

A UNIFICATION ETHICAL APPRAISAL

OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

A Critique of the Female Genital Mutilation in Light of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Speeches and Unification Thought

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Introduction

This paper will attempt to make an ethical appraisal of female circumcision in light of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's speeches and Unification Thought (hereafter UT). If we want to appraise female circumcision, we need to understand the significance of our sexual organ because it involves the cutting of the female sexual organ. Therefore, we will begin the first section with a review of the significance of our sexual organ in light of the Rev. Moon's speeches.

In the second section, we will deal with the issue of "female circumcision," which Western feminists have often referred to as the "Female Genital Mutilation (hereafter FGM).¹

First, we will begin the section with a review of the current situations of female circumcision in the world. The FGM is still very widely practiced in over twenty nations in Africa and the Middle East. Although it is not a religious ritual of Muslims, almost all the nations that widely practice the FGM are Muslim nations. Therefore, we will discuss the Muslim religion's relations to the FGM. Then, we will make an assessment of what caused female circumcision so popular in many Muslim nations and whether its practice is still desirable or not from a viewpoint of the Unification ethics.

In the third section, we will discuss how to facilitate the end of female circumcision from a viewpoint of UT. Focusing on theoretical frameworks, we will criticize "cultural relativism" and "Western feminism" in contrast to UT. Furthermore, introducing Max Weber's thought and UT's "law of dominion by the center," we will also discuss the important role of a charismatic leader to facilitate the end of female circumcision. In Conclusion, we will summarize implications of female circumcision from the UT's perspective.

1. Significance of the Sexual Organ in Light of the Rev. Moon's Speeches

In this section, we will deal with the significance of our sexual organ in light of the Rev. Moon's speeches. We will appraise the sexual organ from four perspectives in his speeches: 1) a perspective of Creator God, 2) a perspective of atoms that constitute it, 3) a perspective of its ultimate purpose of our becoming one with God, and 4) a perspective of the source of the human fall and the gate of Heaven and Hell.

1.1. Created by God with the utmost care and efforts

According to Rev. Moon, God created the human sexual organ with the greatest care and attention. God worked very hard in creating it. Rev. Moon repeatedly pointed out God's great efforts and hard work in creating it, as we can see in the following speeches.

From God's viewpoint, what did He create with the utmost care among the created beings? It is the male and female sexual organs. God created the human sexual organs with every possible care and attention. (10 October 1993)²

The human sexual organ is the concentrated place of the physiological nerves of feelings. It is the organ that God created with the utmost care and attention. (1 March 1994)³

The human part that God created with the utmost care and attention is the sexual organ. It is the place where God exercised the utmost care and attention. It is the place where the originating elements of life are all concentrated. The idealistic and emotional elements are all concentrated there. And it is the original palace of love. (1 January 1994)⁴

As we can see in these speeches by Rev. Moon, God did not create the human sexual organ carelessly or with defects. All-knowing and all-loving God did His very best in designing and in creating it. Therefore, if we believe Rev. Moon's speeches, we can surely say that our sexual organ is a 'God's masterpiece' of all His Creation.

1.2. The place where all atoms wish to reach

In this section, on the basis of Rev. Moon's speeches, we will appraise the human sexual organ from a perspective of atoms that constitute it. According to Rev. Moon, the ultimate hope of all atoms is to reach a restored or perfected human being and to become a part of his or her sexual organ. That is because the male and female sexual organs are the very place where atoms and minerals can also participate in the act of love that will enables not only human beings but also atoms and minerals to become one with God. The followings are some of the Rev. Moon's speeches that refer to atoms or minerals of the human sexual organ.

What is the original palace which all atoms of all materials wish to arrive at? The highest summit that they hope to reach is the male and female sexual organs that control the most delicate and idealistic human feelings. You have heard this kind of talk for the first time, haven't you? Thus, all beings try to sacrifice themselves in order to reach there. No other path but the path of love is the path we are willing to take at the cost of our own lives. That is the case with the world of insects, with the world of minerals, with the world of plants, with the world of animals, and with all beings in the universe. (10 October 1993)⁵

The human cell at the male and female sexual organs is the ultimate goal of hope that the material world most eagerly wishes to reach. By reaching there, materials or atoms can become the precious being that can contact God's love. (6 October 1997)⁶

Thus, according to Rev. Moon, every atom, every molecule, or every cell that constitutes the sexual organ of a restored man and women is very precious because it can directly contact God's love. Besides, it is not easy for atoms and minerals to reach there. That is why the

atoms and minerals of the sexual organ of the blessed family would be very upset and resentful, if they were cut off from such a precious place after a long and difficult journey to get there.

Honestly speaking, at first, I thought these words of Rev. Moon somewhat unscientific and unbelievable; therefore I did not take them seriously. It was not until I encountered Mr. Masaru Emoto's book on various crystals of frozen water that I have come to accept them as truth.⁷ His research findings made me convinced that water, though it is mineral, really has capacity for feelings.

According to his experiment, water created the most beautiful crystal when frozen after it was greeted (or labeled) with words of "love and thanks." In contrast, it created a very ugly deformed crystal when frozen after it was cursed with words of "hatred and contempt."⁸ After reading his books and watching pictures of various forms of crystal made from water in the books,⁹ I have learned to get firmly convinced that not only animals and plants but also minerals and atoms have wills and feelings, as the textbook of the Divine Principle states that every being consists of "internal nature" and "external form."¹⁰ Similarly, the Christian Scripture also tells the story of the feelings of the creation in the Romans 8:19-22. Thus, from the perspective of the Christian Scripture as well, we can regard Rev. Moon's speeches on the atom's heartfelt wish for reaching the sexual organ of a restored man and woman as quite plausible.

