

True Father's Course in Hungnam

27th November 2025

by ESGD

The idea that True Father went to the Hungnam labor camp as an indemnity condition to restore “personal mistakes” is a belief that has gained prominence in recent times. It seems to have become widely accepted as an ‘official teaching’, or at least is something that has not been questioned or challenged.

Based on the new teaching, the ChamBuMoRon, it is clearly stated that True Father should not have married before meeting True Mother; this is one of the significant ‘mistakes’ that he allegedly made. Alongside this, it is implied that there are other sins and mistakes made prior to 1948 which would justify him being sent to Hungnam. For example, at a New Year’s 2025 Q&A meeting in Germany, Shin Chul Moon stated this position in an answer to a direct question. To his understanding, Hungnam was a “personal indemnity course” for “having married”.

To most Unificationists, such statements should be deeply unsettling. We have always believed that True Father went to Hungnam because the prepared Christian foundation he was working with was lost to him. We believe God called him to go to North Korea to build his own foundation in the heart of the growing communist sphere; consequently he was persecuted and sent to Hungnam for preaching God’s word. True Father himself, likened it to Jesus being sent to the cross. True Father was determined not to die, and in the ‘hell’ of Hungnam he was committed to love and serve the other inmates, as well as the prison guards who abused and tortured him.

“You don’t know the bitterly tragic circumstances that made me go to the concentration camp in Hungnam after the loss of the entire national and global foundations that God had worked six thousand years to establish.”

Sun Myung Moon’s life in his own words – Pyongyang Prison and Hungnam Labor Camp (part 12)

Father was sentenced to 5 years of hard labor by the communist authorities for ‘disturbing the social order’. For a Hungnam prisoner it was essentially a death-sentence, but miraculously Father could survive 2 years, 7 months, and 22 days. At the brink of death, his liberation on 14th October 1950 was a decisive moment in God’s providence; Father was still alive and was free to raise up and inspire loyal disciples. This opened the path to establishing the HSA-UWC and expanding his global mission.

Saying that True Father went to Hungnam to indemnify some personal mistakes is comparable to telling Christians that Jesus did not die on the cross for our sins, but was put to the cross *because* of his own sins. There are different angles through which to evaluate the circumstances surrounding the crucifixion. However, every Christian believes that Jesus’ crucifixion was a sacrifice made to liberate mankind from sin. Through this we understand that Jesus could open the path to spiritual salvation; Christianity could be built upon this sacrifice, and God’s providence could continue.

Similarly as Unificationists, we believe the True Parents came and were able to give the Blessing, engrafting us as blessed families onto a new lineage. This was because True Father as the second coming of the messiah was able to discover and reveal the Divine Principle, build a foundation (the HSA-UWC), establish the True Parents, and bless members who he had trained and prepared to receive the Blessing. Without surviving Hungnam, and emerging victorious – none of the foundation of the Unification Movement or Blessed families would have been possible.

We have always recognised that establishing the Unification Church was not God’s original plan. Nevertheless, it was the foundation that True Father needed to make in order to find a new way forward. Therefore, as Blessed families, we understand something of the blood, sweat and tears of True Father going through the Hungnam course. In that sense, Father’s sacrifice in Hungnam is the foundation for our liberation and salvation – both spiritually and physically.

This year we commemorated 75 years since Father’s liberation by the advancing UN forces; Hungnam’s sacrifice should be celebrated as a sacred chapter in the Unificationist story. Hungnam should not be a source of shame and accusation, but a source of pride and honour; the careless revision and belittlement of its significance should be questioned and challenged. Father could give us the Blessing because he could go through hell in Hungnam.

Sincerely,

The ESGD team

*“Now the light of glory arises
like the sun that shines on high;
Now awaken into freedom,
O revive, you spirits, O revive!
Wake the mountains and the valleys;
bring alive the springs of the earth.
Light the world forever
with the Light of your rebirth.
Light the world forever
with the Light of your rebirth.”*

1st verse of ‘Blessing of Glory’, written by True Father in 1950 to commemorate liberation from Hungnam

SELECTED RESOURCES

What I thought about in Hungnam Prison by True Father (16 June 1967)
<https://tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon67/SunMyungMoon-670616.htm>

Sun Myung Moon's life in his own words – Part 12 Pyongyang Prison and Hungnam Labor Camp
<https://tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon67/SunMyungMoon-670616.htm>

Father's Life in His Own Words – Part 40
<https://www.tpaparents.org/Moon-Books/FathersLife/FathersLife-40.pdf#search=%22pyongyang%20prison%20hungnam%20labor%22>

The Beginning of True Father's Public Course and the Founding of HSA-UWC (Chambumo Gyeong – Book 3.)
<https://www.tpaparents.org/Moon-Books/ChambumoGyeong/ChambumoGyeong-03.pdf#search=%22pyongyang%20prison%20hungnam%20labor%22>

Prison Life in Hungnam by Won Pil Kim (July 1983)
<https://www.tpaparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/WPKim/WpKim-830700.htm>

new

We Care
We Carry On

12th October 2025

In response to the official memo sent to European National Leaders on the 26th August by the EUME Leadership

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Beyond
Theology

12th February 2025

The European community has become aware of the recent issues with Shin Chul's talks about ESGD. We informed our network by sharing his FIRST and SECOND talk, and here you can find the third talk on the following weekend:

[Read more](#)

ESGD
statement
on New
Theology

4th October 2024

In our work as ESGD we are compelled to comment on recent theological and educational developments in the movement at large.

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