

TODAY'S

# WORLD

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# Learning at Father's Side

*Since last April, Hyung-jin nim has devoted himself to supporting Father and Mother in their daily lives and it is not easy to catch him personally for any length of time. We were very fortunate to be invited for hoondokhae at Cheon Jeong Peace Palace just before this issue was due to be printed. During that occasion, Hyung-jin nim kindly took time to share something from his heart about what the past few months have meant to him.*

**Today's World: Please can you say something about your experience with True Parents?**

**International President Hyung-jin Moon:** Basically, being with them... True Father is the living God. He is the substantial, tangible God. He just goes beyond the physical limitations. We've been through seventeen hour hoondokhaes, twenty hour hoondokhaes [Hyung-jin nim laughs]. Every couple of days Father does one long hoondokhae. Even for young people—we are young—it's so difficult to keep up with Father's intense schedule. Something about the experience of living with the Messiah, being next to him, is unique, is so transformative.

But also even from a theological viewpoint, Father has liberated God, liberated the God of Day and the God of Night, and become the substantial representative of God, standing in the position of God's body here on earth, so in that form we can see that Father moves his body almost as an offering.

Rev. Yu Jeong-ok gave a great example. He was in Brazil. Father climbed a high mountain, one that was very tough to climb. The leaders told Father, "please sit down," and they had prepared a carpet or large towel for him to sit on. But Father said no, I am not going to sit there. He found a more humble place, not the best, and he took out his handkerchief and sat on that. "I can't do what I want to do." They realized that where he sits is where God wants to sit. In that sense he is like a slave. His body is a total instrument of God's will. So, basically, he has to move his body, send it here and there, in pain, if God desires it.

I recently gave a sermon in which I explained how many of the translations in scripture use the words "serve" or "servant." For example, Christ says "No one can serve two masters."<sup>1</sup> In many cases the word in the New Testament Greek is *doulos* (δοῦλος), which is not "servant" but "slave." The difference is great, because servants are paid. Slaves have no rights. They get protection, food and shelter, but they live solely for their master. I compared this with Confucian texts, from Asia, on filial piety. There are many levels of filial piety, of course. The emperor has to be filial to Heaven. The nation has to be filial to the emperor. The father has to be filial to the state, and the son to the father.

Basically, the Asian concept of filial piety is that the children throw away their desires, ambitions and even dreams for themselves and just serve their parents, even in everyday tedious tasks. I compared this to the biblical concept of the servant, or slave, in which Christ calls us to become "slaves" of God. In the Confucian context, a son willingly chooses to become basically a slave to his parents, putting aside personal ambitions and fully serving them. It illuminates the scriptures and elevates the status of the slave to that of a son. It permits children to understand that this is what is expected when you serve God; even though we are children, we are expected to be more serving even than slaves. But we do it out of choice; we do it out of love, not to get some benefit. We do it out of love.

That context is very important, because that is how Father himself lives. That's how he is literally. He is the son of God, he is from God. He is a son, but he willingly chooses to do things that torture his body if they please God. When we see Father every day, we can feel that. He views his own body not as his own; but that it belongs to God, and that God can do as He

<sup>1</sup> Mt 6:24



wishes.

You may have heard the prayer of St. Francis, "Make me an instrument of your peace." An instrument has no will of its own; it is purely the tool of its user, an inanimate object. For two thousand years, Christians have been begging God that they can be instruments of His peace and His will. If we understand what that means, in this context, we can see that Father totally embodies that. That's one of the things I have experienced.

I also had an inspiration about hoondokhae. We usually have a difficult time with hoondokhae—especially with Father because it is so long! Many people have bad backs and bad knees. It is brutal when it is very long—torture. But I realized one thing, just watching Father doing a lot of hoondokhae. We have our physical limitations—you know, we get tired, or we have back pain, or we need to go to the bathroom, or we have limitations of time such as, Oh I have to meet someone. But actually in the spirit world we don't have any of those constraints—body pain, hunger, fatigue; we don't have any of that kind of pain and no angst over limited time. Being the footstool of the Lord, at the foot of the Lord, being in his presence, sitting on the floor in front of the king of all the spirit world—that's what, for thousands of years, Christians have desired to experience when they go to heaven.

What I realized, therefore, is that hoondokhae is actually heaven. True Father is showing us what heaven is like. If you had none of the pain, if you had all the time of eternity, nothing pressing on you to be done, and if you could be that close to the center of the entire cosmos, the universe and the spirit world, it would be so enjoyable.... Having the honor of being in God's presence, that's the best way to spend eternity. If you are distant from that, and can't come near it, that's hell.

