

Interview of Byung Ho Son, president of UPF-Korea about the Peace Road 2015

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True Mother and Sun Jin Moon in Las Vegas during the Peace Road 2015 launch

Background:

In 2013, as a way of honoring True Father's heart and life, 210 Japanese members mounted bicycles in Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main island. The cyclists crossed from Hokkaido to Honshu (the island where all the famous cities are) and rode down the full length of that island to Shimonoseki on the very southern tip of Honshu.



*President Son of UPF-Korea
Peace Road 2015 head*

From there, eight riders with their bicycles crossed by ferry to Busan on Korea's southeast coast, where Korean cyclists met them. Together, they rode from Busan all the way to Imjingak, a point seven kilometer from the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the strip of land that separates the two Koreas. Imjingak is an observation point with art and photographic displays expressing Koreans' grief over the Korean War and their desire for reunification. A large group that included ambassadors for peace and several of Hyo Jin nim's children mounted bikes and joined the riders for the final kilometer to Imjingak. The Japanese had ridden 3,800 kilometers. For some of the older ambassadors for peace, the unexpected high temperatures made even the last kilometer challenging.

At Imjingak, all joined in singing and praying for unification. The AP and AFP wire services and Korea's KBS broadcasting covered the event.

On August 12 last year at the second anniversary of True Father's ascension, True Mother said, "During the first anniversary of Father's ascension, Japan and Korea became one through the peace bike Tour. This time, fourteen countries took part in the event and the teams cycled a total distance of six thousand kilometers.

How beautiful is that? Despite the changes in climate and bad weather, the participants were not deterred."

This year, the expression of love for True Parents, a desire to see Korean reunification and the fulfillment of one family under God is being carried out on an even grander scale. It is still ongoing. They expect 120 nations or more to take part. To get a behind-the-scenes look we talked to the president of UPF-Korea, Dr. Byung Ho Son.



Japanese members in North Korea took part in Peace Road by driving from Father's boyhood home to Pyongyang. [note the North Korean pins worn by the men in back]

Question: How do you envision the concept expressed by the name Peace Road? Are people helping to make that road through the kilometers they cover?

The Peace Road is True Father's, True Parents' 세계평화 구현의 길, the road to realizing the will for world peace.

Notably, True Father said to connect the whole world as one world. The world of peace will come with the use of developed technology and developed transportation. It should unite in this way. In other words, it should become one life zone. That world is a world of one great family under God, which is centered on one will. True Parents are working hard to realize the ideal that God has been trying to fulfill through the word here on earth. True Father was doing that, and now True Mother is doing that. From that point of view, we need to re-engrave our determination to substantiate the path to realizing world peace at this time.

Especially with the third memorial coming up, we came up with the name Peace Road, in that we wanted to go forward together to bring about the ideal of peace, which True Parents have established in detail. Thus, we can see it as the road to substantially realizing world peace.



Soon after a devastating earthquake, Nepalese members conduct their Peace Road event

Question: For our younger readers, could you explain the relationship between Peace Road and the International Peace Highway?

The International Peace Highway is within the idea of the Peace Road. It is True Parents' plan, their design. It has a very a close connection to creating the actual road. True Father spoke about his determination to create an International Peace Highway starting from the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and from Santiago, Chile. The Peace Road started in Las Vegas, the Cape of Good Hope and Santiago Chile, all on the same day, May 30. In reality, we made it a Peace Road centered on True Parents.

Including the three places I just mentioned the Peace Road actually had four starting points; the other one was in New Zealand, where it will cross over to Australia, and all four are heading toward Korea. So the Peace Road is following a similar course to that of the International Peace Highway.

Question: In 2013, the riders were calling for a Peace Park in the DMZ. South Korean President Park Geun-hye budgeted money for a peace and ecological park in September of that same year. Could you tell us about the cooperative relationship you have had with the government for Peace Road 2015?

The highlight of the Peace Road is that it would be very meaningful for the bikers to cross the DMZ, for Russian, Chinese and North Koreans to come through and to meet the South Koreans and Japanese. They would gather at the National Assembly Building before heading up to Chung Pyung. That is our plan. However, we do not yet have the cooperation from North Korea to do this.

As for your question, the Peace Park, or the official name the "Peace Ecological Park," that president Park has spoken about, and our side and Peace Road, are meant to bring awareness to vitalize the issue as part of our program and for the establishment of a UN office in the DMZ.



Our Japanese members in North Korea quietly took part in the Peace Road event, the central focus of which is reunification of North Korea and South Korea.

Question: Do you mean to make a road through the DMZ?

There is already a road, but the issue is that North Korea has not agreed to cooperate. Whether they are able to come to South Korea or not, we are supporting the government in the making of the Peace Park. This is because True Parents originally wanted to do this. So we are also promoting the building of the UN office with this event.

Question: Many people may not know the ecological significance of the DMZ.

The DMZ is the truce line that was created from the Korean War. The truce line is a joint area two kilometers from the line on either side where both sides do not fight. This is a truce line [He draws on paper]. The two kilometers on each side creates the Demilitarized Zone. Since neither side has been able to go into this area for the past sixty-five years, the nature is perfectly preserved. Thus, it is like a treasure.

This became an extremely important place. No buildings can be built here. It has been sixty-five years since anyone has been there. It has been preserved perfectly for the past sixty-five years. So from the ecological point of view, it has become a land that is like a treasure.

True Father said that there is need to preserve this area for the sake of peace. Therefore, there is a need to make a park that can help this. Especially, if we use this area well, then we can use it for unification. So there is a need to have a UN office here. As a treasure chest, we need to use this place to create peace, for unification, and to protect the natural environment.

We can make this a tourist area for not just the Korean people but for the people of the world. True Father has already spoken about all this, and President Park has outlined it in more detail.

Question: I think that the most moving part was that there was North Koreans participating.

I wish that was so, but it is our people who are in North Korea, under certain conditions who are doing it and visiting True Father's birth home where they held an event with the Peace Road banner. It is meaningful that there were a few Koreans who participated with the Kim Il sung badge.

Question: At least the Peace Road flag was in North Korea

We had hoped that the government would have cooperated as other countries have. When that didn't happen, we carried it out with a few citizens. There was historical meaning to our being able to go to True Father's birth home and set up the banner.



Through the streets of Mali in Africa, Peace Road moves forward