

Mary Mary, Quite Contrary - Korean Sex Shamanism and Sun Myung Moon

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Korean Moodangs

When did you learn that there was no Santa Claus? Were you shocked, confused, or angry? To be honest I can't recall when I found out. This leads me to believe that it wasn't just one Eddie Haskell type spilling the beans but instead it may have been a gradual process of putting together pieces of the puzzle and finally coming to a conclusion. I was not shocked or angry for being lied to. Quite the opposite I felt empowerment cause I knew the facts and eagerly joined in the conspiracy to keep the younger and more gullible kids in the dark about Santa.

Recently I have heard of long time Unification Church members expressing shock, anger, and confusion over the revelations about Sun Myung Moon's sex life. The recent Sammy Park video that came out about a year ago on YouTube has brought up the issue again in a very public forum. Some folks say that they have tried to answer questions from second-generation young people who are hearing the rumors for the first time. Really we all need to answer these questions.

More than forty years ago when I joined the church, rumors and accusations that Rev. Moon had had sex with more than one woman were not new. I, on the other hand, was new and as a new member that was going out on the street everyday fund raising and witnessing I had to be inoculated. I vaguely recall being in a parking lot in Columbus Ohio selling Peanut Brittle when I was informed for the first time by a concerned Christian that the guy that I was following was at best a serial adulterer and a false messiah. Of course, just as I did when the mysterious birds and bees issue first presented itself, I went to my buddies for answers. Just as I thought, I was told that these rumors were just Satan accusing the messiah of his own crime. Furthermore, the rumors were being spread by jealous Christians and communists. The source of the rumors, I was told, could be traced to the early days of the church in Korea where women members loved Father so much that they would never want to leave him and go home to their families. Remaining overnight, it was natural for angry husbands and other family members to assume the worst. There must be immoral, that is sexual, things going on. I recall hearing a story about one rumor being that as you enter the church you had to pass through successive doors where you took off articles of clothing until you were naked. Dancing naked seemed to be the main activity. The heroine of the story hatched a plan to wear many layers of clothing and to thus confront Satan. Of course she joined the church.

Anyway, it was a believable explanation and I believed it absolutely. It was the official explanation of the church leaders. From that time I was a righteous defender of this narrative. We were a small band of followers that were united in our belief and were brought closer together because of the unrighteous persecution from the outside world.

It wasn't until the Hyo Jin, Nan Sook scandal went public that I looked at the issue again. I knew both of them mainly from meeting them in Kodiak Alaska. I was aware that at that time Hyo Jin was deep into a sex, drugs and rock 'n roll lifestyle that was alien to the lifestyle of the average member. Nan Sook was a very nice sister that was attending True Parents at North Garden. When her book came out I read it. It was

a credible story and it brought into question once again the old rumors. She was neither a communist nor a jealous Christian. I had to take her revelations seriously.

The church's official narrative didn't change. True Father announced that he never misused his sexual organ and that was enough for many people. I believed him. But I also knew that it was a highly subjective answer based only on his relationship with God. I knew it wasn't the end of the issue by a long shot. It was also the new age of the internet where vast amounts of information was available at my fingertips. Over the following years I let my fingers do a little walking.

I found CIA reports dating from the early 60s calling Mun's church a sex cult. These reports were taken from raw, unevaluated intelligence. These were easy to ignore as the rumors of enemies. There were also testimonies from early member's concerning Father's first wife. Another woman, Kim Myung Hee, popped up who died under tragic circumstances in Japan. She bore a son who later died in a bizarre train accident.

Sometime in the late 90s I came across a report of a book called The Tragedy of the Six Marys. It was penned by an early follower going back to North Korea. It was a tell all. It was published in Japanese and partially translated into English. It alleged that Moon Sun Myung was associated with two quasi Christian groups in the Seoul area between 1945 and 1948. These groups both are reported to have practiced ritual sex as part of blood purification rites. There is a lot more to be said about this book including the retraction and the retraction of the retraction. Allegations include the assertion that the number six was a serious low ball and the author figured it was more like a hundred. It reads like a novel with lots of intrigue and eyewitness accounts. Hard to know how much credence to put in it due mainly to the author's failure to stand behind it without flip flopping.