1.3. The place where we can become one with God

In this section, we will appraise the sexual organ of the original or restored man and woman from a perspective of its ultimate purpose. The purpose of the human sexual organ is closely related with the purpose of the human sexual intercourse. The traditional Christian ethics has often discussed the purpose of both the sexual organ and sexual intercourse from the perspectives of the "procreative meaning" and the "unitive meaning." In other words, according to the traditional Christian ethics, there are two important purposes in the sexual organ; one is to give birth to children (i.e., "procreative meaning"), and the other is to bring about a deeper unity between a husband and a wife (i.e., "unitive meaning").¹¹

On the other hand, the Unification ethics, which is based on Rev. Moon's speeches and thought, points out a different and ultimate purpose of the human sexual organs in addition to these two presented by the traditional Christian ethics. That is the purpose of humans' becoming one with God.¹² For example, Rev. Moon stated as follows:

Then, what is the place where a man and a woman become one? That is their sexual organ. At that place, the man and woman can directly become one and become one with God. (20 June 1993) ¹³

What kind of partner does God want? Does God need a partner with great wealth? Does He need a partner of knowledge, or a partner of great authority? No, none of these things matters. God wants a love partner. Thus, centering on the place where husband and wife become one through their sexual organs, God wants to appear and meet us. (1 August 1996)¹⁴

Where does God encounter with human beings? When a man and a woman make love and become one, that is, when a husband and a wife become one centering on their sexual organs, God and humans become one. (23 March 1993)¹⁵

Therefore, for the blessed families, their sexual organs are very precious and important, because they not only make a husband and a wife truly become one, but also enable us humans to become one with God.

1.4. The source of the fall and the gate of Heaven and Hell

According to Rev. Moon, our human ancestors fell because of the misuse of their sexual organs. He has pointed out the sexual organ as the source of the human fall; human beings inherited Satan's lineage because of the illicit sexual relations of their ancestors. Rev. Moon spoke as follows:

What is the cause of the human fall that led to an individual's mind and body not becoming one with God's ideal? The Bible tells us that it is because human ancestors ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, what part of the body did Adam and Eve cover after they had eaten of the fruit? They should have covered their mouths and hands, but they covered their lower parts; after that, they married, centering on Satan. This is the origin of how Satan's evil blood lineage multiplied.

However, the origin of true love, true life and true blood lineage are the sexual organs of love. Because of the fall, the organs of love, which should have been the most holy place, became the most abominable place, destroying the way of heaven. The organs of love became the headquarters of evil. And from here they sowed the seeds of false love, false life and the false blood lineage.¹⁶

According to Rev. Moon, if Adam and Eve had used their sexual organs centering on God's love, they and their descendants could have established the Heavenly Kingdom on earth. The human sexual organ, however, has become the gate of Hell, instead of the gate of Heaven.¹⁷

2. An Ethical Appraisal of Female Circumcision (FGM)

We will begin this section with a brief review of the current situations of female circumcision in the world.¹⁸ After that, we will discuss the relationship between the FGM and Muslim religion because the FGM has been widely supported by Muslim nations in Africa and the Middle East. Then, we will discuss reasons of the strong support for female circumcision in Muslim nations and appraise it from a perspective of the Unification ethics.

2.1. Current situations of female circumcision (FGM) in the world

What is female circumcision or FGM? There are several types of female circumcision or FGM throughout the world. The simplest classification consists of the following two types; almost all of the FGM practiced outside the Western world belongs to either of these two types.¹⁹ One type is 'clitoridectomy.' In this procedure, not only the "foreskin" of clitoris of the female genitalia, but also clitoris itself is completely excised. This type of female circumcision is also popularly called "*sunna*" circumcision in Muslim nations.²⁰

The other type is 'infibulation' or stitching together. This procedure includes not only excising the clitoris, but also sewing up the genitalia to close off the vagina, leaving only a small straw-size opening for the passage of urine and menstrual blood after excising inner lips. This type of female circumcision is also referred to as "*pharaonic*" circumcision, in contrast to "*sunna*" circumcision, in North African nations.

In both types of the FGM, its main purpose is allegedly to reduce the sexual desire of the young women so that they can easily keep chastity before marriage.²¹ It is said that the young woman who had her clitoris gouged out can feel much less pleasure in sexual contacts and that such a woman therefore feel much less temptation for premarital sex. Moreover, in the case of the second type of the FGM, it is extremely painful for such a woman to have the first sexual intercourse because her inner lips of the genitalia have to be cut open again to consummate the coitus. Besides, sewing up the inner lips of genitalia together makes it easier to tell whether the woman is a virgin or not at a quick glance.

Thus, allegedly the young women who have undergone the FGM can easily keep chastity before marriage and easily find a suitable husband. These are rationales for the FGM. In this way, tribal elders and parents have persuaded many young girls in Africa that unless they undergo the "female circumcision" they will never happily get married. It is usually their mothers and female elders of the tribes that tell these stories and perpetuate the tradition of the FGM. The work of the operation is also usually undertaken by older women in a village.

It is reported that about 6000 young women everyday, that is, over two million women in total in a year are currently subjected to some forms of the FGM before their adolescence. Consequently, it is estimated that approximately 130 million women living on earth have experienced the FGM throughout the world.²² The FGM is still widely supported in over twenty nations in Africa and the Middle East. Among these nations, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya,

Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan accounts for about three quarters of all cases of the FGM.²³ Estimated prevalence of female circumcision in Africa is reported as follows.

