

FFWPU International: Seuk Joon-ho, 60 Years of Answering Heaven's Call

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Interview with Dr. Seuk Joon-ho, Former President of FFWPU Korea



Seuk Joon-ho

A 60-year journey walking alongside True Parents: Since joining the Unification Church in 1965, Dr. Joon-ho Seuk has stood on providential frontlines, pioneering mission areas around the world - from the Vietnam War mission field to the United States, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, and China. Through this testimony of this elder brother, True Peace Magazine traces the footsteps of former FFWPU president Dr. Seuk, who has served True Parents closely on the world stage for more than half a century.

Question: Can you say something about the family you grew up in?

"My father was the first person in Korea to receive a 10th-degree black belt in judo, and people called him the 'sage of judo.' He was a person of such

intellect and character that he majored in law at a university in Japan during the Japanese colonial period. Even now, disciples from around the world visit my father's grave and shed tears - he was truly a respected teacher. Though he was strict as a martial artist, he was an infinitely affectionate husband and warm father to his family.

My mother served as a professor of English literature at Ewha Womans University. When I was about five years old, she went to the United States as an exchange professor, but soon after, the Korean War broke out and she couldn't return, so we were separated for four years. After the war ended we were finally able to reunite, and despite various difficulties, our family was peaceful and harmonious to the degree that we were envied by everyone in those days.

Then in 1954, my mother joined the Unification Church. She spent time at the church until late every night, and because of curfews that the Korean government imposed during that time, there were many days she could not come home. My father couldn't understand this. Since the media at that time labeled the Unification Church as a 'heresy,' my father's opposition became even more fierce. The family conflict deepened, and eventually, one day my mother left home without saying a word."

Question: I would like to know about the circumstances under which you joined the church.

"At that time, I was one of the top judo athletes in the nation, and my academic performance was also in the top tier. But one day, after a sudden injury, I came down with pleurisy. As a result, I ended up having to give up both sports and going to university. It was a time of despair when everything seemed to collapse in one moment.

I agonized over what life is and why we are alive, searching in books on philosophy and religion, but no matter how much I searched, I couldn't find the answers. Then one day, a voice arose unexpectedly in my heart: 'Try just once to find out about the Unification Church.' Though I could not have given a reason, I felt a strong sense of conviction to do this.

The first teaching on the Principle that I heard there deeply moved me. I was amazed that the purpose of life and the Will of Heaven could be explained so clearly. After that, I devoted myself to studying the Word for three months, and eventually, even amid the severe opposition of my family and friends, I decided to join the Unification Church."

After joining, there were several opportunities to see True Parents up close.

"One day there was a witnessing team meeting. I wasn't a witnessing team member, but I sat quietly in the back to hear True Father's words. Then True Father looked in my direction and said, 'Joon-ho! Don't chew gum!' At that moment I was startled as I had never told True Father my name."

That day was the first time Father called him by name and spoke to him directly.

"Those words weren't simply a reprimand. It was a moment of deep and affectionate awakening, as if a loving father were quietly admonishing his son. The realization washed over me: 'Oh, Heavenly Parent has truly called me.'"

It seems True Father knew exactly when I would come.

"At that time, when True Father returned to Korea after completing the holy ground dedication tour around the world, I heard that he asked my mother for news of her sons. When my mother told him, 'It has been more than ten years since I left home, and I have not had any contact,' True Father said, 'The time has come for one of your sons to join.' When I later calculated the date, I found that those words coincided exactly with the time when I began listening to the Principle teachings."



True Mother and President Seuk Joon-ho at the rally held at the Great Hall of the People in China (29 May 1999)

Question: It seems you encountered many difficulties as you began your public mission.

"After joining, my father began to oppose me. When I tried to go to church, Father would block the doorway, raising his voice. Even after I returned from three years of military service in the Vietnam War, he did not soften his stance. One day my stepmother said, 'When you're here, your father's blood pressure rises, so you should go.' So I told my father I would leave home. Then he asked to have lunch together. At the meal, my father wept. 'Your mother, whom I loved the most, left me, and now my beloved son is leaving me too.' Then, wiping away his tears, he said, 'Succeed!'"

