

## UPF UK: Dr. Hak Ja Han

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*Dr. Hak Ja Han*

Dr. Hak Ja Han is co-founder of the [Universal Peace Federation \(UPF\)](#) and an internationally recognised advocate for peace, family renewal, and interfaith cooperation. Often referred to as the "Mother of Peace," she has helped shape initiatives that bring together religious leaders, scholars, civic partners, and policymakers to advance dialogue, reconciliation, and human dignity. This profile highlights key moments of her life - her early years in Korea, her public leadership, and her work to strengthen families as a foundation for peaceful societies.

Dr. Hak Ja Han, widow of the [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#) [1920-2012], is the co-founder of the Universal Peace Federation. Together with her husband, she has devoted her life to peace, founding many organizations and initiatives in a wide range of fields.

### Childhood and Family Life

Hak Ja Han was born in Anju, South Pyong-an Province, now in North Korea, on the 6th day of the first lunar month (February 10) in 1943. Her mother, Soon-ae Hong, was an earnest Christian and her father, Seung-un Han, was the disciple of a famous preacher, Rev. Young-do Lee. The North Korean Communists were bent on suppressing religion, and in 1948, when she was five years old, her mother and grandmother were arrested by Communist police and jailed for 11 days.



After their release, Hak Ja Han, her mother, and her grandmother fled their village in the middle of the night. They went to Seoul, later moving further south to Taegu, where they lived through the Korean War. The family later moved to Chuncheon, where Hak Ja Han's uncle was living, and she soon graduated from elementary school in that city.

During this period, she, along with her mother, joined the newly formed Unification Church. Five years after joining, on April 11, 1960, the young Hak Ja Han married the church's founder, the Rev.

Sun Myung Moon. She stands as co-founder of the Unification Church, now known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. Since the passing of her husband, she has taken full responsibility for the affairs of the worldwide movement the two worked tirelessly to establish.

### Devoted Wife, Mother, and Grandmother



Dr. Han is a devoted wife, the mother of 14 children and the grandmother of more than 40 grandchildren. She is known for her extraordinary compassion, capability, grace and charm. Above all, she is exemplary as a woman who has created a God-centered marriage and family of three generations.

### Leadership to Strengthen Families

The heart and soul of Rev. Moon and Dr. Han's lifelong ministry is the re-establishment of God's ideal of

the family as the foundation for harmonious societies and the cornerstone of world peace. The Marriage Blessing movement, which began with the marriage of three couples in 1960, has reached millions of couples worldwide. Dr. Han and her husband presided over marriage blessings in Madison Square Garden in New York in 1982, in Seoul's Olympic Stadium in 1992, in RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C. in 1997, and other venues over many years.



*Marriage Blessing at RFK Stadium, Washington, DC*

### [A Woman of International Peace and Good Will](#)

In 1968, Rev. Moon established the Professors World Peace Academy in Korea, and in 1972 the first International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences was held. These and similar organizations have attracted the participation of scholars, scientists, and leaders in the fields of religion, the media, government, and the arts, including numerous Nobel Laureates. Dr. Han played a crucial role in all of these developments, where her compassion and kindness complemented her husband's vision and drive.

By addressing informal gatherings of women at these activities, Dr. Han became more visible in the public sphere. Her speeches included the Address to the Women of the World Media Conference (October 1981) and the Address to the Women of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (November 1981). She moved forward on the world stage for the promotion of God-centered values in 1989, when an interview with Soviet media appeared in the Religion and Society section of *Za Rubezhom* (June 12, 1989).

