

Mother of Peace
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes
A Memoir by Hak Ja Han Moon
February 2020
Text Only Version

Chapter 1. My Cherished Lifelong Wish - 1

- A woman shouts "Monsei!" for Independence - 1
- Thank you! Mother, please take care of everything - 6
- Wildflowers smile on a mountain path - 10
- The Sunhak peace culture - 13
- The oceans are a treasured resource - 15
- Everyday heroes - 17
- Give us this day - 19

A woman shouts "Mansei!" for independence

It was the first day of March 1919, the beginning of spring by the lunar calendar's marking of seasons. The temperature remained below freezing, and the people of Anju, a village in Pyong-an Province of what is now North Korea, were experiencing biting frost. A woman braved the cold to cook her family's morning meal. She lit the wood fire and set rice on the stove, and then her attention shifted from the morning routine. She lifted her arms and, from the back of a cupboard, carefully took out an item wrapped in a plain cotton cloth.

By the light of the fire and a ray of sunshine shining through a crack under the door, the woman untied the cloth to reveal another, larger and more substantial cloth, one with a red and blue yin-yang symbol on a white background. As she laid it out on the table, the design on the larger cloth came into full view. It was a Korean flag. This emblem of her people was always in this woman's mind, even in her dreams. Feelings of sadness and deep emotion rushed into her heart. Hearing the soft cries of her daughter who was awakening, she rolled up the flag, wrapped it again, and returned it to the back of the cupboard.

With their 5-year-old daughter on her lap, this village woman shared breakfast with her husband, who had returned from his early morning work in the fields. She then busied herself cleaning the kitchen, living room, porch and yard. A little after noon, trying to appear nonchalant, she left the house with an expectant heart, her daughter on her back and the flag in her bosom.

* * *

A narrow gravel path to the Anju market meandered through her village. It joined a larger road, on which she met others making their way -- a farmer leading a cow, a young man carrying a heavy load on an A-frame carrier, a mother with a bundle on her head.... Some were walking at a leisurely pace, others quickly, all heading for the market.

Arriving at her destination, the woman stopped in front of a vegetable stand centrally located in one of the most crowded areas of the market. Her child awoke from her afternoon nap taken on her mother's back. Turning her head, the mother quietly looked at her beloved daughter and smiled. To this daughter, her mother's smile was the most beautiful sight in the world.

Suddenly, a loud shout burst through the quiet of the market: "Korean independence! *Mansei!*" As if she were a runner hearing the sound of the starting gun, the woman quickly pulled the Korean flag from her bosom. Waving it vigorously, she joined the crowd, shouting "*Mansei*, victory for ten thousand years!" With all her strength, she shouted, "Korean independence! *Mansei!*"

The first shout had been a signal, and all at once, people in the market were taking out Korean flags and vigorously waving them high above their heads. From every corner of the open market, cries of "Korean independence! *Mansei!*" reverberated. This woman's voice was the loudest of all. Shocked by the sudden melee and scores of Korean flags bursting into view, market-goers unprepared for the uprising had to decide what to do. Some fled in fear of possible consequences. Others, the ones who believed in their nation's independence, joined the ranks of the demonstrators.

The woman had been eagerly awaiting this day. She had stayed up many nights with her daughter, sewing her nation's flag, her hands shaking. Sitting under a kerosene lamp, she spoke to her daughter about Korea, its people, its faith, its ageless traditions, and the meaning of the Mansei Independence Movement. Listening to her mother, the little girl nodded her head, taking in everything. Now, clinging to her mother's back, she heard the shouts of mansei. She felt the innocence and righteousness of her countrymen and women, dressed in white, ready to lay down their lives for the sake of their nation's right to exist.

The March First Independence demonstrations took place not only in Anju; they occurred simultaneously in Seoul and across the nation. At most sites, they included a public reading of the Korean Declaration of Independence. This public outcry was not futile symbolism; it was an act of peaceful, non-violent protest, an acclamation that the Korean people will cherish for eternity.

