Interview: Takahisa Sakai, Manager of Cheon Jeong Gung Groundskeeping and Maintenance Team

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Takahisa Sakai, Senior Manager of the Cheon Jeong Gung Groundskeeping and Maintenance Team

> A Commemorative Ceremony Marking the 20th Anniversary of the Cheon Jeong Gung Entrance and the Coronation of the True Parents as the King and Queen of Peace in Heaven and on Earth was held on July 29, 2026. The ceremony also included an awards presentation honoring long-serving staff members who have faithfully served in their respective roles over many years. To mark the occasion, TP Magazine is presenting a series of stories about those whose years of service have been closely intertwined with the history of Cheon Jeong Gung. In this issue, we meet Takahisa Sakai, senior manager of the Cheon Jeong Gung Groundskeeping and Maintenance Team under the Central Administrative Council, and hear the story of his 20 years faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to him. - Editor's note

A Dream of Cheon Jeong Gung: 20 Years of Service

Question: To begin, could you please introduce yourself and tell us what you do at Cheon Jeong Gung?

I started working on the groundskeeping and maintenance team in 2006, and I have continued in the same role ever since. What began as my first assignment has now continued for 20 years.

My family consists of my wife and our two children. Until last year, my wife served as director of the Dasarang Family Counseling Center. Many long-standing members, especially Japanese members who came to Korea after receiving the Blessing, may know her. My wife and I are one of the 6,500 Blessed Couples, and our daughter and son are both now in their 30s.

Question: When you first began working here, did you ever imagine that you would remain for so many years?

The Entrance and Coronation took place in 2006, and the first job opening was announced in 2005. That was when I applied.

Before applying, however, I had a dream in which I was already working at Cheon Jeong Gung. Someone I was working with was struggling with various difficulties and was talking with me about whether he should quit. In the dream, I said, "Whatever happens, I'm going to continue."

After having that dream, I was accepted and joined the staff in 2005. Because of the dream, I had a sense that I would probably remain here for quite some time, even if I encountered difficulties along the way. Still, given my age, I never imagined that I would remain for 20 years.

Question: What was Cheon Jeong Gung like when you first began working there? Are there any people or experiences from that time that you particularly remember?

I first started work in January 2006, when Cheon Jeong Gung was still under construction. It looked very different from the way it does today.

At the time, work was also still underway on the painting depicting True Parents' life course inside the dome at the top of the main building. I believe the artist had come from Italy. Every day, he had to look up and paint with his brush raised overhead, and the work looked extremely demanding. Watching him made me realize just how much effort had gone into building Cheon Jeong Gung.

Above all, knowing that this was Cheon Jeong Gung, where True Parents were staying, always kept me on my toes. I had a strong desire to attend them well.

An Unforgettable Day - True Parents; helicopter accident

Question: Of all the days you have worked here, which one stands out most vividly in your memory?

It was the day True Parents were involved in the helicopter accident. Of course, I also remember clearly the day of True Father's Seonghwa, but for me personally, the day of the accident remains the most vivid.

That day, I had some business at the training center, so I went there in one of our shared vehicles. On my way back, when I reached the spot where the gate now stands, two members of the security team flagged me down. They asked me to go with them, so I picked them up and we continued up the road.

We ended up driving right up beside the place where the helicopter had crashed, but even then I had no idea what had happened. The three of us got out of the car and approached it. At that moment, flames suddenly shot about five meters into the air. I thought, "If we stay here, we are going to die."



Realizing the danger, we retreated to where the gate is today. From there, I called up to the palace to report that a helicopter appeared to have crashed. The immediate response was, "Then what happened to True Parents?" Only then did I realize that True Parents had been on that helicopter.

Realizing that I urgently needed to find True Parents, I headed back up to the site. Fortunately, someone there knew where True Parents were, so I followed them. True Parents and everyone who had been on the helicopter were all there together. I will never forget that scene.

It was the rainy season, and rain was falling. The water around the helicopter was ankle-deep, and the area where True Parents were was completely soaked.

Because I arrived relatively early, I was able to escort True Mother to safety first. I was then instructed to

go back to Cheon Jeong Gung, and after doing so, I returned to the site and helped move the last person to be rescued. Thankfully, everyone was brought to safety that day. That is the day that has stayed with me most deeply.