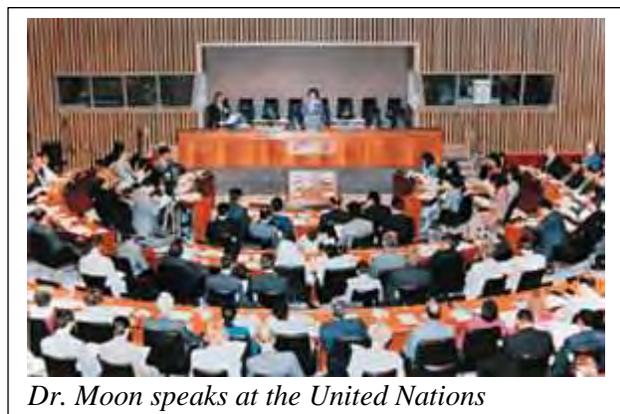
### **Meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and President Kim Il Sung in North Korea**



The following year, Rev. Moon and Dr. Han met with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. This extraordinary event, which took place in the Kremlin on their 30th wedding anniversary, April 11, 1990, initiated an educational exchange that brought hundreds of Russian students to study in the United States.

Then, in December of 1991, Dr. Han put her life on the line when she and her husband traveled to North Korea to meet with President Kim Il Sung for the purpose of uniting the two Koreas. That meeting led to ongoing projects to facilitate the peaceful union of North and South Korea. ([Re: Visit to North Korea](#))

### **Founding the Women's Federation for World Peace and Universal Peace Federation**



*Dr. Moon speaks at the United Nations*

In 1992, Dr. Han, together with her husband, founded the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), of which she became international chairwoman. She invested all her energy into developing a global base for the new organization, giving the federation's inaugural speech in 113 cities in 12 countries and in three different languages within an eight-month period.

Her first world tour in 1993 took her to 44 cities in the United States, 27 cities in Japan, 40 university campuses in Korea, and 41 nations around the world. She spoke in such notable venues as Capitol

Hill in Washington, D.C., the United Nations in New York City, the Kremlin, the Great Hall in Beijing, and congressional buildings in Japan, Korea, and Canada.

A further turning point came with the inauguration of the [Universal Peace Federation](#) on September 12, 2005. The years that followed were a period of intensive joint outreach and institution building. Dr. Han accompanied Rev. Moon on a world speaking tour of 100 international cities in 100 days ([UK - UPF Inauguration](#)).



*Dr. Moon speaks in the Tokyo Dome*

In July of 1993, after speaking throughout America, Dr. Moon's tour culminated with addresses on the US Capitol Hill and at the United Nations, delivering a message of peace and interreligious reconciliation.

Universal Peace Federation: Leading the Way for Peace, Development and the Renewal of the United Nations

Dr. Moon, following in her late husband's footsteps, is proposing a revitalized, renewed United Nations with the help of the Universal

Peace Federation (UPF), with more than 50,000 diplomats, clergy, civic leaders, current and former heads of state appointed as [Ambassadors for Peace](#). Among the prominent initiatives of the UPF is the Middle East Peace Initiative. Thousands of religious leaders have journeyed to Israel and Palestine to urge the children of Abraham to unite in peace. UPF has also been active in disaster relief after Hurricane Katrina struck the US in 2005 and the tsunami that struck northern Japan in 2011. Its educational programs combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and encourage youth to work for peace through sports and community service.



Following the inauguration of UPF in 2005, Dr. Moon accompanied her husband on a historic world tour to 100 international cities in 100 days. The following year she led a 120-city world speaking tour accompanied by their children, their spouses and their adult grandchildren and spouses who also served as speakers.

After her husband's passing, Dr. Moon has taken over the leadership of the organizations she and her husband founded.

#### **The Sunhak Peace Prize**

In February 2013, she proposed the [Sunhak Peace Prize](#) in memory of Dr. Sun Myung Moon, framing it as a public instrument to recognize leadership for peace and human development. A preparatory committee was formed in January 2014, the first laureates were announced in June 2015, and the inaugural award ceremony was held in Seoul on August 28, 2015. The first laureates were former President Anote Tong of Kiribati and Indian aquaculture pioneer Dr. Modadugu Vijay Gupta. The same year, Dr. Han visited India and Nepal in November 2015, where she met government leaders and addressed public meetings, reflecting her emphasis on peacebuilding that combines high level dialogue with grounded community development.