* * *

Within moments, the demonstrators' ears were assaulted by the sound of whistles and boots. With batons and rifles, dozens of policemen converged upon the market. They mercilessly struck everyone in their path. Right and left, people were beaten to the ground, bloodied. The policemen did not distinguish between man or woman, young or old. Desperate to protect her daughter, this mother had no choice but to hold back her tears and retreat. Although she was filled with the resolve to stand to the last, she knew that God's wish is for human fellowship, and that bloodshed would only increase the burden of pain in God's heart.

And there was something else. Something told this mother that it was not yet time for her nation to rise. It told her that in the future of Korea, a woman would be born with an unprecedented destiny, a woman who would break the mold of this fallen world. With this light of hope in her heart, she endured the humiliation of that afternoon.

In accordance with God's providence and the absolute faith and love of Christian believers since biblical times, what that woman conceived in faith entered the world 24 years later. To her lineage, the only begotten Daughter of God was born, as the one called to fulfill that woman's dreams.

* * *

Anju was my birthplace. It was an epicenter of Korean patriotism, and it is no coincidence that it was an area in which Christianity was first introduced to Korea. That woman was my grandmother, Jo Won-mo, and she continued her support of the independence movement, and she engaged her daughter -- my mother -- and me in her activities.

I was just two years old when my nation's history took its next turn, liberation from Japanese occupation. On that day, August 15, 1945, my grandmother Jo Won-mo again had a child on her back while she shouted, "*Mansei!*" But this time, the child was me. And this time my grandmother was shouting and waving our national flag with joy and delight for our nation's newfound freedom.

God chose our family, a family of three generations of only daughters. Jo Won-mo, my grandmother, a woman who committed her heart to the Independence Movement, was an only daughter. Hong Soon-ae, my mother, a woman who single-mindedly committed her flesh and blood to fulfill her faith that she would meet Christ at his Second Advent, was her only daughter. I was her only child, the only daughter of the third generation. Among the oppressed people of the Korean Peninsula, God's only begotten Daughter was born.

As I write these words in 2019, the centennial of the March First Independence Movement, I am pursuing my forebears' dream, the dream of the ages, the completion of God's providence of salvation throughout the Earth.

Thank you! Mother, please take care of everything!

*Moon, moon, bright moon, the moon
with which Lee Tae-baek used to play,
Far away on that moon,
there is a cinnamon tree.
I cut it down with a jade axe
and trimmed it with a gold axe,
To build a small cottage
where I attend my mother and father.
I want to live with them forever;
I want to live with them forever.*

While laden with sadness, this traditional Korean song also stirs and uplifts the heart. The wish to live forever with one's mother and father conveys the heart of filial piety. We are orphans, far from the Heavenly Parent whom we have lost, and we have to find our True Parents and our original homeland. Nothing leads to greater happiness than being able to attend the beloved parents for whom we long, be it in a palace or a small hut.

Everything and everyone loves the sun. Only with the sun can life flourish. The moon, on the other hand,

bestows something else. The sun represents splendor, the moon tranquility. When people are far from home, they tend to think about their hometown and long for their parents while looking at the moon, not at the sun. I have fond memories of gazing at the moon together with my husband. We watched it with many members during the Korean Chuseok harvest festival, and at the first full moon of the new year. Nonetheless, those moments were rare. My husband and I could not immerse ourselves in such tranquility.

"After this work is done . . .," my husband would always say, and so would I: "After this work is finished and we have a bit of free time, we'll be able to take a break." Over our years of ministry, one would think there would have been brief moments to relax after completing an urgent task. But for us, free time never materialized. Spurred on by the thought of my grandmother Jo crying "*Mansei!*" for the independence and salvation of our nation, I burned with a youthful passion for saving humanity and building a peaceful world.

I have always held high the banner of peace, inheriting the March First Independence Movement's noble spirit of non-violence and self-determination. Because I lived with this sense of urgency, I found myself accomplishing what I would never have imagined possible. Throughout my life, I have done my utmost to fulfill all the tasks that have come to me. I have striven to dedicate myself to living for the sake of others with one heart and one will. I have never given my body the rest it needs. Many were the times I neglected to eat or sleep.