The countries with the highest total estimated prevalence are Somalia (98 percent), Djibouti (95-98 percent), Egypt (97 percent), Mali (90-94 percent), Sierra Leone (90 percent), Ethiopia (90 percent), Eritrea (90 percent), Sudan (89 percent for the northern two-thirds of the country), Guinea (70-90 percent), Burkina Faso (70 percent), Chad (60 percent), Cote d'Ivoire (60 percent), Gambia (60 percent), and Liberia (60 percent). Also very high, with estimates of 50 percent each, are Benin, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, and Nigeria. Countries where fewer than one third of women and girls are affected include Mauritania (25 percent), Ghana (15-30 percent), Niger (20 percent), Senegal (20 percent), Togo (12 percent), Tanzania (10 percent), Uganda (5 percent), and Zaire (5 percent). ²⁴

Female circumcision is not an obligatory religious ritual of the Muslims. Nonetheless, almost all the nations that widely practice the FGM are Muslim nations largely because the Muslims attach the grave importance to female sexual purity before marriage. In many of the Muslim nations (e.g., Egypt and Sudan) that widely practice the FGM, we can see a large number of the cases of the so-called "honor killing"—killing of a young woman by her father or brothers to protect the honor of the family because she lost virginity through illicit sexual relationship before marriage. Usually in the case of the "honor killing" in the Muslim nations, those who killed their daughter or sister will not go to prison at all, or if they go, only for a very brief period of time. Most people in the Muslim society do not condemn the actions of the "honor killing."

Thus, we can regard the FGM as a traditional custom that has come into existence to keep their young women from temptations of premarital sex in Muslim communities with a purpose of compelling them to keep virginity before marriage.

2.2. Muslim religion's relations to female circumcision (FGM)

As mentioned in the above, we can find the widespread practice of the FGM in many Muslim nations. The FGM has been endorsed by a large number of Muslim leaders, although some say that it is not the official Muslim ritual. In this section, we will discuss the relations between the Muslim religion and the FGM.

The chief sources of the Muslim authority in practice are "the Koran, the *Sunnah* (the 'path' marked by the Prophet Mohammed's words and deeds), and more recently the *fatwas*, [that is] opinions and teachings of Muslim religious scholars."²⁵ Because the Koran itself is silent about female circumcision, there are certain disagreements on the issue of the FGM among the contemporary Muslim believers, especially between those who live in Africa and the Middle East and those who live in the modernized West.²⁶

Professor G. Parrinder of comparative religion noted that "Clitoridectomy was Sunna as far as it involved removal of the tip of the clitoris."²⁷ On the other hand, according to medical historian David Gollaher, "Mohammed is supposed to have recommended circumcision as a *sunnah* for men, meaning that it conformed to the right path, and a *makrumah* for women, suggesting that it was an estimable act..."²⁸

In general, many Muslim leaders who live in Europe and the USA are very critical of the FGM. One of the contemporary Muslim leaders who live in the West and who are opposed to the FGM asserted as follows:

There is no existing religious Islamic text of value to be considered in favor of female circumcision,... And if unfortunately some people keep practicing excision, to the great prejudice of women, it is probably due to customs practiced prior to the conversion of the people to Islam.²⁹

Nonetheless, as Gollaher summarizes, the consensus among the Muslim clerics and scholars in African and the Middle East seems to be that "even if not explicitly commanded by the Prophet, it is nonetheless good, mainly because it curbs a woman's sexual desire and thus safeguards her morality."³⁰ It appears that many of the contemporary Muslim leaders justify the practice of the FGM, not on the basis of the Muslim textual authority, but on the basis of its practical benefits. One of those Muslim leaders who favor the FGM asserted that "uncircumcised women risked nymphomania, clitoral swelling that could drive them to masturbation or lesbian activity, and even increased risk for vaginal cancer."³¹

2.3. An appraisal of female circumcision (FGM) from a Unificationist perspective

In this section, we will attempt to appraise female circumcision from a Unificationist perspective. We will review benefits and bad effects of female circumcision and make an ethical appraisal of it in light of Rev. Moon's speeches.

At first, in order to think about beneficial effects of female circumcision, we will introduce a voice of a Muslim woman who had experienced 'infibulation' (FGM). She explained its benefits as follows:

The importance given to virginity and an intact hymen in these societies is the reason why female circumcision still remains a very widespread practice.... Behind circumcision lies the belief that, by removing parts of girls' external genital organs, sexual desire is minimized. This permits a female who has reached the dangerous age of puberty and adolescence to protect her virginity, and therefore her honor, with great ease. Chastity was imposed on male attendants in the female harem by castration which turned them into

inoffensive eunuchs. Similarly female circumcision is meant to preserve the chastity of young girls by reducing their desire for sexual intercourse.³²

Thus, we can find the main benefit of female circumcision in the fact that it helps young women protect chastity before marriage with great ease. As the Muslim woman pointed out in her assessment of the FGM in the above, when a community or society attaches priceless values to chastity before marriage, the usefulness of female circumcision increases accordingly. As for the bad effects of female circumcision, they vary and often depend on the luck of each woman. Nonetheless, we can easily point them out because there are many. Gollaher, for example, noted them as follows:

The side effects vary. At the time of the operation, the greater risks are hemorrhage and shock, which claim unknown numbers of victims each year. And while most girls survive, many experience acute or chronic disorder related to the surgery. Among the most common are clitoral cysts, labial adhesions, recurrent urinary tract infections, renal scarring and kidney dysfunction, sterility, and, as intended, loss of sexual feeling.³³

In my view, when considering these bad effects, no parent can easily recommend female circumcision.

Nonetheless, many Muslim parents in Africa and the Middle East seem to have no hesitation in persuading their daughters to undergo an operation of circumcision. That is because they are more fearful of their daughters' losing chastity than their losing life or health through the operation of circumcision. For the Muslim parents, female circumcision is equivalent of attaching a "chastity belt" to their daughters. A certificate or proof of circumcision parents present to their daughter's prospective husband is equivalent of a marriage license. They are firmly convinced that chastity before marriage is absolutely essential for their daughters' happy marriage. Therefore, they are afraid that their daughters will not be eligible for marriage without circumcision.