The Sunhak Peace Prize continued on a two-year cycle, with the second award ceremony in February 2017, honoring Italian humanitarian surgeon Dr. Gino Strada and Dr. Fatema Hameed. The third award ceremony, in February 2019, honored women's rights activist Ms. Waris Dirie and African development leader Hon. Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina. These choices reflected the prize's stated focus on sustainable human development, conflict resolution, and ecological conservation, and they placed women's leadership and social solidarity at the center of peacebuilding.

#### **UPF's Primary Associations and the World Summit**

From 2016 onward, her leadership included the establishment of UPF's primary associations as standing platforms for sector specific cooperation.

The [International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace](#) was inaugurated in February 2016, and in November 2017, UPF launched the [Interreligious Association for Peace and Development](#), offering a structured framework for interfaith cooperation that has particular relevance in societies shaped by migration and religious diversity.

World Summit 2019 in Seoul was another milestone, convening current and former heads of state and government, parliamentarians, and civic leaders. In that context, UPF also established the [International](#)

[Summit Council for Peace](#), a platform intended to sustain dialogue among national leaders beyond electoral cycles and regional divides.



In February 2020, UPF convened World Summit 2020, an expanded framework for high-level dialogue that also served as a launch point for additional sector platforms including the [International Association of Academicians for Peace](#), the [International Association for Peace and Economic Development](#), the [International Media Association for Peace](#), and the [International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace](#). During the COVID-19 years, UPF adapted its convening model through initiatives such as the global online Rally of Hope series, and in May 2021 launched Think Tank 2022 to generate practical policy proposals through cross-sector collaboration.

[World Summit 2022](#) in Seoul was an international gathering hosted by Dr. Hak Ja Han that combined in-person participation with global virtual

engagement. Within that summit framework, the Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony honored Professor Dame Sarah Catherine Gilbert of the University of Oxford and [Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#) for contributions linked to vaccine development and equitable immunization. In May 2023, UPF convened [Peace Summit 2023](#), where Dr. Han addressed global participants and continued to frame peace as a long-term, values-based project that requires leaders, institutions, and citizens to cooperate across dividing lines of nation, religion, and ideology.

### **Dedication of the Cheon Won Gung**

Since the 1970s, Rev. Moon and Dr. Han have worked to establish a permanent base for the Unification community in the district of Gapyeong in South Korea. They purchased land and built numerous buildings, including a training center, a hospital, a middle and high school, a graduate school and Korean language academy, a retirement home, residential apartments, and a world-class stadium. After her husband's passing, Dr. Han directed the construction of an office complex and the imposing Cheon Won Gung, or Peace Palace.

On April 13, 2025, Dr. Han dedicated this beautiful building to God, as a place where people, including world leaders, can come to meet their Heavenly Parent and join together in seeking pathways to peace.

Through the decades of Dr. Han's public life, the core narrative has been continuity in building families dedicated to the public good, as well as partnerships among individuals and groups striving for harmony and peace. Since her husband's passing in 2012, she has focused on institution building to ensure these efforts endure. She continues to advance a vision of peace grounded in the dignity of the person, the strength of the family, and the belief that humanity is one family under God.

### **Be Part of Building a Culture of Peace**

If this message resonated with you, take the next step:

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[Become a Monthly Supporter of UPF - UK](#) - sustain long-term peace initiatives and leadership development.

[Become an Ambassador for Peace](#) - join a global network of ethical leaders and bridge-builders.

[Get Involved in UPF - UK's Charitable Work](#) - interfaith cooperation, youth leadership, gender equality, community service.

### **Most Relevant Next Reads**

[UPF Celebrates 20 Years of Global Peacebuilding](#)

[Dr Hak Ja Han - Mother of Peace, A Life Dedicated to Unity, Family, and Global Peacebuilding](#)

[Rev Dr Sun Myung Moon](#)

[Honouring a Legacy of Peace](#)

[Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values](#)