

Wonmo Pyeongae Scholarship, Support in Reaching Our Dreams

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A year ago, my husband and I decided to move to Korea and join the Wonmo Scholarship program, which True Mother had created. The scholarship consists of studying Korean for a year in the Sun Moon University Language Institute. Once a big language test is passed, we are free to pursue a major of our choice in Sun Moon University, and start our four-year education in Korean. My parents are a happy Swedish-Italian couple and my husband, Wansong Mukendi comes from a happy Brazilian-Congolese family. Wansong and I were matched at True Mothers' matching in 2013.

We received the blessing a few days later. We did not have a common language at the time, but such challenges did not seem overwhelming to a nineteen-year-old newlywed couple. In the following year, Wansong left Brazil and moved to

Europe, first to live with my family in Sweden and then to England, where starting from scratch he became fluent in English in a little over six months.

Our motivation to come to Korea was similar to the reason we attended True Parents' Matching: we long to be close to True Parents, to support our church and to be able to work toward the goals we believe in. After spending some valuable time in Chung Pyung cementing our relationship as a couple and sincerely inviting God into our marriage, we decided to stay in Korea and to study here together.

We made this decision without knowing much about what moving to Korea entailed. Though we both have moved between countries and continents a couple of times, we only had each other in this new country. Nevertheless, at twenty years old, we were excited about building a life here together independent of our families and far away from our comfort zones.

What we knew of Korea we had experienced through the church's lens. We had many realizations and eye-opening moments to look forward to.

Sun Moon University impressed both of us; our church can be proud of this establishment. Thousands of students, not exclusively from our church, and a beautiful campus welcomed us. If you have tried to learn Korean, you can understand how challenging it truly is. Perhaps one of the toughest moments that most of

us students have had to endure is the realization of how much patience and perseverance we need to learn this language. To a western mind, it is not very logical, and you truly have to start from absolute zero.

Trust us, combined Wansong and I speak eight languages and we both have endured the painful process of learning new languages before starting our Korean adventure. Learning Korean, however, brings deep insights into our church; for example, we finally are able to distinguish and recognize the difference among the True Children's names! Jokes aside, we truly have found great inspiration when reading Hoon Dok Hae in Korean. Even if we do not fully understand the material, it helps us feel connected to True Parents.

Listening to True Parents speaking in Korean and being able to understand them has been the most rewarding experience. Perhaps the satisfaction of being able to understand True Parents directly has been one of the stronger contributing factors to our maintaining our motivation and inspiration about learning.

Understanding a sentence, a word or a question from True Mother's speeches is simply thrilling. Korean is no longer a block of strong, impenetrable sounds; it is becoming something we can understand and absorb on a deeper level. We have a long way to go before we gain the confidence in translation and in interacting with leaders, but we have great examples of non-Korean students with an outstanding level of fluency whom we look up to.

About our experience with Koreans and Korean culture, we can truthfully say that we have gained appreciation for old people in this country. At a time when I was actively praying and wanting to understand and love Korean people, I had wonderful experiences with older Koreans. I could feel how those in the previous generation were prepared to make a great difference in this country. They have an

extremely disciplined work ethic, and they will gladly share with you -- a foreigner -- food and laughter and joyfully react to your Korean greetings. We have all had experiences of rough Korean grandmothers complementing our simple Korean or offering food straight from their tables and inviting us to sit with them, loudly chatting with us, completely ignoring the fact that we do not understand much of what they are saying. Their lifelong values, hard work and caring for their families, emphasize the beauty and the tradition of building united families whose members can support and love one another.



Another contributing factor to our daily life here is that we have received great inspiration by observing the foreign members living here in Korea.

There are many foreign families that have built a life here, some of whom have even become Korean citizens. I try to picture them in the 1980s deciding to build a future in the chosen nation, sticking through the process of learning a very challenging language and adjusting to a completely different culture. I am so touched by their love for True Parents and by their faithful hearts. The beauty of our worldwide unification family is evident, especially in these beautiful families with children that do not have Asian features yet are fluent in Korean and play around with their Korea friends. That reflects the absolute faith of the parents that took the step of building a life in True Parents' country. Many members took to heart what True Father had said about Korea and every day face the struggles and the joys of loving Korea and raising a family here. Many beautiful African families here are helping

break down concepts and are winning the hearts of Korean people on a daily basis. That is true witnessing and the practical way of building one family under God!

We are extremely grateful for this opportunity to study Korean here. We look forward to the scholarship, in that it will aid us in growing, developing and becoming even better.

Some extremely good benefits from living in Korea are our close connection to the providence and to activities that are happening here. We could help the staff at the Blessing Ceremony, work for major UPF events, participate in workshops, take part in the Great Works in Chung Pyung and attend meetings with True Mother. One of our most cherished memories from our time here has been being part of the Global Choir that sang for True Mother in March. Around fifty Sun Moon Korean Language Institute students, all foreigners, sang two Korean songs for True Mother during an event held for all the hundreds of students receiving scholarships from her. For months, we joined our faithful Japanese brothers and sisters -- whose sincere hearts, diligent attitudes and beautiful faith were an inspiration to us -- in choir practice sessions that required incredible dedication and discipline. It was an emotional and amazing experience to be able to stand all together singing for True Mother, expressing determination to study Korean and to help her achieve our ideal.

Overall, we want to focus on the positive aspects and experiences we have had here. Of course, it has not been easy, the scholarship provides tuition fees but many of us are struggling to pay our living expenses. Even if our external situations can be challenging, the main feeling we have is that we are grateful, so grateful to be here, to be close to True Parents, to experience the sincere hearts of the members around us and to resolve each day to overcome obstacles and keep True Parents in mind. Most of us here are

studying Korean because it is True Parents' language, no other obvious reason, and we sincerely hope that our efforts can bring results and inspire others. Challenges will always be there no matter where we go, but we chose to have faith and to look for inspiration and for love to True Parents and hopefully our faith and vision can help us achieve great things for the sake of the whole and for the sake of our families. We chose to pursue a life with the hope of supporting our church, while working on our relationship as young couple, living in Korea, having our families on two different other continents. Our prayer is that we can be able to use Korean in our professional lives and be able to testify for our church and True Parents teachings.



Both Anna Rivetti and her husband came to Korea as Sun Moon University Wonmo Pyeongae Scholarship recipients with the heart to live in close proximity to True Parents. Through reading about her experience, readers can see the challenges faced when studying in Korea and learn how Anna gradually came to understand Korean people and Korean culture. People often say that young people represent the future. It is important that young Unificationists are able to inherit the vision for the future that has motivated their parents' generation. Living in Korea, experiencing the culture within True Parents' nation is one way for this to happen. True Mother, through the scholarships she has made available, is allowing young members to have a visceral experience with their faith through living and studying in God's homeland.