

Studying Religious Figures: The Path of the 'Global Citizen, Hak Ja Han

Monthly JoongAng
February 2014 issue



She planted the seeds of true love in the hearts of our isolated neighbors around the world.

Head of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Hak Ja Han Moon establishes her place as a female global leader through various women's peace projects.

With Foundation Day coming up on February 12th, she takes charge as the successor of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's legacy.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012), founder of the "Unification Church," is considered to be a pioneer in realizing world peace.

Unification Church co-founder Hak Ja Han Moon was the biggest supporter of his dream of establishing international and interreligious world peace. Dr. Han supported Rev. Moon and stuck to him like a shadow, taking the lead in world peace initiatives focused on women. This is why it is impossible to speak of Rev. Moon's life and the history of the Unification Church without also mentioning Dr. Han.

Last October, the eyes of the religious world all turned towards Japan. This is because Dr. Han, after becoming Rev. Moon's successor, started her international activities for the first time, beginning with Japan. Under the

banner of the “55 Year Anniversary of Unification Church Japanese Mission Activities,” Dr. Han carried out a rigorous five-district tour (Sapporo, Tokyo, Nagoya, Nagano) from October 14th to the 22nd.



This event held two particular meanings for both the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (hereafter referred to as the Family Federation) and Dr. Han. The first was the sweeping away of the concerns regarding which of Rev. Moon’s children would become his successor. The second was the actual establishment of the ‘Era of Dr. Han’ through international activities.

How was Dr. Han able to stabilize the Family Federation and organize the worldwide Unification Movement in just one year? Some say it is because she was able to achieve recognition for the accomplishments of her life that she spent by Rev. Moon’s side, devoted to realizing world peace.

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, together with Rev. Moon, has dedicated her whole life to the realization of world peace and the salvation of humankind. It was in this context that in 1990, Rev. Moon proclaimed the advent of the women’s era and Dr. Han as the 2nd leader of the Unification Church. He entrusted the responsibility of leading the women’s peace initiatives to Dr. Han. It was through her rigorous tours of many countries, as well as more than thousand lectures since 1992, that she established her place as a women’s peace leader and pushed the Unification Church closer to its goal of world peace.

Dr. Han is a leader of the Unification Church, but her thinking transcends national and religious borders. Many other religions are often said to be unable to see beyond their own self-interests and only speak empty words of peace without any real results. Her way of thinking can be understood by looking back on her life as a child and her family’s traditions.

Dr. Han was born into a devout Presbyterian family in Pyeonganbuk-do, Anju, North Korea. As a child, she

diligently attended services and did evangelical work with a Christian religious group together with her parents and grandmother. Around the age of six, at the start of the Korean War, she moved to the south part of Korea with her mother and grandmother. They went to find her uncle (Sun-jeong Hong, currently age 92), who was a medical officer at Army Headquarters.



After the Vietnam War, Dr. Han entered a Catholic nursing school. “When I was in high school, I always saw many people injured by the war on my way to school. There were many war orphans who suffered from starvation and sickness. It was rare to see anyone recover or even receive treatment at the right time back then. I felt so sorry for those people. I wanted to heal their pain. That is why I decided to enter nursing school. I wanted to find a way to help those people,” explained Dr. Han.

Although Dr. Han was devout, faithful, loving and kind, she had lived a very normal life. Her life drastically changed when she married Rev. Sun Myung Moon. After their engagement on March 27th, 1960, they were married on April 4th.

A religious leader who strove to realize world peace

Dr. Han took her first steps as the “mother of the Unification Church.” As Rev. Moon stated, “many sacrifices need to be made,” her path has not been a smooth one. We are unable to say that she led a happy, normal married life. After her marriage, she was unable to see her mother for 3 years, and had to cut off all ties with her family. This was because there were some assumption made that she would be unable to carry out her responsibilities as the “mother of the Unification Church” if she was distracted by her own personal feelings for her family.

Dr. Han has said that her life “resembles the ocean. The ocean is wide enough to embrace the sky, and seems to become one with the sky when reflecting its light. It is the lowest place that receives water from all over the world. The ocean embraces everything and begets all life. The ocean appears to be calm and tranquil, but massive black currents flow and rush thousands of meters deep below the surface. When the raging waves and tsunamis rise, everything becomes swallowed up at once. People cannot see the whirlpools that swirl deep within the sea. This is the way my life has unfolded. Within the providence that rages around me like a typhoon, there have been many unspeakable stories unknown to anyone but me. I have struggled against that whirlpool and brought victory without being swept away. This is how I was able to achieve so much for world peace together with my husband.”