That one word became my determination for my lifelong path of faith that lay ahead.

"In the eyes of the world, I may well have been an unfilial son, but I resolved to be victorious in the work for Heaven's Will, to help my father realize the value of True Parents, and to bring him to shed tears of joy. With that resolution, I left my home and began the path of my public mission."

In 1970, Dr. Seuk received the Blessing as part of the 777 Couples and embarked fully on the path of the public mission.

"Those were truly days when we had nothing. The Dongducheon Church where I was first assigned was a small house with a dirt floor. There was no wooden flooring, and the ceiling was stained with water marks spreading like a map from rain leaks."

Then one day, there was an unexpected visit.

"Just as I was about to go out witnessing, I heard the sound of footsteps outside. When I opened the door I found that True Father, who was touring Korea, had arrived in his jeep. Astonished, I invited him into the narrow room. Father looked up at the ceiling and asked, 'What's this?'"

When I said, 'It's because the roof leaks when it rains,' he took money from his pocket and said, 'Please repair it.' I realized that True Parents are people who keep in mind even the smallest details, even the living conditions of one of their children. It was a small and poor church, but it was where I took my first steps on the path of true pastoral ministry."

Question: I understand that in the 1970s you went to America at True Parents' call. What was the American social atmosphere like at that time?

February 1972: The road to the United States in response to True Parents' call.

"In those days, American society mocked us by calling us 'Moonies.' True Parents shook America through the 1974 Madison Square Garden rally, the 1976 Yankee Stadium rally, and the Washington Monument rally, but at the same time, fierce criticism poured out from the secular media, leftist forces, and some of the established churches."

Day after day, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* ran articles attacking the Unification Church. The impact affected not only local members but also the True Children.

"I heard that Hyo Jin nim was also teased at school: 'Aren't you the Moonie son?' Hyo Jin nim could endure insults against himself, but he couldn't tolerate insults aimed at True Parents, so he ended up in a fight with that person. Yet only Hyo Jin nim was punished for the incident. When I heard that he cried all day in a corner of the schoolyard, my heart broke."

The heavy emotions of that time were difficult to bear.

"My eldest child was also spat upon by friends at school, and was called a 'Moonie.' As a parent, it pained me to think how hard it must have been to be so attacked and wounded like that at such a young age. When I was young, I had experienced pain due to my mother's connection to the Unification Church, and now my own children's hearts were being wounded in a similar way."

In those days, the moniker 'Moonie' wasn't simply a nickname but a social stigma.

"But we could endure because we believed in True Parents. What we heard more loudly than the voices of criticism were the tears True Parents shed for humanity. When I thought of those tears, I could receive with gratitude all the stones that the world threw at us."



Dr. Seuk with True Father in the US at East Garden (30 Dec 1999)

Question: You served for a long time as the Continental Messiah for the Northeast Continent. Could you explain the situation at that time?

True Parents named the vast region including Russia, China, and Mongolia the Northeast Continent. It was an enormous territory encompassing the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union, plus Mongolia, China, and North Korea.

"At that time, True Parents said to me, 'You are a Continental Messiah. The era of Continental Messiahs is coming.' That's how I was appointed as the last Continental Messiah."

In April 1990, True Parents visited the Soviet Union, held talks with President Mikhail Gorbachev, led the Moscow event to victory, and then traveled via Korea to the United States. From that time on, the US-Soviet student exchange project took shape.

"At first there were 300 students, but within a year it grew to 3,000. In those days, exchanges between the

United States and the Soviet Union were almost impossible. However, we were able to build 'bridges of peace.' This was because it was the heavenly path that True Parents had pioneered."

After that, Dr. Seuk's active mission work continued for a further 18 years, traveling back and forth between Russia, China, and Mongolia.

"In those days, you could go to prison just for possessing a *Divine Principle* book. However, we knew about the spirit world. I was convinced that my hardships would certainly be recorded in the spirit world. So I didn't think of them as trials. Rather, those trials were rewards, joys that God bestowed on me."

