

Teacher – Family Ethics and Education

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This article is the second in a series of three, on the concept of the "three great subjects". In the Appendix of the textbook *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, the notion of three great subjects is described in this way:



"The three great subjects thought is an expression coined by Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The three great subjects refer to parents, teacher, and leader. In other words, the three great subjects mean the three great centers: the parents, who are the center of a family; the teacher, who is the center of a school; and the leader, who is the center of dominion... (center of dominion refers to ...the central person who is responsible for management or leadership). ...The three great subjects thought emphasizes that these three great subjects should all practice God's true love." - NEUT, p. 525

Teacher -- the second of the "Three Great Subjects"

The textbook *New Essentials of Unification Thought* devotes an entire chapter – the Theory of Education – to the methods and goals of education. But regarding the idea of "three great subjects", one quote is sufficient to provide perspective:

"...the original place of education must be the family where parents and children live. Along with the development of culture, however the amount of information and learning has increased, and it has become impossible for parents to convey the entire scope of education... Therefore teachers, as the representatives of parents, must instruct students with a parental heart." New Essentials of UT, p 249

So the attitude of the teacher is an extension of family ethics into the educational system: as the parent loves and cares for their child, the teacher should as much as possible feel that level of interest and concern for the student.

Remarkable Teachers



And when we turn to the topic of the teacher as the "second great subject", *Unification Thought* explains that role in this way:

"The role of a teacher is to teach his or her students through the education of knowledge, technical education, artistic education, physical education, and so on. A teacher should teach students kindly and sincerely. If students raise questions, the teacher should answer sincerely, and if they have any difficult problems, the teacher should help them as much as

possible. In this way, a teacher can practice God's true love.... To teach only for the sake of wages is simply to sell and buy knowledge. This kind of education is not a correct education, since there is no love invested. A teacher should focus primarily on teaching students with sincerity, setting aside their receiving a salary as a secondary concern. Teaching should aim at the cultivation of the personality of students so that they will be empowered to serve society once they have matured. In order to do this, the teacher should first of all have a noble personality and a spirit of serving others. It is with the true love of a teacher that the teacher seeks to teach students with such a spirit of service and with a sincere and warm heart. Thus, the true love of a teacher is to practice love in one's role as a teacher." NEUT, p. 528

Frankly, these are high ideals and it is all too easy to look at the situation in many schools today and dismiss these ideals as hopelessly quixotic.

Nevertheless, the ideals stick with me because there have been special times in my life where I experienced learning with a few remarkable teachers. Despite the fact that they were in the minority, it is exactly those few teachers whom I remember, and who have affected me most deeply and permanently. I don't remember most of my teachers any more, but I can't forget that small group who made a powerful impression on my heart and eventually on my life. Later on, as I was a martial arts instructor and a college professor, these special teachers' relationships with their students had a very real effect on my relationship with my own students.

Special memories that made me take these ideals seriously



I was once at an international science conference in Washington, D.C., and there was a committee on Unification Thought. It was chaired by Dr. Sang Hun Lee, who is the disciple that Rev. Moon charged with creating Unification Thought publications based on his teachings and guidance. At one meeting, Dr. Lee was taking questions from committee members and time was running out. Realizing this, he asked that in the remaining time, those who had questions should write them down and submit them.

He promised that they would be answered. So that night, Dr. Lee called me to his room and asked me to read him every one of the unanswered questions. He dictated the answers to me until every question was handled. And he explained: "When you answer people's questions, you give them love." When the committee resumed the next day, before his planned presentation,

Dr. Lee had me read each question and its answer. He did not teach until after the last question was answered.

Years later, when I read in the "Three Great Subjects" that "...If students raise questions, the teacher should answer sincerely, and if they have any difficult problems, the teacher should help them as much as possible. In this way, a teacher can practice God's true love", I understood that his intention was to love each person and leave no one's question unanswered. And years after that, when I saw volumes of his own handwritten notes from listening and dialoging with Rev. Moon, I realized that he had been the personal recipient of Rev. Moon's love, when he had his own questions.

The Way of Harmony

Another example I remember is from my experience with the grandmaster of my first martial arts style. The style was WonHwa Dō (the Way of Harmony) and the teacher was Dr. Joon Ho Seuk. When he would guide his senior students about his vision for this martial art, it was a means to strengthen and straighten out a weakened or troubled character. His focus was on the internal Dō -- in both Korean and Japanese, this word means art, or path, or way -- and the physical training was a means toward not only practical defense skills, but more fundamentally toward the development of his students' heart, soul, and character.



Because of Dr. Seuk's character focus, when we earned our black belts we weren't full of self-pride. Instead we realized that our accomplishment was made possible by the challenge and support of our instructors and fellow students. We felt pride in them, in our teachers, and in our school, and we learned to see our students with the heart of parents towards their children. Clearly, some are gifted and learn quickly, while others are less so and learn more slowly. But when a teacher cares, they work to guide each student toward their own experience of growth and success, encouraging those who need encouragement, and humbling those who need humbling.

The True Love of a Teacher

Dr. Young Oon Kim, was my comparative theology professor at the Unification Theological Seminary. She was the first Unification missionary to the United States, Young Oon Kim personally appointed by

Rev. Moon, and she had a deep love of God and of God's voice in any religious tradition. So she was particularly well suited to teach us about how God's love has been expressed to many peoples, at different times, in their own languages.

When early American members in Oregon received news that Dr. Kim would be visiting them, they asked what time her plane would arrive so they could meet her and bring her to their meeting place. She declined, assuring them that she could find her own way if they simply gave her the address of the house. She later arrived in a taxicab with bags of Korean groceries, proceeded to prepare their dinner, and only began speaking with them of spiritual things after they had dined wonderfully.

Serving with a warm heart

The president of Unification Theological Seminary was David Sang Chul Kim, and he arrived in America immediately after Dr. Young Oon Kim did. He presided over the Seminary for many years, and when he was succeeded by the next president, he continued to think of and care for the many classes of students who had studied under his administration and he asked us to consider him "Grandpa Kim". So, on my birthday, on my wife's birthday, and on our children's' birthdays, we would -- for years -- receive a birthday card from him and Mrs. Kim with a little gift inside.

My Role Models

These teachers are remarkable people in my life, all disciples of Rev. Moon, and are models of the second part of the concept which Unification Thought calls "the three great subjects", this being the teacher, as subject. So although -- as someone born, raised, and educated in one of America's biggest, most materialistic, and skeptic-minded cities (in case you must know, it's NYC) -- this remarkable concept of the greatness of teachers doesn't seem unrealistic and unattainable. Because of Unification Thought and its originator Rev. Moon, I not only understand these things intellectually, but have experienced them in reality. And so, though most of my greatest teachers have passed on, the way I try to live and teach has been shaped by them.