So being with True Father every day, I realize he is showing us a taste of the eternal world. I reflect that when I am in hoondokhae, when I am with Father, near him, my heart is at ease, at peace. In that moment, I have no big concerns—because he is such a rock, he is the mountain. In that sense spiritually you feel, when you are near him, that he is in joy, he is happy, and you feel also joy, peace and stability inside. Think about being eternally separated from that. You don't know when judgment will come, you don't know your standing with God. That's torture. You can't breathe.

Actually, I can understand Christians and also Buddhists, particularly Pure Land Buddhists who desire to go to the land of Sukhāvati (Ultimate Bliss) and meet the Amitabha Buddha. When you look at the Pure Land scriptures—the beautiful paintings of pagodas, golden streets, and so on—at the center of all that is Amitabha Buddha, and he is preaching the Dharma. When those who call his name and worship him die, they can go to the pure land and listen to the sweet words of the Dharma. That's hoondokhae! Christians too, sitting at the foot of the Lord—that's hoondokhae. All the visions of heaven and all the major religions point to hoondokhae. [Hyung-jin nim laughs] That's what I feel.

Because True Parents are God's substantial presence on earth, when they go to the spirit world, they will not be separate from God. When He materializes He will be within the presence of True Parents. That's why I think Father has stressed the hoondokhae tradition.

Arcanjo, who recently came to Korea,<sup>2</sup> used Divine Principle hoondokhae reading as an effective way of witnessing. He was constantly reading it with new members. It strengthens faith.

So I had that new experience of understanding why Father

<sup>2</sup> True Parents invited Arcanjo Espindola to Korea in June to testify about the Divine Principle reading conditions he and others have done and the measurable results they've achieved. His testimony appeared in our June issue.

spends so many hours of his life doing hoondokhae. The majority of Father's hoondokhae is Father's speaking directly. When you are with True Parents if your eyes are open, heaven is really before your eyes.

At first it was very tough being with True Parents because we had to adjust and felt such a strong need to transcend the physical plane. After having adjusted, when we are with True Parents, for example when Father is fishing, we can study and do other things that we need to do. Adjusting to these changes was the thing.

We feel very grateful to have this opportunity and as Father gave me my responsibility, there is no better training. Father said I have to become his cane—like an instrument for God's will. One day we sent that tweet when I had the honor of holding Father's tray at a mealtime. I said as a joke, "I also want to be Father's dining table!" [Hyung-jin nim laughs; see this photograph on page 4] Actually it was wonderful just to hold it for him.

I am very relaxed around Father. He is also very relaxed around me, so I am grateful for that relationship. Of course, he has had great experiences with most of his children—for example, Kook-jin hyung spent a lot of time with Father on boats in Alaska. But Father doesn't get mad at me as much as with the others [Hyung-jin nim laughs]. I think it is a special grace, and it has nothing to do with what I have done or accomplished. I am kind of the baby of the family. So he gives this grace that I am not worthy to receive. But he gives it. So I am filled with thanks.

With Father, it's very relaxing at times. But at other times, he can bring a whole spectrum.... You learn that you can never do this kind of work for personal reasons, for reasons of self-interest. Father will always check that, he will always say things in hoondokhae about you. If you were to take this personally, it would drive you crazy. They are just words. They can express love or chastisement. Fundamentally, Father loves his children!

Father allows me to be myself. I am not always quiet. I like to make jokes; when I was young, I was a prankster. Father also loves animals and loves nature, and we connect on that because I love animals and have raised many animals. He loves all the animals that we have.

**Father is emphasizing things such as tribal messiahship, giving out 430 volumes. Members are trying to comply with these instructions. As international president could you say something about what members' attitude or focus should be?**

The whole purpose of tribal messiahship is witnessing. That's what Father is focusing on. Witnessing to your family. We call this restoring your tribe. But that basically means witnessing. It means bringing them to the blessing. It means understanding that when you are blessed you have to make a pledge before True Parents and believe in them as the Lord at his Second Advent, the saviors of your soul, changing your lineage from the realm of Satan to the realm of God. That's huge, and you can't do it on your own power or by your good deeds. You can only do it by the grace of True Parents. That is why the Messiah is necessary.

In the end, the Messiah is absolutely essential. We don't need some kind of Gnostic realization, where we all feel we are all messiahs, and Father is just one among us—this kind of new-agey type of theology; rather, he is a fundamental necessity for the sinful children of Satan. There is no way for the sinful children to jump back into God's family without God sending His son to recover them. No matter how much enlightenment we receive, no matter how much realization we may come to, getting back into God's family can only be done by God's grace and God's love, and by the son whom he sends as His representative. Understanding this is a very important, because it allows us to realize the greatness of God's love and the greatness of True Parents and their sacrifice. **TW**