There is a certain similarity between Muslim sexual ethics and Unification sexual ethics on the importance of the sexual purity before marriage.³⁴ Teaching the importance of the sexual purity to female members, Rev. Moon repeatedly spoke to them that they must preserve purity even at the cost of their lives, as we can see in the following speeches:

Even though there are so many men in this world, you should not look around. No men can treat the women in the Unification Church as they wish. If your purity is threatened, you should die or kill by stabbing a knife in the attacker's chest. It's one or the other. Do you understand?

Purity is more important than life.³⁵

You should not ruin your purity during your adolescence, which is the precious time when you cleanse and indemnify the purity lost by Adam and Eve during their youth. You should preserve your purity, precious and clean, and you should have the mind and the determination that "even if I have to live a thousand or ten thousand years, my love will absolutely never be misused."³⁶

As we can see in these speeches, the Unificationists have emphasized the importance of female sexual purity no less than the Muslims. Rev. Moon has clearly stated that "Purity is more important than life." According to Unification theology, the fallen world has existed until now due to the fall of human ancestors. As a result of the fall of humanity, human beings inherited original sin, hereditary sin, and collective sin, in addition to the so-called "fallen nature." Consequently, it became very difficult for men and women to preserve their sexual purity before marriage in the fallen world. We can view that female circumcision came into existence because men were still very eager to get married with a pure woman, even though men themselves could not preserve their chastity before marriage.

Moreover, just like the Divine Principle's interpretation of male circumcision,³⁷ we may well say that the FGM came into existence as an indemnity condition for women because Eve the first female ancestor fell by misusing her sexual organ. In other words, we can see the blood women shed in the procedure of the FGM as the "blood of death" symbolizing Satan's lineage.

The Unificationists do not agree, however, in the means to preserve chastity. Unification theology asserts that a new age has dawned when we can restore our original wholesome state by eliminating original sin. In other words, now is the time when we can restore our original mind and will-power sufficiently enough to preserve our chastity before marriage, thanks to the indemnity conditions set up by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon. They have acquired the title of the "True Parents" because of their victorious accomplishments. The Unificationists believe that by studying the Divine Principle and True Parents' speeches and thought we can clearly learn the cause of the human fall, God's deep heart of love, and the existence of the spirit world, and that to learn these teachings enables men and women to preserve their purity before marriage. Rev. Moon spoke of True Parents' mission of teaching men and women to protect their chastity as follows:

"A man must become a responsible person who can protect his sexual organ for thousands of years or for ever and ever. A woman also must become a person who can protect her sexual organ for thousands of years or for ever and ever." It is Reverend Moon that teaches these things. It is parents with a special title of the True Parents that have responsibility of producing men and women who absolutely protect their sexual organs

without fail and of making sure of this. The mission of True Parents is simple. True Parents are the persons who have the power of making men and women absolutely protect their chastity without any flirting after picking up flirtatious men and women and educating them.³⁸

Then what is the road that is 180 degrees opposite the way of free sex? The path of free sex was laid because of the false parents. Therefore, True Parents have to come to straighten the wrong path. God cannot intervene. No authority or any military, economic or political power can do it. It was caused by false parents. Therefore, it takes True Parents to cut it open with a scalpel. True Parents should operate with their scalpel; that is the only way humanity can be saved.³⁹

Thus, the Unificationists believe that Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon as True Parents have the power to solve the problem of sexual immorality. Such True Parents have now appeared on earth and can solve the problem of sexual immorality and the misuse of sexual organs. Moreover, throughout the world, True Parents have promoted the Pure Love Education (i.e., abstinence education) and encouraged the social education that teaches the importance of preserving the sexual purity for both men and women. They also introduced the new concept of the "absolute sex" in 1996 in criticizing the free sex and taught us to become "absolute, unique, unchanging, and eternal" husbands and wives who can enjoy "absolute, unique, unchanging, and eternal" sex.⁴⁰

Therefore, as a result of the arrival of True Parents, the new age has dawned when there is no need of the FGM. Without undergoing the FGM and by learning and practicing True Parents' speeches and thought, the young women can now preserve the sexual purity before marriage, participate in the Holy Blessing of Marriage, and establish a God-centered happy family. In other words, the Unificationists are very sympathetic with the motive and goal of the FGM, but they assert that we can attain the same goal of preserving chastity before marriage and reaching a happy marriage without such a cruel procedure as the FGM, which may result in women's serious health problems and even in their death.

3. How to Facilitate the End of Female Circumcision: A Critique of Cultural Relativism and Western Feminism in Contrast to Unification Thought

In this section, we will discuss how we can facilitate the end of female circumcision from a viewpoint of UT. Focusing on theoretical frameworks, we will criticize cultural relativism and Western feminism in contrast to UT. Introducing Weber's thought and UT's "law of dominion by the center," we will also discuss the important role of charismatic leaders to facilitate the end of female circumcision.

3.1. Cultural relativism in contrast to Unification Thought

First of all, cultural relativism has offered a rationale for many nations to resist the international pressure to change the practice of female circumcision. It has also become an intellectual obstacle in mobilizing international scholars against female circumcision. Cultural relativism is one of the theories that support ethical relativism, which denies the existence of the universal standard of good and evil that applies to each and every person in the world.⁴¹

Cultural relativism is an ethical theory that says the standard of good and evil is relative to culture. According to cultural relativism, what is "good" is what is "socially approved" in a given culture, and our moral standard is based on the norms of our culture. Believers in cultural relativism inevitably end in refraining from criticizing customs of other cultures. Thus, cultural relativism produces not international social activists but detached passive observers of other cultures. Anthropologists tend to support cultural relativism. Very few philosophical ethicists, however, have supported cultural relativism, partly because it ends up affirming racism such as anti-Semitism against the Jews and white racism against the colored minority races.⁴²

Many anthropologists have made serious efforts to understand customs and practices of other cultures by visiting and closely observing them. In large part, it was anthropologists that have introduced the custom of female circumcision to the Western world. They were, however, not encouraged to criticize customs of other cultures. When they inadvertently made any value judgment of other cultures, they tended to admire others by criticizing their own.⁴³

In other words, in the academic society of anthropology, to speak well of other cultures have been accepted as a sign of freedom from "ethnocentrism," which was regarded as the cardinal sin of social anthropology. Ethnocentrism stems from the assumption that the way something is done in other societies is inferior to the way it is done in one's own society. Harsh criticism of "ethnocentrism" in the academic world of anthropology led many anthropologists to endorsing cultural relativism by hesitating to criticize other cultures. Thus, cultural relativism has been an intellectual obstacle in mobilizing anthropologists to put an end to the custom of female circumcision in Africa.

