeed Steve as Treasurer for IOWC when he moved on to Golden Gate Seafood in San Francisco.

It was more than having similar jobs or being ensconced in neighboring workspaces that defined our friendship. It was more than sharing meals in the dining hall, sharing night watchmen duties, and weeding dandelions by hand on the acres of lawn. It was the one unforgettable gift he passed on to me in late autumn of 1975. Kem Mylar, the General Affairs coordinator, and Steve approached me one day and asked me to take over Steve's responsibility of leading the Sunday Pledge service at 5:00 AM each week. For most church members living in smaller church communities, their response would probably be "no problem, can do." But I had been attending these Pledge services at Belvedere. They were public events, with 50 or more dedicated members arriving early just to get the closest seats in front of the dais to hear the True Father of all humanity give the Sunday sermon. It was The Warm-Up Act for the weekly Cosmic Messiah Speaks Event. It set the stage, so to speak—the spiritual atmosphere to receive God's Word through His Representative. No pressure, yeah.

I tried to demur and refuse the honor. Kem and Steve persisted. You can do it. It's not hard. Give it a try. Eventually, I grudgingly agreed. That began my spiritual journey of waking up at 3:00 AM to pray at Holy Ground each Sunday (and Holy Days) in preparation, but never feeling prepared enough. I was searching for God's Presence, which I had once felt as a new member in New Orleans following the successful

completion of a 7-day fast of repentance, but thereafter I struggled to have this experience again. Leading every Pledge service for 21 months was like that, filled with anxiety and stress from the evening before until the moment my representative prayer ended, allowing me to feel relieved from the burden of responsibility.

But Steve was there to guide me. He taught me how to offer a representative prayer like True Father did: To build rapport with God through verbalizing His providential history of preparing and sending the Messiah 2,000 years ago and then preparing to send the Lord again 2,000 years later. To feel a measure of God’s suffering and heart of being let down by faithless people who couldn’t comprehend how precious they were meant to be in His eyes. To repent for those historical sins and convey that feeling to brothers and sisters gathered there. In the end, that was the unforgettable gift I received. It wasn’t a gift just from Steve. It was also from Kem and most likely also from David Kim who was overall in charge of Belvedere and would have at least approved even if not requested to accept such an appointment of responsibility. And for that, I am truly grateful, even to this day.

Thank you, Steve! And may you peacefully and victoriously transition to our Heavenly home of our Eternal Heavenly Parent! Amen and Aju!

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All information will be kept confidential.

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 Not shared

* Indicates required question

Title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.) *

Your answer



First Name *

Your answer

Middle Name(s) or Initial

Your answer

Last Name *

Your answer

(Your name while attending UTS/HJI if different from above.)

Your answer

Gender *



Male



Female

Email address *

Your answer

Phone number

Your answer

Home address

Your answer

Country of Residence *

Your answer

In what academic program did you complete your degree? *

If more than one academic program please indicate.

- ☐ Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Program
- ☐ Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program
- ☐ Master of Religious Education (M.R.E.)
- ☐ Master of Arts in Religious Studies (M.A.)
- ☐ Master of Arts in Peace Studies (M.A.)
- ☐ Certificate in Unification Studies
- ☐ Diploma of Divinity
- ☐ Diploma of Religious Education
- ☐ Other:

What year did you graduate? *

If more than one graduating year please indicate.

Your answer

I would like to receive HJI newsletters and upcoming programs in the future. *

- ☐ Yes
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