

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AND THE MISSION OF WOMEN

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*Little Angels Performing Arts Center, Seoul, Korea
Seminar for Korean and Chinese Women Leaders*

Women leaders from China and from various associations here in Korea, and leaders of the Women's Federation for World Peace:

It is a great honour for me to speak at this event and encourage women leaders from two nations, Korea, and China, who have come together to seek the way to bring a world of peace and to affirm the coming of the global age of women. With the twenty-first century only a few years away, we stand in a position to experience the upheavals of the twentieth century along with a new and different century in our lifetime. This does not mean simply that we will span two centuries. Since the providence that permeates human history is carried out in units of two thousand years, there is great significance in concluding the twentieth century and preparing for the twenty-first century.

Though history is apt to change, the rate and extent of recent changes have been so wide and unpredictable that we have come to fear change. In the society of the future, in which science and technology will have been developed to a high degree, will humankind find happiness? In the information society of the twenty-first century what kind of lifestyle will people lead? How will the pressing problems of humanity that darken our future be resolved? What will be done about such issues as the establishment of a principled morality and new values, and the problems adolescents face, crimes, drugs, AIDS and other diseases, war and starvation, and religious conflict? Without finding a fundamental answer, the hopes of humanity for the twenty-first century will never be realized. We need to address these problems not as problems of individual nations; instead, we need to address them as those of humanity. The time has come to resolve our problems and bring clarity to our future through the new expression of truth revealed by Heaven.

On the verge of entering the twenty-first century, when we examine history, we see that men have been ignorant of the true value of women

and have not treated women fairly. The women's movement of modern times, which began with the nineteenth-century campaign of Western women to gain suffrage, has continued to develop under the banner of women's liberation. In general, it has been a movement carried out against men to restore women's rights, including the extension of women's rights, gender equality, and the women's labour movement. Therefore, the mainstream of the women's movement generally took the form of opposing men only for the sake of women. The movement I am carrying out through the Women's Federation for World Peace is different from the American women's movement. It is a women's movement not only for women. It is for everyone, carried out on the foundation of the new teaching centred on God's ideal of creation.

Chauvinists assert that men are destined naturally to assume the superior position and men and women are designed for certain roles they are meant to play. Their theory is that men and women are born with different natures and that accordingly their roles also differ. They believe that men and women naturally assume the superior and the inferior positions, respectively, in terms of identity and status and that men are established as the superior. I believe that feminists until now primarily have been responding to this view. They have tried to secure an equal status with men in all respects, by imitating them and assuming the same roles as men.

Despite their efforts, complete gender equity could not be achieved. This was because they did not know the essence of the problem. The fact that the role of women and their inborn nature differ from those of men does not mean that the value of women is less than that of men and that their status is inferior. The unhappiness of women stemmed from not realizing the preciousness of their God-given original nature and role. Problems arose from the fact that many women forgot what they possessed and tried to imitate the nature and role of men, as if men were the exemplars for women.

My esteemed women leaders! Women are the individual embodiments of truth representing one of the two natures of the incorporeal God, who possesses yin and yang in both external form and internal nature. Therefore, women are not in a competitive relationship with men, who represents the other side of God. Women are not the assistants of men; they are the interdependent object partners who make the world whole. When God created men and women, God established them as the ideal object partners of each other and made it so that they can become one through true love.

From the perspective of true love, women are the perfect object partners of the love of men, and regarding their value, men and women are absolutely equal. The fact that the natures of men and women are different does not pose a problem. Those differences are factors that bring on the stimulation of love. In the original ideal, a man and a woman united in true love have the right of equal position and equal status. Moreover, a man and a woman united in true love have the right to participate as equals, and through their love they can always be together. A man and a woman united in true love have the right of inheritance through which each share what belongs to the other as the second owner. As you can see, a man and a woman united through God's ideal of true love are created as completely equal beings in terms of value. They have the right of equal position and participation and mutual ownership.

Therefore, men and women are not in an antagonistic relationship, in which they need to imitate, covet, or somehow acquire the other's nature and role. Instead, they are in a relationship in which they share with one another, by giving what is theirs to the other through true love. Thus, each perfects the other and becomes one with the other.

My fellow women leaders! Women have a precious original nature and affection that God has made unique to us. We also have the central role of bearing and nurturing children and leading our families. Through the self-sacrifice of bearing and nurturing the fruit of love, women continue clans and generations of human beings. While the external work of mothers is important, the role and responsibility of mothers in nurturing their children to become righteous, cultivating their character even while the children are in the womb, are just as noble.

From now, humankind has no choice except to live in an increasingly globalized and pluralized society. In the future world, women will have a noble role in the family unit and in the entire society as well. We could even say that the role of the mother shapes history by bearing, giving birth to, and nurturing the future of humanity. Without this maternal nature, where can the hopes and bright future of human beings be conceived? Where can good men and women, our future leaders, be born, and from whom can they receive their basic education?

Respected women representatives, traditionally history has continued under the leadership of men. Most men have misled humanity using brute force, and they have created conflict and division in irrational societies. Consequently, there is a mountainous pile of historical legacies that need to be dispensed with, as well as many pressing

problems. For humanity to usher in the twenty-first century with hope, the contribution of women is necessary. Now that the age of women has come together with heavenly fortune, centring on True Parents, the women of the world can create a movement of magnanimous true love as part of their lives and make new families and new societies. The trend of internationalization and globalization leads toward the twenty-first century, wherein we need to live together as one global family. Extreme individualism and egoism are major deterrents to achieving this goal. Only true love can affect the hearts of the people who are inclined in that direction.

Women, united with True Mother, need to raise their children to create the heavenly way, through their influence of love, and perfect their husband's maturation through mother-child cooperation, thus forming ideal families. This is the movement to inherit the True Parents' true love, true life, and true lineage. Through ideal families thus established, we are to construct ideal societies, ideal nations, and an ideal world. I hope you women leaders will become central figures in this movement.

To achieve this goal requires the cooperation and international activities of enlightened women from various nations. A time will come when the leaders of nations will realize keenly their international relations and the conditions of this planet's environment. On this basis they will have no choice except to prioritize the common good of the world above their national interests and to translate this realization into action.

I hope that this meeting and exchange of Korean and Chinese women leaders will set an example of women's international cooperation for constructing an ideal world. I encourage cooperation of women leaders from both nations that will serve as a turning point in achieving peace in Asia and the whole world, marking the progress of history toward one world of peace transcending the walls of nationality, race, and religious belief.

Thank you so much for listening and may God's blessings be with you and your families.