In contrast, UT is strongly opposed to cultural relativism as we can see it criticize all theories that support ethical relativism.⁴⁴ Because cultural relativism is one of the theories that support ethical relativism, I will introduce a passage in the textbook of UT that criticizes such an ethical relativism.

Another characteristic feature among the proponents of analytic philosophy is that they have regarded goodness as something undefinable, a quasi-idea. From the Unification Thought perspective, however, goodness can be clearly defined. In sum, human beings have the clear purpose of realizing God's love through the family four position foundation; thus, behavior in agreement with this purpose is good.⁴⁵

Thus, UT clearly supports the existence of the universal and objective standard of goodness, regardless of the geographical location or culture.

On the issue of female circumcision, a scholar who is somewhat critical of Western feminist views contrasted the cultural relativist position and the universalist position as follows:

The relativist position asserts that the moral equality of cultural norms around the world and sees "circumcision" from the vantage point of a ritual that signifies an important event in individual and group life. In contrast, the universalist position criminalizes those who engage in genital cutting. To many observers who subscribe to this universalist position, genital cutting is viewed as brutal misogyny, an extreme act of violence, and a violation of the human rights of women, . . .⁴⁶

If we want to mobilize the scholarly world in order to end the practice of female circumcision in Africa and in other Muslim nations, it is important for us to strive to increase the number of supporters for the universalist position.⁴⁷

Cultural relativism is an equivalent of the democratic decision-making of good and evil. According to cultural relativism, if the overwhelming majority of the people in a society approve any custom, such a custom will be deemed to be acceptable and good in that society. If the democratic decision-making of good and evil is correct in each society at the present time, it is impossible to oppose female circumcision in such a nation as Egypt or Somalia, where more than 95% of women have experienced the operation of cutting their sexual organ. UT, however, does not agree with the democratic decision-making of good and evil of the customs in each society in the current fallen world. Consequently, UT encourages conscientious scholars to participate in the campaign to end female circumcision.

3.2. Western feminism in contrast to Unification Thought

Secondly, I would like to criticize Western feminism for its somewhat misguided and ineffective critiques of the FGM. As a matter of course, there are various types of Western feminism; as C. Mohanty presented, the Western feminist critique "is neither singular nor homogeneous in its goals, interests, or analysis."⁴⁸ Therefore, it is not so easy to generalize its critiques. In this paper, we will largely focus on *The Hosken Report*,⁴⁹ which according to Abusharaf "is widely cited, often uncritically, by the most sophisticated scholars" and "exemplifies the shortcomings of some Western feminist discourses on female 'circumcision'.⁵⁰ In spite of many Western feminists' hard work, such a typical Western feminist critique as Fran Hosken's *Hosken Report* has not been of much help in putting an end to the FGM in Africa and in other Muslim nations.

In my view, the main problem with Western feminist critique such as *The Hosken Report* is its emphasis on individualistic human rights. It seems that Hosken's main concern is the individual woman's right to feel sexual pleasure; she is mainly concerned about the FGM's effects on individual woman's sexual pleasure, especially on her capacity to experience orgasm.⁵¹ In short, Hosken presented a male dominance theory of female circumcision; according to Hosken, societies of male dominance produced the practice of female circumcision in order to compel young women to keep virginity before marriage.

Generally speaking, Western feminists disagree with the absolute importance of virginity before marriage; they view such a requirement of virginity, which is closely related with the custom of female circumcision, as a symbol of "universal male dominance." Western feminists insist that the individual woman's sexual organ is her own property; therefore, no other person, even her own parent, is allowed to cut or mutilate. Western feminists have encouraged young women or girls to reject their parents' advice on the necessity of female circumcision and ended up in encouraging them to be independent of their parents.

The individualistic and anti-religious ethos of Western feminism is alien and hostile to African or Muslim tradition of the strong unity of the whole family and clan with a firm faith in God. Consequently, Western feminism is lacking in the values that attach importance to the family relationship, especially to the vertical parent-child relationship that constitute "lineage." Thus, in spite of their good intention, Western feminist voices against female circumcision in Africa have often been counterproductive because they belittled both the importance of virginity before marriage and the unity of a whole family that have been long cherished in the African/Muslim tradition.

In contrast to such a Western feminist view as typified by *The Hosken Report*, UT's world view is neither individualistic nor anti-religious; it has a deep concern for the unity of a whole family and for the vertical relationship with one's parents and ancestors just like the traditional African view. Rev. Moon, the founder of UT, has strongly emphasized the importance of lineage, even more than love and life. He spoke in his Inaugural Address of Universal Peace Federation on 12 September 2005 as follows:

Let me talk about lineage for a moment. Lineage is more important than life and more important than love. Life and love come together to create lineage. Lineage cannot be established if either life or love is missing. Therefore, among the three qualities that define the parent-child relationship, love, life, and lineage, lineage is the fruit.