* * *

My husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, who is often known as Father Moon, was the same. He was born with a strong physique, and had he taken better care of his health, he would have had more time to work for a better world. But he too followed God's will with unflinching devotion, and this damaged his health, ultimately to the point of no return. Up to four or five years before his ascension in 2012, he was in continual motion, living each day as if it were a thousand years. His work was strenuous, both physically and spiritually. For example, he often spent entire nights in a small fishing boat on rough seas. He did this for the sake of others, setting an example for our Ocean Church members as well as leaders who accompanied him. He wanted to help them cultivate patience and the spirit to overcome hardship.

Father Moon constantly traveled between continents, and it usually was between east and west, which takes a much greater toll than traveling between north and south. Considering his age, he traveled far too often between Korea and the United States. He should have limited such trips to once every two to three years, but he would not consider it. The year before his passing at age 92, he traveled between Korea and America at least eight times. This was a complete self-sacrifice, offered solely for God and humankind.

Father Moon's daily schedule itself was grueling. Every morning he would rise at 3:00 a.m., exercise, pray, and study. At 5:00 a.m. he led Hoon Dok Hae, which means "gathering to read and learn," with followers. It was a time of devotional scripture reading, prayer, and instruction. During Hoon Dok Hae, my husband had so much to share that it was not uncommon for it to continue for up to 10 hours, skipping breakfast and lunch. No sooner would he conclude the session than he would grab a quick bite and depart to visit a movement project. In the final years, while in Korea, he would travel by helicopter to Geomun Island or Yeosu, where we were developing fishing, recreational, and educational facilities.

* * *

Into his seventies, Father Moon could handle this physically, but in his last decade it would wear him out, and he would end up with a cold or worse. Of course he would ignore the symptoms. And then, during the summer of 2012, he caught a deep chest cold that was particularly alarming. We should have gone to the hospital immediately, but he kept postponing it, saying over and over, "We can go after this is done." Eventually, the decision was non-negotiable; he had to go to the hospital. His body was already in a very fragile state. He was hospitalized for a short time, but as soon as his medical examinations were finished, he stubbornly insisted on being discharged. We tried to persuade him to stay longer, but he wouldn't listen.

"I still have a lot of work to do; I can't just sit here in the hospital!" he said, scolding the people who advised him to stay. There was no choice but to discharge him. That was August 12, 2012. We arrived home, and all of a sudden he said, "I want to have breakfast sitting opposite you, Omma." The members who heard this weren't sure they heard him right, because I always sat next to my husband during meals, not facing him. And then, when the food was served, my husband seemed uninterested in eating. He just gazed at me as if he were trying to engrave my face in his heart. I smiled and placed a spoon in his hand and something from the side dishes on his plate. "These vegetables are delicious, so take your time to eat," I said.

The next day, the sun was unusually strong, even for mid-summer. In the oppressive heat, Father Moon toured parts of our Cheonwon complex on the shores of Chung Pyung Lake, accompanied by an oxygen

tank larger than himself. Upon his return to our home, Cheon Jeong Gung, he asked me to bring a voice recorder. With the recorder in his hand, he fell into deep thought for 10 minutes, and then little by little, began recording his thoughts.

He stated that when we transcend the history of the Fall and return to the original Garden of Eden, following only God, we can then move in the direction of the kingdom of heaven. He also proclaimed that we can restore nations through fulfilling the mission of guiding our tribes. It was a soliloquy and prayer that embraced the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega. "Everything has been accomplished! I offer everything to Heaven," he said in closing. "Everything has been brought to its consummation, completion, and conclusion."

* * *

This turned out to be True Father's final prayer. With it, he brought his life to a close. Breathing with some difficulty for a moment, he squeezed my hand tightly. "Mother, thank you! Mother, please take care of everything. I'm so sorry and I'm truly grateful," he said, struggling to get the words out. Again and again he said those same words. I held his hand more and more firmly, and with warm words and loving eyes, holding back the tears, I reassured him that everything would be all right. "Don't worry about anything."

On September 3, 2012, my husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, ascended into God's embrace. He was 93 years old, by the Korean way of counting, and was laid to rest in the Bonhyangwon, which means the garden in the original hometown, beside a pond on Mount Cheonseong. I have often slipped into deep thought gazing at the moon rising above Mount Cheonseong. "*I cut it down with a jade axe and trimmed it with a gold axe, to build a small cottage where I attend my mother and father. I want to live with them forever.*" I repeat this poem to myself, over and over.

