

Hisao Lee Martial Arts Group Studies the Divine Principle

Abel National Messiahs to Panama
June 2014



In front of the Peace Embassy Dr. Byung Moon Lee and acting national leader Torribio de Lora and his family

Panama is one of seven Latin American Cheon Il Guk nations? [1] This article explains why. True Father invested greatly in the martial arts providence because he understood that young people need an exciting way to learn discipline and values. He saw martial arts as the ideal way to train young people.

In August 2006, the leader of Hisao Lee, the largest martial arts school in Latin America, was invited to a Family Federation event where True Father's speech was read. Rather than attending himself, Master Fabio Perez sent a few of his top leaders as "spies" to see what FFWPU was all about. They came back and enthusiastically reported, "Master Fabio! They're just like us!"

Two months later, Shin Mi nim [2] came to Panama as part of the True Family's world tour. [3] When Master Fabio attended that event, he had a profound spiritual experience listening to Shin Mi nim read True Father's speech. The God-centered-family message resonated deeply with what he has been teaching his students for over forty years. At the banquet afterward, he testified about his experience. He had felt as though this event ascended to Heaven like the most fragrant perfume being offered to God.

The Origins of Hisao Lee

Right after World War II, American soldiers who had recently learned martial arts in the Asian Pacific region came to serve in the Panama Canal Zone and began to teach Panamanians what they knew. Thus, Panama was the first country in Latin America to develop oriental martial arts. In 1972, eight-year-old Fabio was deeply worried about the other children in his poor neighborhood. Most came from broken homes or single parent families and because they had nothing to do after school and on weekends, they were often getting into trouble. He was inspired to teach them martial arts as a way to keep them busy and teach them values. Like True Father, he saw martial arts as an exciting way to develop good character and discipline in young people. Several close friends joined him as instructors and he developed his own martial arts style. With no money to buy mats or rent facilities, he focused on techniques and forms that did not need mats and he gave lessons in empty school yards. Excited by the idea of creating the "largest peace army in the world," his instructors often taught their students for free. From these humble beginnings, Hisao Lee grew to be the largest martial arts organization in the Americas.

Over the last forty-three years, more than ninety thousand young people have learned family values and personal discipline from Master Fabio. Today at any given time, Hisao Lee has two thousand five hundred students and two hundred and fifty instructors. Ten years after he began, Master Fabio became an Evangelical Christian as did most of his instructors. They even organized their own church, *Guerreros de la Fe*. [4]

Sacrifice As a Way of Life

Their instructors live for others by teaching martial arts for \$5 a month or nothing if the student has little money. Most of the time, their instructors are using their own personal money to help their students buy school supplies or school uniforms or to take them out for a Coke and some one-on-one time after class. Martial arts groups in general are run as businesses. But Hisao Lee instructors just live for others. One of our ambassadors for peace and the founder of one of Panama's top NGO's, for example, joined Hisao Lee at age twelve, while growing up in a poor single parent family. I met her when she received an award from the United States ambassador for her work. She told me that when she married, she had to quit being a Hisao Lee instructor. When I asked her why, she told me it had become "too expensive" for her because as a married person she no longer had money to both help her students and establish a household with her husband. This is an example of the sacrificial lifestyle expected of Hisao Lee instructors. Over the years, thousands of Panamanians have had their lives touched by Master Fabio's teaching and training. Many owe their personal and professional success to him.

Through many conversations with Hisao Lee instructors, I have become familiar with their personal and family sacrifice. Married couples raise exemplary children; their children and often their teenagers become instructors themselves. Hisao Lee is a family centered martial arts organization.



Cheon Il Guk missionaries from Japan escorting winners to the awards table

In November 2006, we sent Master Fabio to a Tong Il Moo Do tournament in the Philippines. He was astonished at the dedication and high standard of our members from all over the world. Observing carefully the Japanese sisters as they served at the event, he realized "Reverend Moon is better than I." Over the ten days of the event, Master Gustavo Giuliano, president of Tong Il Mood Do in Latin America, taught him the entire Divine Principle. Master Fabio accepted Divine Principle and True Parents.

In 2008, Dr. Byung Moon Lee was assigned to work in Panama. [5] My husband was writing his Cheongshim Graduate School doctoral thesis on Hisao Lee, but we didn't know how to work with this group, in part because they have their own strong Evangelical Christian church. Dr. Lee developed a clear plan, and we were able to teach Divine Principle and our values lectures to all their top leaders -- more than a hundred and twenty in all. Master Giuliano came to Panama several times to teach Divine Principle and Tong Il Moo Do. Most importantly, we prepared Hisao Lee leaders to become full Blessed Couples through blessing seminars. To date, forty-six couples have received the blessing and done the Three-Day Ceremony. Five beautiful Blessed Children have been born to them. Now, engaged couples are coming to us to ask for the blessing because they have seen the difference in the blessed babies and want their children to be Blessed Children.

Personal Connections

In 2013, Rev. Sung Jong Seo gave Panamanian members training in how to do one-on-one Hoon Dok Hae teaching of Divine Principle. We now study Divine Principle individually with Hisao Lee members using this method. We are constantly amazed at the deep understanding and insights they have while studying Divine Principle because of their understanding of the Bible based on their Evangelical Christian background. This method gives us the opportunity for lots of personal discussion and sharing, thus building a strong personal relationship with our students.

Not long ago, martial arts were considered by many Evangelical Christians to be satanic. In the beginning, Master Fabio received a lot of persecution from other Evangelical churches. Recently, he also

received strong persecution for associating with our Family Federation; some of his top leaders left. Dr. Lee told him not to worry and that within three years Hisao Lee would be bigger than ever. That is exactly what has happened: Hisao Lee is growing as never before.

The martial arts style that Master Fabio developed is most similar to Japanese Shotokan, so he and his members have great admiration for Japanese culture. With the recent arrival of four exemplary Japanese Cheon Il Guk sisters [6] in Panama, FFWP is working with Hisao Lee even more effectively.

We feel humbled to see how based on True Parents' victorious foundation of indemnity, God prepared many years ago this special foundation for True Parents and for the spread of Divine Principle.

Notes:

1. Four providential nations and three strategic nations are in Latin America.
2. True Father's grandchild through Sung Jin nim, the boy Father left behind when God ordered Father suddenly to go to North Korea in 1946. Her mother, Dong Sook nim, is the daughter of Won Pil Kim. Shin Mi nim was blessed in 1999 and has a son and daughter.
3. Shin Mi nim spoke in Panama City, Panama on October 7, 2006. The tour theme was God's Ideal Family and the Kingdom of the Peaceful, Ideal World
4. "Warriors of Faith" is the English translation of the church's name.
5. He originally came as a boonbangwang. The boonbangwang providence concluded on February 22, 2013 last year.
6. These are Cheon Il Guk missionaries, who went through a pre-deployment training program.