There was one incident in 1999 that Dr. Seuk always remembers: "I will always remember what happened in 1999, on the day before True Mother was scheduled to give a speech at the Great Hall of the People in China. True Mother, who had arrived in Beijing via Mongolia, was resting at the state guesthouse when an urgent message came at 9:00 pm: 'Tomorrow's speaking engagement by Dr. Han Hak-ja has been canceled.'" The atmosphere became gloomy, and many members were discouraged, saying "the event has fallen through." Even so, they couldn't give up.

"I went to find the managing official in charge and knocked on his door late at night. At 11:00 pm, he opened the door in his pajamas. Until 3:00 am I worked to persuade him. It wasn't just logic - I appealed while holding onto Heaven's heart. In the end, the next day True Mother took the stage at the Great Hall of the People as scheduled."

Mother's speech that day went into the record as a historic moment.

"After the rally concluded, all the dignitaries in attendance gave a thumbs up, saying, 'There has never been a more moving speech than this.' That day I realized: a desperate heart moves the spirit world. And miracles always accompany devotion to fulfill Heaven's Will. If the Great Hall of the People speech had fallen through that day, the flow of providence afterward might have been different. That night I became certain: Absolute faith and devotion toward True Parents become the power to change an era."



Dr. Seuk with True Mother after dedicating the newly published *Tong-Il Moo-Do* and *Il-Won-Do* guides (14 Apr 2018)

Question: What has the 60-year journey of public mission meant to you?

In 2008, after returning to Korea at True Parents' call, Dr. Seuk served at the center of the providence as Vice President of the World Mission Headquarters and President of the Korean Church.

"In 2016, True Mother entrusted me with two chairmanship positions that she had been personally holding, saying, 'I'm entrusting this to you, Seuk Joon-ho.' I will never forget those words."

After that, Dr. Seuk served as Chair of the Global Foundation and Chair of the Sunmoon Educational Foundation, and took on central providential roles as Director of the Cheon Jae Won and as a Cheon Il Guk Supreme Council member.

"Then, in 2018, True Mother said, 'Seuk Joon-ho should now put down everything else and devote himself to the martial arts providence.' From that time, I have been walking the path of witnessing to the world through martial arts, which True Parents loved."

In his younger days, True Father had enjoyed wrestling and judo, and emphasized the harmony of mind and body through martial arts.

"I too believe that martial arts can become a tool for witnessing. Up to the present time, I have been traveling to various countries, devoting myself to the martial arts providence."

Before Dr. Seuk knew it, he had achieved 60 years of public life.

"I wanted to live without shame before Heaven. With that one heart, I have walked until now. So I have not a single regret."

Behind that was always the love of family who believed in him and understood.

"Living my whole life attending True Parents, there were many times when I was home less than 20 days a year. I was always sorry to my family, but even now, I am grateful to my family members who silently understood and stayed with me."



If I were to summarize my life in a single sentence, it has been a succession of gratitude and happiness.

"Looking back, nothing happened according to my will. Joining the Unification Church, working in America, Russia, China, and Mongolia - none of these were things I did because I wanted to. There was simply a call, and I only answered that. The fact that I lived in an era when I could directly attend the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, the Savior and Messiah of humanity - that alone has made my life an ongoing series of moments of gratitude and happiness."

Question: Finally, is there a message you would like to convey to blessed families?

"Above all, what we need to have now is hope. I would like to express that hope in four ways."

The first is inheriting heart.

"The root of our church is heart - the heart of Heavenly Parent, the heart of True Parents. We must inherit that heart and practice the way of loyalty and filial piety."

The second is the realization of a respected religious order and ideal families through the Blessing.

"We must change first. We must become individuals, families, and a church that is respected by society."

The third is building a community of the culture of heart centered on harmony and unity.

"We must not separate but become one. We must establish a community overflowing with love and affection centered on True Parents."

The fourth is completion of the mission and responsibility of the Heavenly Tribal Messiah mission.

"If we fulfill our responsibility, Cheon Il Guk can be hastened. We must hold onto that hope and continue one-on-one witnessing. Witnessing is what gives us hope."

His voice was calm, but within it could be felt the still-burning passion of faith.

"The mission that Heavenly Parent and True Parents have given us is by no means small. However, if we do not let go of hope, the new era of Cheon Il Guk will certainly be accomplished by our hands."