Wildflowers smile on a mountain path

"It's been raining a lot and the path will be slippery," my assistant informed me. "Why don't you just rest today?" Of course she was concerned for my safety, and I thanked her but continued my preparations.

In autumn, we have heavy rainstorms, and snow falls in the winter. There are countless reasons and excuses to stay inside. Regardless, after his passing, I departed my room each day at dawn for prayer at my husband's tomb, and upon returning, I prepared his breakfast and dinner.

As I walked along the path up the hill to the Bonhyangwon and back, he and I shared many heart to heart conversations. My husband's thoughts became my thoughts, and my thoughts became his.

Korean bonsai pines lined the path to the Bonhyangwon, and underneath them, clusters of wildflowers bloomed in the spring. During the winter, wildflowers disappear, but in spring they bloom profusely, as if competing with each other. I would stop on my way up the steep incline to take a closer look at the grasses and flowers. They displayed their colors beautifully in the spring's bright morning sun, whether I was there to admire them or not. I would become intoxicated with their beauty, caressing the wildflowers before resuming my ascent up the path. The walk was difficult but my heart would be as serene as the flowers.

When I would reach my husband's tomb, I would carefully check to see whether any weeds had sprouted among the blades of grass, or whether animals had left any traces. The lawn on the grave became greener and greener as time went by. Sitting alone in front of his tomb, I would pray for everyone in the world to be as beautiful as wildflowers, to have minds as strong as pine trees, and to always live prosperous lives as green as a summer lawn. On my way down I would say farewell to the flowers and pine trees, "My friends of the natural world, I will meet you again tomorrow."

The path I would walk was the same each day, but the weather was never the same. There would be days when I felt the warm rays of the sun; there were windy days, rainy days when thunder roared and lightning struck, and snowy days covering everything in white.

During this three-year period of devotions, I also retraced my husband's travels throughout the United States, traveling nearly 4,000 miles as my husband had done in 1965, and visited the 12 mountain peaks we had toured in the Swiss Alps to pray and meditate. Through these devotions, our spiritual oneness deepened into eternity.

In traditional Korea, offering such filial devotions in remembrance of one's deceased parents was expected. Representing the family, the first son would build a small hut just to the west of his father's or mother's tomb, and live in it for three years, regardless of the weather, even if unable to eat properly or make a living through this period. Those three years represent the three years after we are born, when we receive our father's and especially our mother's full love and care, without which we would not have

survived. This time of devotion is a time to acknowledge, show gratitude and return that love and kindness.

Today, there are too many people who forget their father's and mother's kindness. From those who lack filial piety toward their own parents, comprehension of Heavenly Parent and the True Parents, who have shed tears over humanity's suffering, cannot be expected. People today live without any connection to the True Parents, not knowing that they are here on earth.

To awaken people who have eyes but cannot see, as my husband's wife, I offered devotions in remembrance of True Father every day for three years, on behalf of all people. With this depth of commitment, I promised my husband and all the members of our worldwide movement: *I will bring us back to the spirit of the early days of our church, and I will create a revival through spirit and truth.*

I dream of a church that feels like a mother's warm embrace, a church that is like a home, where people always want to come and stay. This is my husband's dream as well. Honoring him, I made the decision to dedicate myself to God and all of humankind even more than before. Since that hour, I have never fully rested.

Then, in 2015, moved by my husband's unchanging heart, I prepared his gift for humanity. May the Sunhak Peace Prize stand forever as an expression of his eternal commitment to peace.

The Sunhak peace culture

Looking into the hazy summer sky, I queried what the weather was going to be like the next day. "There'll be showers in the morning," I was told, "with lots of clouds." With a smile on my face, I accepted that that was how it was going to be. Rain has poured down during many of our Unification Church events. It was more than 40 years ago that heavy showers and strong winds swept through our Yankee Stadium rally in New York. Heavy rain also fell all day long during the International Blessing of 360,000 couples, as well as during the inauguration of the Women's Federation for World Peace at the Seoul Olympic Stadium. I have grown to accept rain at such times with gratitude, as a gift. So it rained on August 28, 2015, the day of the first Sunhak Peace Prize Awards Ceremony. That day, hundreds of guests converged on our hotel in Seoul, moving quickly through the downpour, summer's last cleansing gift. Thankfully, when the doors opened, the skies cleared, and this felt like God's joyful welcome to our guests. These were special people, leaders from all fields, gathered from throughout the global village, many traversing long distances, for the sake of peace.