. . . Please inscribe the absolute importance of lineage in your hearts. I cannot emphasize this enough. Without lineage, neither life nor love can endure. You strive to set a good tradition, but it will endure only through your lineage. Lineage is the bridge allowing the parents' spirit to carry on through subsequent generations.⁵²

According to UT, human ancestors soiled and lost precious lineage of God by misusing their sexual organs. To protect our lineage means to protect our sexual organs, because we can create and maintain lineage only through our sexual organs. Rev. Moon and Unificationists are opposed to female circumcision not because a woman should be allowed to enjoy a premarital sex or free sex. Far from it, they regard our sexual organ as the most sacred place that we must protect at the risk of our lives.

Unlike the Western feminist view, UT presents a deep concern for the unity of a whole family by introducing a new concept of the "Three Great Kingships," which means the "Three Generations' Kingships" in a family. The textbook of UT explains the concept of the "Three Great Kingships" as follows:

Thus, the original concepts of grandparents, parents and children are very precious, and the conventional concepts are not able to convey the same noble sense as do the original concepts. There is no better means of expression than to use the concept of king in order to express their nobility, importance and gloriousness, since the king occupies the most supreme of all positions on earth. Thus, in the original world, where humans are so precious, the nobility of grandparents, parents, and children is expressed through the concepts of the three great kingships.

. . . From this viewpoint, we should look at the members of our family, and other families, as those who are as precious as kings and queens. Hence, a home is a royal palace. ⁵³

Moreover, UT discerns that every being exists not as an "independent being" but as a "connected being" with dual purposes. The textbook of UT explains a "connected being" with dual purposes as follows:

When an individual being is seen as a being with dual purposes, namely, the "purpose for the individual" and the "purpose for the whole," it can be called a connected being. Its purpose for the individual is to maintain its existence and development as an individual, and its purpose for the whole is to live for the existence and development of the whole.⁵⁴

Thus, UT emphasizes that every being as a "connected being" has a whole purpose as well as an individual purpose.

3.3. Charismatic authority and Unification Thought's "law of dominion by the center"
Finally, theorizing how to facilitate the end of female circumcision in mind, I would like to discuss the most likely process of cultural change, which includes the change of the traditional custom of female circumcision. One of the founders of sociology, Max Weber analyzed the process of socio-cultural change by discerning three types of authority: 1) traditional, 2)

charismatic, and 3) rational-legal.⁵⁵ In his analysis he emphasized the important role of a charismatic leader in the socio-cultural change. According to Weber, a rise of the charismatic leader often made it possible to bring about a sudden and profound change in the old customs and habits that constitute the traditional authority; it is charismatic leaders that have brought about the so-called "cultural breakthrough" -- a sudden profound change in culture -- throughout history. Weber spoke of "charisma" as follows:

The term "charisma" will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.⁵⁶

UT generally agrees with Weber in acknowledging the important role of central figures in a socio-cultural change. UT presents the important role of central figures in discussing the "law of dominion by the center" as one of the "laws of creation" that have guided human history. According to UT, "human history is the history of re-creation and at the same time it is the history of restoration." Therefore, "historical changes have taken place in accordance with the 'laws of creation' and 'laws of restoration'."⁵⁷ The textbook of UT explains the "law of dominion by the center" as follows:

In the history of restoration God establishes central figures and, through them, leads society in a direction in accord with His providence, namely, in the direction of goodness. In this case, He first forms a social environment, and then inspires the central figure to lead that environment in a direction in accord with His providence. For that to happen, the central figure is charged with their (portion of) responsibility to control the environment. In this way, there is a law that central figures in the providence of God have dominion over the environment. We call this the "law of dominion by the center." This law applies not only to the chosen people; it applies to all other peoples and countries, as well.⁵⁸

In the past, Marxist scholars harshly criticized Weber's emphasis on the important role of a charismatic leader as "a great hero theory of social change." UT is, however, very critical of the materialist view of history such as presented by Marxism and affirms the crucial role of the central leaders.

The materialist view of history theoretically attaches greater importance to the environment (i.e., the social environment) than to leaders, and asserts that the masses, which are the basis of the social environment, play the decisive role in social development. . . . This is not a correct view, however. The leaders are the subject, and the masses, the object; the leaders

guide the masses, or society, in a certain direction on the basis of their religious or political ideologies.⁵⁹

Therefore, from a viewpoint of the "law of dominion by the center," as well as from Weber's perspective, we can assert that the most effective course to facilitate the end of female circumcision is the development of new charismatic authority. It appears that religious leaders' involvement in the local campaign significantly contributed to reducing the cases of female circumcision in Africa in the past. It is documented that "noted religious leaders such as Farah was Taktook and Sheikh Hamad wad Umm Marioum had launched successful anti-circumcision efforts through the *khalawi* (religious schools) as early as 1860."⁶⁰

Because many nations that practice female circumcision belong to a strong monotheistic culture, we can say that without mobilizing charismatic "ethical prophets" we are destined to fail in bringing about a socio-cultural change in such a culture. It is also Max Weber that emphasized the important role of charismatic prophets; he discerned two types of prophets: the "*ethical prophet*" and the "*exemplary prophet*." Weber explained the type of the "*ethical prophet*" as follows:

Thus, there remain only two kinds of prophets in our sense, one represented most clearly by the Buddha, the other with special clarity by Zoroaster and Muhammad. The prophet may be primarily, as in the last cases, an instrument for the proclamation of a god and his will, be this a concrete command or an abstract norm. Preaching as one who has received a commission from god, he demands obedience as an ethical duty. This type we shall call the "*ethical prophet*".⁶¹

Therefore, in my view, the most effective way to facilitate the end of female circumcision is to encourage the activities of anti-circumcision "ethical (or emissary) prophet," who declares a clear ethical demand as God's direct message. The Arabic term "*Tahur*" for female circumcision, which is popularly used in North African region, means "purification" and "connotes the achievement of cleanliness through a ritual activity."⁶² This term indicates religious and sanctifying nature of female circumcision on the basis of their faith in God. Therefore, it is understandable that the humanistic and anti-religious arguments against female circumcision such as Western feminist critiques have not been effective in Muslim societies in Africa.