Continuing Commitment and Devotion

Question: What led you to work at Cheon Jeong Gung, and what was in your heart at the time?

Although it was not a position in which I would attend True Parents directly, the opportunity to attend them from nearby was what led me to apply.

I once heard that True Father had said something along these lines, "Suppose a visiting VIP happens to speak with someone doing the cleaning and discovers that this is a well-educated, admirable person. Through that one person, the VIP will come to see True Parents in a new light. That itself becomes a testimony and demonstrates our pride in True Parents."

I wasn't sure what I could really do. I simply hoped that somehow, through my work, I might be able to testify to True Parents and demonstrate my pride in them. That was not my only reason for coming here, but it was part of what was in my heart.

But in all these 20 years, I have never had an opportunity like that. (Laughs) I simply haven't had any occasion to speak directly with VIPs. Even so, I think what matters is that I have continued to keep in my heart the promise I made with True Parents at that time. Whether or not there has been any result is less important than the fact that I have kept going.



Question: What has given you the strength to continue through all those years?

True Parents' teachings speak of providential periods such as 21-year and 7-year courses, don't they? Once you make a commitment, even if you came here for personal reasons, it ultimately becomes a promise made with Heaven, because this is Cheon Jeong Gung, a place where we attend True Parents. I felt that I needed to continue this work until I had seen that promise through. That kind of faith in keeping a promise is important.

There was also the dream I had before I began working here. I wouldn't go so far as to call it a revelation, but I did have that experience. Of course, anywhere you go there are difficulties. Sometimes there are things I personally don't want to do. At those times, I would steady myself by thinking, "This is a promise I made, so I have to keep it."

And I feel that when even work like cleaning is done with sincere devotion, all creation appreciates it, just

as with attending True Parents. Other people may not feel this as clearly, and I don't know how they see it. After all, I can't go around asking everything in creation - or every person - one by one.

Still, when I put sincere devotion into something, I can feel that it brings joy. That has given me a sense of fulfillment. You can't keep going for 20 years on a promise alone. As those small joys accumulated one by one, I became grateful, and I think that gratitude may be what has given me the strength to keep doing this work all these years.




Continuing a Life of Attendance in Heavenly Parent's Home

Question: What does Cheon Jeong Gung mean to you?

It may sound simple, but in a word, it is "Heavenly Parent's home."

True Father spoke not only of this Cheon Jeong Gung here, but also of the Ocean Cheon Jeong Gung, and at the time he also spoke of building a Cheon Jeong Gung in Switzerland. Ultimately, shouldn't every place become Heavenly Parent's home, so that the entire earth becomes Heavenly Parent's home - Cheon Jeong Gung, so to speak? I believe this is where that begins.



Question: If you could take this opportunity to say a few words to your family, who have supported you through all these years, what would you say?

I work here, while my family lives in Seoul. In fact, even before I began working here, I was often away from home for long periods.

When my wife and I first began our family life, I was managing a local branch of the Segye Ilbo. While running that branch, I went to a training program in Jardim, Brazil. At the time, going to Jardim meant

leaving without a job or even a home. Even so, my wife did not object. Although our children were still young, she went with me to Jardim.

It was the same when I began working here and had to live apart from my family. When I wasn't at home, who was there to take care of our children? My wife took care of everything. She was the one who held our family together.

Because of her, I was able to work here without having to worry too much about things at home. I am truly grateful to her. I am grateful for everything - including how well our children have grown up.



Question: Finally, what would you like to say to True Parents?

When people come to the training center, they learn about the course True Parents have walked, and many are deeply moved by their story. That is certainly a good thing. Yet at the same time, I sometimes wonder whether True Parents really had to walk such a path of suffering.

True Parents were originally meant to come as the King and Queen of Glory, as the King of Kings. Rather than True Parents having to suffer, a John the Baptist figure should have endured the hardships and laid the foundation, so that True Parents could come on that foundation. Yet if True Parents had come in that way, would we really have been able to recognize their value?

When I think about it that way, I feel that, in some respects, True Parents had to walk that path of suffering because we lacked the eyes to recognize them. So I believe we should repent for what we need to repent for, do what we need to do for True Parents, and attend them better.