Everyone desires peace, but peace does not come easily. If it were as commonplace as stones on the side of a country road or trees on a mountainside, we would never have experienced the terrible wars and conflicts that plague the human world. But bringing peace demands that everyone invest sweat, tears, and sometimes blood. That is why, even though we long for peace, we seldom achieve it. To experience true peace, we must first practice true love without expectation of reward. My husband and I walked this path and, continuing on it, I prepared the Sunhak Peace Prize as a gift for the world from Father Moon.

Despite the rain on this first day of the awards ceremony, none of the guests could suppress their excitement. They were like little children about to receive a special gift. Everyone was wide-eyed as they greeted the person beside them, one saying, "There are so many kinds of people here! I've never been to a more diverse gathering," and the other, "It's unbelievable! I wonder where that attire is from."

The event was an exhibition of the world's ethnicities; the hall was alive with the rushing flow of various languages. Everyone's eyes showed gratitude on behalf of the entire human family. People seeing me for the first time focused on the stage to get a good look, wondering, "Who is this Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon?" Then they would tilt their heads quizzically. Perhaps they considered my clothes to be no finer than theirs, and that I looked like a typical mother.

As I prepared the Sunhak Peace Prize project, my utmost concern was that people would understand its fundamental root. To embrace the future, we must expand the scope of vocations that can herald the coming of peace. Even though we may never meet our descendants, we must make sure that all their activities will harmonize in peaceful societies and nations. After serious consideration and discussion, the Sunhak Foundation determined its overarching orientation, the peace that transcends the present and builds the future.

True peace certainly requires that we resolve the current conflicts between religions, races and nations. The even greater challenges that we face, however, include the destruction of the environment and demographic trends. The world's leading peace awards focus on solving the problems of the present generation. Yet we must solve the problems of the present in a way that is integrated with a practical vision for a happy future. I founded the Sunhak Peace Prize as a bridge bringing us out of this world's maelstroms of conflict and as a compass pointing to a future homeland of peace.

The oceans are a treasured resource

In every era of recorded history, humanity has experienced incredible pain. The most tragic period was also the most recent -- the twentieth century. Wars raged ceaselessly across the global village, and countless good people lost their lives in that savagery. I was born during the Japanese occupation of Korea, and I experienced the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War. I still cannot forget the terrible things I witnessed as a small child.

Those times have passed, and now we are waging war against a complex enemy, the temptation to forget our responsibilities to our families and the natural environment and seek only personal comfort and convenience. Fortunately, we have a deep moral sense and wisdom, and practical methods by which we can work together to achieve God's ideal.

All people hope that we can recover and sustain the oceans as the Heavenly Parent created them. Covering 70 percent of the Earth, the oceans contain immense resources. Like hidden treasures, they hold solutions for the dilemmas confronting the human race. I have emphasized the importance of the ocean on many occasions and have, together with my husband, suggested various approaches we might take. Accordingly, "The Ocean" was chosen as the theme for the first Sunhak Peace Prize. The Peace Prize Committee oversaw a strict process to select righteous, achievement-oriented leaders in this arena. Those selected as our laureates that year were Dr. M. Vijay Gupta of India and President Anote Tong of Kiribati, a small island nation in the South Pacific.

Dr. Gupta is a scientist who, concerned over persistent food shortages, led the "Blue Revolution" by developing fish farming technologies. He greatly contributed to relieving hunger among the poor by widely distributing these technologies in Southeast Asia and Africa.

President Anote Tong is a leading global advocate for the intelligent preservation and management of the marine ecosystem. It is predicted that much of his nation of Kiribati could be submerged in less than 30 years due to the rising sea level. In the face of such a crisis, President Tong took the lead toward protecting the ecosystem by creating the largest protected marine park in the world.

* * *

For decades, my husband and I took on the task of ensuring that humanity moves into a future assured of abundant food supplies and pleasant, healthy environments. We advocated the free exchange of technology across national borders and shared our vision that the oceans are a gift from God and the ultimate source of the world's nutrition. Stable food sources and pure air, land and water are essential to world peace and the salvation of humankind.