In contrast, UT's world view is religious and God-centered. UT's founder Rev. Moon has now emerged as the most charismatic "ethical prophet" as well as the most charismatic "exemplary prophet" in our contemporary time.⁶³ Therefore, I have no doubt that Rev. and Mrs. Moon's Unification Movement, which disseminates UT, can be of great help in facilitating the end of female circumcision in African/Muslim nations from now on.

Conclusion

According to Rev. Moon, we now live in the restored world of the "Age after the Coming of Heaven." In this new age of "New Heaven and New Earth," we should get rid of the old customs that were required as indemnity conditions in the age of the fallen humanity. The old customs of both male and female circumcisions implicitly indicated that something was wrong with the human sexual organs and that human beings had inherited the fallen impure lineage through these organs. As the textbook of the Divine Principle and Rev. Moon's speeches clearly taught us, human ancestors did indeed fall through the misuse of their sexual organs and inherited Satan's lineage. Therefore, female circumcision had a providential significance in the fallen world in the past age of restoration through indemnity.

We do not need, however, female circumcision any longer in this new age when Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon as True Parents can clearly teach us why and how we ought to preserve our chastity before marriage. As discussed in the first section, God created the human sexual organ with His utmost sincerity, care, and attention. In this new age, we can completely eradicate Satan's lineage through the Holy Blessing of Marriage and restore the wholeness of our sexual organs as restored men and women. Therefore, there is no need to mutilate our sexual organ that is God's work of masterpiece.

In this paper, I presented current situations of female circumcision in the world and asserted that it is no longer necessary in this new "Age after the Coming of Heaven." In my view, criticizing cultural relativism and Western feminism, UT can greatly facilitate the end of female circumcision in the world.

I really hope that the day will come when the custom of female circumcision will disappear throughout the world because all young women can learn to know and practice the absolute importance of chastity before marriage and acquire the will power to abstain from a pre-marital sex. I am convinced that UT, which elucidates God's deep love and His lineage as well as the importance of the God-centered three generational family, can be of great help in ending the old practice of female circumcision in Africa. I believe that a new cultural revolution will take place as the new age dawns when the new charismatic authority of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon as True Parents of humanity can take roots throughout the world and make female circumcision needless and obsolete.

Notes

1. Some scholars prefer to use somewhat more neutral term: "female genital cutting." See e.g., Ellen Gruenbaum, *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia:

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 4. In this paper, I use both "female circumcision" and "female genital mutilation" interchangeably without paying attention to their connotation of the meaning.

2. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1647. Translation is mine.

3. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1677. Translation is mine.

4. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1702. Translation is mine.

5. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1647. Translation is mine.

6. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1677. Translation is mine.

7. See Masaru Emoto, *Mizuwa Kotaeo Shitteiru* (Water knows the answer: the hidden messages in water crystals) (Tokyo: Sunmark, 2001).

8. See Emoto, *Mizuwa Kotaeo Shitteiru*.

9. See Emoto, *Mizuwa Kotaeo Shitteiru*; Masaru Emoto, *Mizuga Tsutaeru Aino Katachi* (Form of love that water conveys) (Tokyo: Tokumashoten, 2003).

10. See HSA-UWC, *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1996), 17.

11. For the traditional Christian ethical view on the purpose of the sexual organ/sexual intercourse, see e.g., Vincent J. Genovesi, *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1996); Stanley J. Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

12. For a Unification ethical view on the purpose of the sexual organ/sexual intercourse, see e.g., Yoshihiko Masuda, *Toitsu Rinrigaku Koza* (Lectures on Unification ethics), vol. 2, revised ed. (Gapyeong, Korea: Cheongshim Graduate School of Theology Press, 2004).

13. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1650. Translation is mine.

14. Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han Moon, *True Family and World Peace* (New York: FFWPU. 2000), 61.

15. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1651. Translation is mine.

16. Moon and Moon, *True Family and World Peace*, 16. I slightly revised the translation and changed the sexist language into the inclusive language.

17. For Rev. Moon's speeches on the sexual organ as the gate of Heaven and Hell, see Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1690-1692.

18. For the issue of female circumcision or FGM, see e.g., Efua Dorkenoo, *Cutting the Rose, Female Genital Mutilation: The Practice and Its Prevention* (London: Minority Rights Publication, 1994); Gollaher, *Circumcision*; Ellen Gruenbaum, *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Fran Hosken, *The Hosken Report: Genital and Sexual Mutilation of Females* (Lexington, Mass.: Women's International Network News, 1982 and 1993); Hanny Lightfoot-Klein, *Prisoners of Ritual: An Odyssey into Female Genital Circumcision in Africa* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989); Anika Rahman and Nahid Toubia, eds., *Female Genital Mutilation: A Guide to Laws and Policies Worldwide* (New York: Zed Books, 2000); Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund, eds., *Female "Circumcision" in Africa: Culture, Controversy, and Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000). For a discussion on a Unificationist view of female circumcision/FGM, see Frey-Lungula N'kumu, "Ethical Controversies of Female Circumcision in Africa: A Unificationist Appraisal," M.A. thesis, Graduate School of Theology, Sun Moon University, November 2002.

19. For an explanation of these types of "female circumcision," see e.g. Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 2-3.

20. The word "sunna" means "tradition," It usually refers to "the traditions of Islam's Prophet Mohammed" and means those things that he did or advocated during his lifetime. See Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 2.