In 1948 Sun Myung Moon left Seoul and went to Pyongyang in the north. By 1948 the lines of division between the north and south were solidifying. The south had conducted their own election under the mandate of the United Nations and the north had rejected the UN's call for a peninsula wide elections and held their own election firmly consolidating Kim Il Sung's power over the north. Within less than two years, with Stalin and Mao's support, they would invade the south.

For Sun Myung Moon, the move to the north was not a casual move for providential or missionary reasons. In his own words he says that he went to the north to start his providence over after losing all of his foundation in the south. He left behind a wife and a foundation that he hoped would recognize him as the Lord that they were ardently preparing to receive. Whether there was a public break with the Love Israel church or he just came to understand that it wasn't in the cards is not clear. The split with his wife was longer in the making and apparently more acrimonious.

In Pyongyang he was introduced to two groups that were also waiting for the Lord to be born in Korea. One has come to be known as the inside the belly church referring to their main tenant that the Lord would be born from a woman's belly. They may have already been practicing cleansing of the blood through ritual sex or it was introduced to them from the south at that time. The new young preacher in town did create quite a stir especially among female believers. The established churches soon heard of him and mounted a smear campaign.

The support and love of women believers, as in most religions, was crucial to Moon's work. The Unification Church has always said that Moon was arrested twice in 1948 by north Korean authorities for preaching Christianity and disturbing the moral order. Others claim it was on more specific moral, meaning sexual behavior, charges. He was living and preaching in a house in Pyongyang with a married couple and the husband went to the police and filed charges of adultery. Adultery has been a crime punishable by prison time in south Korea until recently. Moon was arrested once and was interrogated with torture and was released close to death. He was nursed back to health by followers and apparently resumed the same activities that got him busted the first time. The second arrest resulted in a three year sentence to a re-education through labor camp. It was a death sentence.

The question remains: what activities was Moon engaged in that got him a death sentence? Of course preaching a vigorous Christianity or stirring up the locals with a way of life that didn't conform to the new Marxist ideology would be sure to do it. So would adultery.

Embedded deep in the Korean language, culture and psych is shamanism. The particular form of shamanism prevalent in Korea in modern times is called mooism and the shaman is known as a moodang. The moodang, usually but not always, was a women who is open to and gifted in communication with the world of invisible spirits. The moodang often goes into a trance and experiences the ecstasy of oneness with the deity. This ecstasy is often expressed in dance. It has been correlated with a sexual union with the deity and afterwards the moodang may refer to herself as the wife of god. The authority of the god is passed down to the moodang through this 'sexual' ecstatic experience. At a later time she may pass her authority to a student though an actual or symbolic sexual relationship. Upon learning this I couldn't help

but consider the peukarim, cleansing the womb, change of blood lineage rites that seem to be at the heart of the early practices of Moon. There is no doubt that shamanistic practices and beliefs play a significant role in many new religious groups in Korea including the quasi Christian groups that Moon was associated with. Are the sexual rituals rooted in the much older shamanistic groups in Korea? They could be.

When the early missionaries brought the teachings of Sun Myung Moon to America and Europe, the teaching was based on Christianity and the Divine Principle interpretation of the Bible. There was just about no overt spiritualism in the official teaching. To supplant the teaching the early missionaries gave so called internal guidance that presented more mystical or spirit world teachings. One of the most popular events that we held in the Columbus Ohio center in the mid-seventies was all about the reality of the spirit world and how to cultivate spiritual experiences. Of course, in the seventies, lots of folks were looking to the east to gurus for enhanced spiritual messages. The so called Lady Doctor Kim had a wealth of experiences with the invisible world and she was our guest speaker several times. In fact, among many of the early female members of the church in Korea, many also had similar backgrounds. They were drawn to the church and its founder through their connection to the world of spirits.

The deep influence of shamanism in everyday Korean culture is a fact. The connections between the beliefs and practices of shamanism and other religious groups, including more than a few unorthodox Christian groups as well as other so called new religions, is clear.

That sexual ritual was an integral part of Sun Myung Moon's early ministry is no longer in doubt for me. The question now is why and does it disqualify the Unification Church as a legitimate and credible church, messianic movement, or a tool to realize the will of God in the current age? Was it a sound tactic to not only hide it, but to lie about it for so long also needs to be addressed?