Not confining ourselves to theoretical explanations, we devoted significant resources to practical projects in the real world. For half a century, Latin America was a major site for this investment of true love and human resources.

In the mid-1990s, with serious hearts, Father Moon and I traveled to the Pantanal region. The Pantanal is a vast wetland straddling the borders of Paraguay and Brazil. It is located precisely on the opposite side of the globe from our home country. There, we worked hand in hand with farmers and fishermen. Putting an end to food shortages begins by getting your hands dirty. Rather than give sermons from an air-conditioned pulpit, we worked under the scorching sun, neglecting to eat or rest. I vividly remember pondering environmental issues as I wiped beads of sweat from my face.

We launched various initiatives in the Pantanal region, and we have carried out countless other projects for the sake of humankind over the past 60 years. My nature compels me to give everything I have for the happiness of others, with no desire for recognition. I know who I am, the True Mother, the Mother of peace and God's only begotten Daughter, and my mission is to live this way. To end Heavenly Parent's sorrow I have dried the tears of strangers in need, considering this to be connected through threads of fate to the salvation of humanity.

Everyday heroes

The end of winter can be bitterly cold, but no matter how cold it is, when spring comes and its warmth envelops the Earth, we quickly forget that there ever was a winter. The bitter cold of humanity's winter is receding and as Heavenly Parent's warmth envelops the Earth, it will be forgotten. We feel this warmth at our Sunhak Peace Prize events, such as its second bi-annual convention that took place in Seoul on February 3, 2017.

That very busy day began by my personally welcoming hundreds of guests. These men and women hailed from 80 countries, representing various races, speaking many languages and following different paths of faith. I tried to create an environment in which everyone would freely greet the strangers around them and

quickly become friends.

The warmth of spring was the setting in which I reminded my guests that many people in the world are friendless and hungry. Many families have been driven from their homelands. As a child refugee myself, I know there are no words to express the misery of being forced to flee one's home due to the devastation of war. The Sunhak Peace Prize is an initiative through which I can issue the call for solutions to the painful plight of refugees and prevent livelihoods from being destroyed. I look for righteous but unheralded pioneers of peace, honor them, and strongly encourage them. The second set of Sunhak Peace Prizes, presented in 2017, went to two such people. Dr. Sakena Yacoobi and Dr. Gino Strada do not look like celebrities. They look like everyday people.

A gentlemanly middle-aged European with ruffled hair is a gifted surgeon and founder of an international medical relief organization. Dr. Gino Strada from Italy is a surgeon and humanitarian whose work over the past 28 years provided emergency medical care for more than 9 million refugees and victims of war in the Middle East and Africa.

A motherly woman with a sun-weathered face framed by a black hijab has brought thousands of young women hope. Dr. Sakena Yacoobi of Afghanistan is an educator, referred to as the "Afghan Mother of Education." She has worked in Afghan refugee camps for more than 20 years, helping refugees and displaced people resettle. She has risked her life to teach, encouraging people to hope for a better tomorrow, even in the face of enormous obstacles. In response to her award, Dr. Yacoobi wrote to me in her clear handwriting, expressing her heartfelt gratitude:

It is really, really wonderful, the award itself is really big, it's comparable to the Nobel Peace Prize.... My life is in danger all the time. In the morning, I get up; in the evening, I don't know whether I will be alive or dead.... Knowing that somebody values you in your work helps a lot. Also, I want to say to Mother Hak Ja Han Moon that I am really thankful to her because she gives me credit for what I do.... It means a lot to me.

Korea is a country that I admire because you have been to war, you have suffered but with your determination, hard work, sincerity and wisdom, you have accomplished a lot in a really short time. I hope and pray that someday my country can use your country as a role model.

Putting her own life in danger, Dr. Yacoobi continues to fight for women and children. While we are comfortably at home, eating warm meals, many are being driven from their homes. Uprooted, they live in pain and anguish, their lives completely shattered. This is the time to bring this sad tragedy to an end.

Give us this day

When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, his answer was clear: "Give us this day our daily bread." Two thousand years have passed since Jesus taught us that prayer; however, there are still so many people, more than we imagine, who do not have daily bread.