21. See Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 2. Another type of female circumcision with a different purpose is to excise only the part of "foreskin" of clitoris or its entire covering skin (the layers of tissues that hood clitoris). This procedure is somewhat similar to male circumcision and was once (still?) promoted by some physicians in the West. Contrary to clitoridectomy or infibulation, this procedure allegedly increases the female sexual pleasure and is not opposed even by feminists in the West. In fact, the *Playgirl* magazine for women promoted it in 1973, claiming in the article that removing the excess skin "made the clitoris more accessible to stimulation and thus heightened sexual response in women." See Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 202.

22. These statistics of the FGM are estimates made by the World Health Organization and cited by Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 189; for the statistics of the FGM, also see Dorkenoo, *Cutting the Rose*, 88-89; Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 7-9; Shell-Duncan and Hernlund, eds., *Female "Circumcision" in Africa*, 10-12.

23. It is noteworthy that "Nearly a third of the cases in Africa are in Nigeria, not because of high prevalence but because of its large population." Nigeria "accounts for 30.6 million of the 114.3 million cases for Africa as a whole." See Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 8.

24. Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 8. According to Gruenbaum, these data are "drawn from national surveys, small studies, country reports in WIN News, and anecdotal information." See Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 8.

25. Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 192.

26. The ritual FGM is strictly prohibited in almost all of the Western nations by laws.

27. Parrinder, *Sexual Morality*, 161. Some scholars also spell "Sunna" as "sunnah."

28. Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 192.

29. This is a statement made by Sheik Abbas, rector of the Muslim Institute at the Mosque of Paris, and cited in Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 192.

30. This is the view presented by e.g., Great Sheikh of Al-Azhar in 1981. See Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 193.

31. Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 193.

32. This is a statement by a Muslim woman named Nawal el-Sasawi and quoted in Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 194.

33. Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 191.

34. The Unification ethics, however, emphasizes the importance of purity and chastity equally both for men and for women, whereas the Muslim ethics tends to emphasize only women's sexual purity before marriage rather than men's. Another difference is that the Unification ethics supports strict monogamy, whereas the Muslim ethics allows a husband to marry plural (up to four) wives.

35. Sun Myung Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family* (New York: HSA Publications, 1997), 44.

36. Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family*, 45.

37. For the Divine Principle's interpretation of male circumcision, See HSA-UWC, *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, 240.

38. Moon, *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 1635. Translation is mine.

39. Sun Myung Moon, "In Search of the Origin of the Universe" in his *True Love and True Family* (New York: FFWPU, 1997), 33-34.

40. For Rev. Moon's comments on the "absolute sex," see e.g., Moon, "In Search of the Origin of the Universe" in his *True Love and True Family*, 34. For his comments on the "absolute, unique, unchanging, and eternal" sex, see e.g., Sun Myung Moon, *Uchu-no Konpon* (Fundamentals of the universe) (Tokyo: Kogensha, 2002), 295.

41. Besides cultural relativism, other ethical theories that belong to ethical relativism include the emotive theory, intuitionism, and subjectivism. For an explanation of cultural relativism, emotivism, intuitionism, and subjectivism, see e.g., Harry J. Gunsler, *Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1998).

42. For a discussion on cultural relativism, see e.g., John W. Cook, *Morality and Cultural Differences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

43. E.g., American anthropologist Margaret Mead criticized the puritanical sexuality in the United States by introducing the relaxed sexuality of the Samoans. See Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966; First published in 1928).

44. See Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought* (Tokyo: Kogensha, 2006), 295-296.

45. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 296.

46. Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, "Revisiting Feminist Discourses on Infibulation: Responses from Sudanese Feminists," in Shell-Duncan and Hernlund, eds., *Female "Circumcision" in Africa*, 155.

47. It is important to make a distinction between the universalist position and Western feminist position. Although Western feminist views generally belong to the universalist position, all those who support the universalist position do not necessarily agree with all the views held by the Western feminists.

48. Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," in C. Mohanty, ed., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 52.

49. See Hosken, *Hosken Report*.

50. Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, "Revisiting Feminist Discourses on Infibulation: Responses from Sudanese Feminists," in Shell-Duncan and Hernlund, eds., *Female "Circumcision" in Africa*, 151 and 160.

51. See Hosken, *Hosken Report (1993)*, 8.

52. Sun Myung Moon, "God's Ideal Family: The Model for World Peace," The Inaugural Address at Inaugural Convocation of Universal Peace Federation, 12 September 2005, New York.

53. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 543-545.

54. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 119.

55. The German word "*Herrschaft*" that Weber extensively discussed is translated either as "authority" or "domination." For Weber's explanation of the three types of authority or domination, see Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of the Interpretive Sociology*, tras. E. Fischoff et al.; ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich, reprint ed. 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 212-254.

56. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 241.

57. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 343.

58. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 346-347.

59. Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, 348.

60. Abusharaf, "Revisiting Feminist Discourses on Infibulation," 164.

61. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 447. On the other hand, Weber (*Economy and Society*, 447-448) explained the "exemplary prophet" as follows.

On the other hand, the prophet may be an exemplary man who, by his personal example, demonstrates to others the way to religious salvation, as in the case of the Buddha. The preaching of this type of prophet says nothing about a divine mission or an ethical duty of obedience, but rather directs itself to the self-interest of those who crave salvation, recommending to them the same path as he himself traversed. Our designation for this second type is that of the "exemplary prophet."

62. Gruenbaum, *Female Circumcision Controversy*, 4.

63. It is important to understand that Rev. Sun Myung Moon is not only the most charismatic "ethical prophet" but also the most charismatic "exemplary prophet" in our contemporary time. In his early years of public ministry, especially before his marriage with Miss Hak Ja Han in 1960, he almost exclusively functioned as the "ethical prophet." Nonetheless, as he has accomplished various great victories in so many

fields, especially in the 2000s, he has gradually acquired the status of the most charismatic “exemplary prophet” in our contemporary time as well.

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