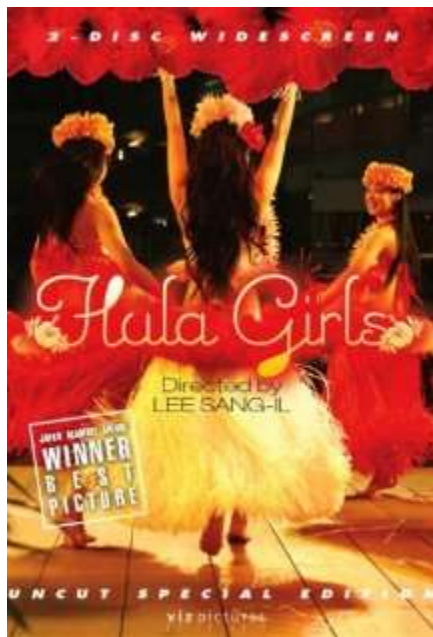


Education Through Relationship

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Sacredness of the Teacher-Student Relationship

Recently my wife and I watched a Japanese film called Hula Girls. It is the true story of a dying mining town in north Japan. The main characters are within a group of students and teachers.

When we'd dried our tears and were reflecting on our experience, one theme that's dear to my heart stood out as central in the story: the sacredness of the teacher-student relationship. Surely there are other significant themes — each viewer has their own experience with any piece of art — but for me, that was the key one.

My Learning Experiences

Through my years in art high school, and then in architecture and design college, I was encouraged to become confident in my own instincts, my own creativity, my own talent and ability. So I think that the internal focus of my schooling had been on developing my subjectivity: I learned that success in my profession rested significantly on achieving unwavering confidence in myself, regardless of the opinion of others.

The result of this type of education was a myopic attitude and approach to life that tended toward egotism. It seemed to make sense, but I was nevertheless uncomfortable with it. There was something missing.



A Different Education

Sometime after graduating from college I read Explaining Unification Thought, which taught me about object consciousness. Then after becoming involved in martial arts I realized the enormous power that comes from object-consciousness.

To illustrate this, I need to explain what goes on in a genuine martial arts experience. Firstly, martial arts are called Dō (judo, karate-do, taekwondo, aikido, etc.). The Chinese character for this (道) is translated as path or way or art. So, a Dō is an art or path that leads its practitioner to a goal, that is not the same as the goal of art/design training in school.

In school I learned the skills to make pieces of art (hopefully great ones). But in martial arts, I learned that skills — and these can be marital or others such as tea, calligraphy, painting, bonsai, etc. — are not the end goal but rather the means to a different, higher end.

On the Dō, creating art is a medium, whereas perfection of the artist is the goal. So if a remarkable piece of art is achieved, it is seen as the natural extension of the artist's soul. This notion comes from the deep integration of Zen into an art, thus transforming it from a craft into a Dō.



The agent through whom this profound education occurs is one's teacher.

In any eastern Dō, good teachers are revered. Good teachers are confident in themselves, but they have both subject and object consciousness. They deeply respect and revere their own teachers, their school, and the tradition of heart within that school.

Beyond and beneath the passing on of skills is the teacher's devotion and commitment to unearthing and cultivating the original beauty that resides somewhere in the soul of each of his students. So when a student experiences that he or she has been led to discover the uniqueness and the abilities that they perhaps didn't know or trust that they had, they cannot forget their teacher. When the student understands their teacher's heart, their conscience knows

that the most appropriate way to address this debt, is to do for others what has been done for them.

The result of this relationship is that each succeeding generation of students quietly grasps this debt of heart, the tradition naturally, organically continues, an expression of the best within the human soul.

And that's what moved me so much about this film: the love between the students and their teachers. Love informed the choices they made throughout their lives, and these relationships proved to be life-changing. Set aside some time one evening to watch *Hula Girls* with a loved one, and make sure you have a box of tissues beside you. I hope it stirs your heart as it did mine, and please let me know of any other pieces of art that moved you similarly!

Honoring My Teachers

I remember some of my own teachers — Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, Dr. Sang Hun Lee, Dr. Young Oon Kim — and their teacher, Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Three are deceased, but they nevertheless instruct me continually.

In *Unification Thought*, my own teacher Dr. Sang Hun Lee writes:

True subject-consciousness manifests itself in other areas as well. If you are the subject, when you give a lecture or sermon, for instance, you should not feel that you are great. Instead, you should feel that you are representing the church leader or Rev. Moon, or God Himself. You must think that your subject is behind you; this will help you to maintain your object-consciousness. Only then will you remain humble, thus conveying the right impression to your audience. Of course, we also ought to show dignity as a preacher or lecturer. Our attitude must combine both the subject- and the object-consciousness.

· *Explaining Unification Thought*, p. 111

And in the *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, in the Appendix explaining Three Great Subjects Thought (pardon the awkward translation) Dr. Lee again writes:

... although parents, teacher, and leader are different roles, nevertheless, parents should be at the same time a teacher and a leader. In other words, parents practice true love through the roles of the three subjects: While parents are primarily fulfilling their role as parents to love their children with a warm heart, they also carry out the roles of teacher and leader.

While engaging primarily in teaching, a teacher also stands in the position of a parent and raises students as if they were his or her own children, and at the same time, the teacher stands in the position of a leader to guide the students.

While engaging primarily in the management of an organization, a leader should also accomplish the roles of parent and teacher. A manager, in addition to the work of management, should express a warm heart to his or her employees with the heart of a parent in raising children, having constant concern for their eating, sleeping and welfare. Also, a leader, standing in the position of a teacher, should teach his or her subordinates social norms and knowledge.

· *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, Appendix 2