Africa is the birthplace of human civilization. Yet some African people live in circumstances so poor that their primary goal is having enough to eat. This fundamental human need is often not met, and the opportunity for basic education is also limited. Many face this situation. Each time I visit Africa, I seek solutions to these issues, which I take very personally. When the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee announced its 2019 theme, Human Rights and Human Development in Africa, I was delighted because it addressed the task I have always set for myself.

Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, president of the African Development Bank (AFDB), and Waris Dirie, a woman's rights activist, our 2019 laureates, are examples of what I have always thought of as "righteous people of action."

Dr. Adesina was born to a poor farming family in Nigeria. From a young age, he researched methods to modernize farming and nurtured the dream of making Africa a land of abundance. After earning his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue University in the United States, he returned to Africa and for the last 30 years has worked on agricultural innovation, helping millions of people overcome the problem of hunger.

In February 2019, during his visit to Korea to receive the Sunhak Peace Prize, Dr. Adesina said that there was still much for him to do to make the world a better place. "Nothing is more important," he said, "than eliminating hunger and malnutrition. Hunger is an indictment on the human race. Any economy that claims growth without feeding its people is a failed economy. Nobody has to go hungry, white, black, pink, orange or any color you can think of. That's why I am fully dedicating the whole of the \$500,000 award of the Sunhak Peace Prize to my foundation, the World Hunger Fighters Foundation." Dr. Adesina's dream of peace is to discover the actual means to bring it about. I encouraged him never to give up his noble work.

The other Sunhak Peace Prize laureate for 2019 was Ms. Waris Dirie, an African woman of remarkable willpower, who has overcome many virtually insurmountable obstacles. Ms. Dirie was born into a Somali nomad family. While her childhood was fraught with civil war, hunger and oppression, she had big dreams and challenged herself and her circumstances. Eventually, she became a celebrated supermodel.

In 1997, she revealed her own experience of genital mutilation (FGM), and her life changed. On behalf of millions of African women, she took up the cause of eliminating the practice of FGM. The United Nations appointed her Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. She supported the Maputo Protocol, which prohibited FGM and was ratified by fifteen African countries. Also, in 2012 she played a significant role in introducing a UN resolution prohibiting FGM, which gained unanimous approval by the General Assembly. Ms. Dirie did not stop there. She founded the Desert Flower Foundation, which mobilizes doctors in France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands to treat victims of FGM. In several locations in Africa, she runs educational institutes that help women stand on their own feet.

Female genital mutilation is neither a religious nor an ethnic tradition; it is nothing other than a violent abuse of girls. This abuse of removing part of the external genitals of young girls is not only a means of oppressing women, but it is also life-threatening. Waris Dirie has devoted her life to eradicating this heinous custom, and global organizations have responded to her efforts. One can only imagine how difficult a path she traveled.

Waris Dirie's goal has also been to help women in Africa, and to see women empowered. In Africa, women are on the front lines in the battle for life as they strive to protect their families. They also play a central role in their nation's economy. We should therefore be deeply aware how this violence against young African girls injures them physically and often cripples them emotionally.

The African peoples are tremendously good-natured. They love their families, respect their neighbors, and live in harmony with nature. Nonetheless, as it has everywhere in the world, western modernization has brought Africa mixed blessings. Its prosperity comes at a cost of destroying family and tribal traditions. I believe that Heavenly Parent's love will strengthen indigenous African values that support interdependence and mutual prosperity and will wipe away Africa's tears.

* * *

The Sunhak Peace Prize is painting a beautiful picture of the new century, by honoring men and women who represent the best we can be. It embraces all people as one human family. The Prize is a stepping-stone into a better future. It is a friend to righteous people who labor with a true heart. It is planting seeds of peace that will grow into beautiful trees of life and knowledge bearing nourishing fruit in this home we call Earth.

In this chapter I have presented to you, the reader, the scale of my life, from my grandmother's struggle for liberty among a colonized people, to the last days of my God-sent husband's glorious life, to my years of mourning, to the new global horizons that he and I are opening today. Now I invite you to wend your way through this story as it unfolded, breathing its air with me, tasting the bitter and the sweet, finding the needles in the sandstorms, and discovering with me our Heavenly Parent's hand in every moment.