A lot of folks might say that it just doesn't matter. It happened a long time ago and we just can't know what really happened. Well I think it does make a difference. For me it's about salvation. What is salvation and how are we saved. If the human fall was the misuse of sex then the solution could very well involve sex. If the purification of blood lineage constitutes our salvation then we have to consider whatever method there is to purify blood lineage. In my opinion this can't possibly be literally true. Too much is known about the human genome and DNA. It is not changed by ritual. On the other hand if salvation is something else then rites practiced to purify blood must be rejected.

Christians say they believe in Jesus and so they are saved. Really, if you say you believe in something does that mean you even understand it enough to really believe it? What is real is not what you claim to believe but what you do. In my experience salvation is not a onetime thing but is contested every day. You win one day and the next day you fight the same battle again. You can't be saved one time and that's the end of it. In the Catholic Church we were saved through the sacraments. But it was no salvation at all unless you went out and changed your life. This leads me to understand that our sacrifice is won through our daily struggle to be a better embodiment of the divine or logos. We can't be saved by proclaiming our belief, by taking the sacraments, or through sexual ritual. Profession of faith, the sacraments, and perhaps rituals may provide a helping hand but salvation consists of something else.

Our salvation is not through a literal change of blood lineage or literal engrafting onto another blood lineage, if that is even possible. So then what is our salvation that we have to struggle for each and every day?

Through the things that I have read and experienced I am quite sure that I was never saved through any mystical experience, declaration of belief in a person or dogma, or participating in a sacrament. All such things have pointed me in a direction and helped me along.

Many look to an ideal kingdom of heaven or an evolved ideal state for salvation. Once the Kingdom of God is established on earth there will be no more tears, no more sorrow or suffering. Problem is to realize such an ideal state it would have to be populated by ideal people. The utopian state is faced by the same problem. This leads me to believe that such grand enterprises are doomed to failure. History teaches the same lesson.

The state can never be the answer nor are utopian ideals. All states, over time, tend to degrade into tyrannies. Churches also tend to degrade into dogma and so are also not the final salvation or redemption.

No state has the answer, States all fall into tyranny, churches all fall into dogma. No church, no messiah, no saint or other person is going to save me. Only I can fight the battle every day and find redemption and meaning

Salvation may in fact be found in the daily death and renewal that makes up everyday life. To be redeemed is to aim at the highest value you can and sacrifice what is no longer valid and valuable in

myself. Then tell the truth and see what happens. If things get better then I'm on the right path. If I make the world around me worse than I have to readjust. The consequence of this may be to live in a relationship with a meaning profound enough to make it possible to bear the toil, troubles, and suffering of life.

Is Sun Myung Moon the messiah? That depends on what you say the messiah is. Michael Jordan was a great athlete, probably still is. When he played the game it was a thing of beauty. He made it look almost effortless. He played in the zone. He and many other athletes, artists, musicians, and mystics are able to enter into this state of enhanced performance and perception. To be engaged in something that has the greatest meaning possible is to be in the zone. It may be that they first pay attention and then narrow their focus down and concentrate on the one thing. The right hemisphere and left hemisphere of the brain are completely integrated. Performance is optimized. Time flies; it disappears.

This is as close as we come to fully embodying the ideal, the logos. The logos, the word; the articulated truth, is the transforming agent that brought order out of chaos at the beginning of being and has the power to transform individuals, families, nations, and the world. This is the Christ, the messiah. Using this understanding I'd say Sun Myung Moon was the messiah. More than anything else he did, was his articulation of the truth as he came to understand it by standing up and speaking for hours and hours. More than anyone else I've ever heard of, he did this all his life. It is debatable if he was always right but he always spoke out for the highest goodness. In the course of his life doing this he transformed uncountable people.

As for me, I can most consistently enter the zone when I am speaking to groups or writing. In addition, I'm currently finding a lot of meaning working with North Korean refugees. I'm pretty sure my redemption or salvation comes not from the hand of a state, a church, a messiah, a sacrament, or any other person. Only I can be engaged in the battle every day to find redemption and meaning in my life. I've written one novel, *Shootout at the North Line* and am working to complete a second, *Between Heaven and Earth*, that deal with the working out of one's salvation.



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