Family Federation officials stated that, “Dr. Han has lived her life according to the will of heaven, following the creed of ‘absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience.’ She has carried out her role as the mother of our church with an eagle eye. In order to assist her husband, who sleeps no more than two or three hours in a day, Dr. Han has been unable to get a proper night’s rest for her entire life. If she sees a person wearing ragged clothes, she buys clothes for them. If she sees a hungry person, she will buy them food. When people sent her presents, she would many times give them to others without even opening them. You can see that it was this heart of love that played such an active role in Rev. Moon’s mission of realizing world peace.”

Was it because she lived a life so different from others since she was young? Dr. Han has always had a deep, overflowing love for helping those who are isolated and alone. This is why, within the religious world, the name “Dr. Han” has become synonymous with the words “service,” “women’s initiatives” and “peace.” She has especially emphasized practicing service through “true love.”

In 1979, Dr. Han first organized the International Relief and Friendship Foundation. This organization carried out service initiatives in countries such as Zaire, Senegal and the Ivory Coast. Starting in 1992, her international service work began to hit its stride. This was due to the establishment of the Women’s Federation for World Peace (hereafter referred to as the Women’s Federation) on April 10th of that year. The Women’s Federation, which is registered as an NGO under the United Nations, develops world peace initiatives and was created around the ideal of a true familial, healthy and moral society and the true love in women’s hearts. The Women’s Federation has grown so much as a global NGO that it now has branch offices in 194 countries.

Aewon Volunteer Organization, established by Dr. Han in 1994, plays another crucial role. At the founding of Aewon, Dr. Han stated that, “Volunteering your service for the sake of others is the actualization of true love. True love is the sincere gift of a pair of socks to one shivering with cold. True love sometimes means sacrificing yourself for a complete stranger.”

Actualizing ‘true love’ and contributing to world peace

Currently, Aewon is exceptional in the fact that it is composed of and broken down into “customized service” initiatives. They currently are working in over 18 different fields: food distribution, unification of North and South Korea, books, skills, labor service, distribution of scholarships and supplies, support of culture and the arts, handicapped welfare, environmental work, supporting schools in underdeveloped areas, international relief, work with farming and fishing, creation of true families, traditional physical education, relief for orphans, free medical treatment and relief for the poor. It is an organization that uses the donation of talents to serve the isolated and needy.

Aewon’s light shined even brighter overseas. After the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, Aewon sent relief workers and held charity concerts to help the victims. Last year, after typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines, Aewon generously sent 1 million dollars to help the victims. Dr. Han, who developed so many international service initiatives, says that her ultimate goal is “the realization of a peaceful world.” Dr. Han develops her women’s peace initiatives with the heart of a mother, and they have received positive responses in countries throughout the world. She feels that a mother’s heart is needed to look after and take care of the impoverished and war-torn countries of the world. At the end of last year, during her Japanese tour, she emphasized “bringing about world peace with a mother’s heart of leadership.” It was in this spirit that in 1992, during her 113-city tour (including cities in the United States, China, Japan, and Russia), under the title of the “Women’s Role in World Peace,” she appealed that women need to lead the way to world peace.

Dr. Han also emphasized that the male-centered “logic of power” could be replaced by the “logic of the heart.” She emphasized that the role of the woman and the mother is the most important factor in bringing about a healthy family and society.

A Family Federation official stated that, “Dr. Han is opening wide the doors to world peace, not through religion but through love, through women’s initiatives. This is not the sort of women’s movement that promotes women’s liberation through breaking or escaping from the family. This is a women’s movement that promotes the protection of a true family, and the actualization of love.” Dr. Han played a leading role in the Family Federation’s overseas mission projects as well. In 1997, the Family Federation sent 1,600 missionaries to 160 countries to participate in service projects, and Dr. Han took care of all of them. These missionaries paid their own expenses for over 100 projects that were carried out in Africa, Southeast Asia and other impoverished countries. These projects included relief for the needy, educational work and the distribution of technology.

Dr. Han, the successor of Rev. Moon’s unfinished work, proposed a goal titled “Vision 2020” in order to foster progress and development. “Vision 2020” aims to build the congregation and organize the Family Federation to become a true world religion by 2020, the 100-year birth anniversary of founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

In the first Hoon Dok Hae of the new year, Dr. Han proclaimed the motto for 2014 to 2020, the year of Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s 100-year birth anniversary, to be, “Let Us Become True Owners of Cheon Il Guk who Practice True Love in Resemblance to our Creator, the Heavenly Parent.” She ordered for an unstoppable advance until the reaching of this goal.

As her first step towards this goal, Dr. Han has been replacing the leadership roles within the Family Federation with young and capable 2nd generation members. For the first time in the 60 years since the founding of the Family Federation, the position of Korean President has been appointed to a 2nd generation member, Kyeong-Seuk Ryu (50), opening up the “era of the 2nd generation.” This was just a peek into the many changes planned by Dr. Han, who aims to inject the Family Federation with youthful power through “Vision 2020.”

“Unstoppable Advance” through the Shift in Generations

During his life, Rev. Moon stressed and pushed plans for training talented individuals. He always stressed the importance of capable individuals, saying that he “wished for genuine global leaders to rise up from our country. I wish for political leaders that can lead the U.N., diplomatic leaders that can prevent conflict and strife, and leaders like Mother Teresa who can save the poor and suffering.”

That wish manifested itself at the inauguration of the Wonmo Pyeongae Foundation on February 20th, 2013. Paying tribute to Rev. Moon’s theories of peace, the societal contribution organization was created to foster international peace leaders. At the inauguration, Dr. Han explained the reasons for establishment, saying that, “The Foundation will focus on the role of educating talented youth and carrying out service work, as well as contributing to society.”

As its first project, the Foundation awarded about four billion won (\$3.7 million) worth of scholarships to 745 selected individuals and organizations, both domestically and abroad. In February, the Foundation awarded 8.5 billion won (\$7.8 million) in scholarships to one thousand students (350 students in Korea and 650 students abroad). Following in the footsteps of Rev. Moon’s international and interreligious thought, as well as his attitude of love and service for the fulfillment of world peace, the Foundation is also planning to establish the “Sunhak Peace Awards” in 2015, commemorating Rev. Moon’s 3rd year ascension anniversary. Candidates for awards will include individuals, organizations and districts that have contributed to a peaceful world. This will become the basis to further Rev. Moon’s vision of sacrificing for the sake of others.

In commemoration of Rev. Moon and the inauguration of the Wonmo Pyeongae Foundation, and under Dr. Han’s direction, a total of 110 billion won (\$1.01 billion) was collected for the Foundations funds, with 5 billion won (\$4.6 million) from around the world, and a substantial amount from the sales of Rev. Moon’s helicopter company. This provides the foundation for expanding the scale of funds that can be granted to eligible candidates in Korea and abroad. To accomplish this, the Foundation has developed the “Initiative the 1% Distribution for the

Great Future” a movement aimed for the whole world. Furthermore, the Foundation aims to not only depend on funds from members, but to seek support from the general public and international peace leaders who accept the vision of Rev. Moon.

The Family Federation is preparing for its second launching on the coming February 12th Foundation Day 1-year anniversary at the Cheong Shim Peace World Center in Gapyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do. This event, which will be attended by a total of about 25,000 world leaders and members, will both celebrate the lifetime achievements of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and pledge a new start for the Family Federation.

At this time, Dr. Han intends to complete and publish both domestically and internationally Rev. Moon’s “Cheon Il Guk Scriptures.” The “True Parents’ Scriptures,” a compilation of the life and accomplishments of Rev. Moon and Dr. Han, is also scheduled to be dedicated on Foundation day. Family Federation published before the revised Cheon Seong Gyeong, composed of 13 sections (God, True Love, True Family, etc.) of quotes throughout Rev. Moon’s, as well as the Pyeong Hwa Gyeong, containing about 180 of Rev. Moon’s published speeches on all fields. There will also be an inauguration for the promotional committee for the True Parents’ Life Museum (tentative title). This museum will serve to exhibit the life and works of Rev. Moon and Dr. Han, especially their work for peace, to their descendants.

Former South Korean Prime Minister Lee Soo-Sung stated that, “Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon is a superb representative of women who can hold her own, not only in Korea, but also on the world stage. It makes me wonder if Rev. Moon would have been able to complete his own role without Dr. Hak Ja Han at his side.”

It means that the many relief work projects and world peace initiatives by Rev. Moon were possible because of the support of Dr. Han. She is now working to put down the roots of the Family Federation as an “actualized religion that is put into practice.” She bases all of her work on the wish for love among mankind and world peace. The time has come to lay down the solid roots of Rev. Moon’s peace theories. This is why the women’s global religious leader Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon is drawing so much attention from the religious world.

Notes:

Quotation) Dr. Han also emphasized that the male-centered “logic of power” could be replaced by the “logic of the heart.” She further emphasized that the role of the woman and the mother is very important factor in bringing about a healthy family and society.

Photo) November 1995, Dr. Han encourages children during a relief visit to an orphanage kindergarten in the Republic of Ghana, during her 16-country world speaking tour.

Photo) Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon encourages devotees in Nagoya during her 12-city Japan tour in June, 2006.

Photo) Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon at the inauguration of the Women’s Federation for World Peace at the Tokyo Dome in Japan

Photo) Cutting a cake with former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and his wife at the 30-year anniversary celebration.