

Unification Founder's Body Lies in State as Thousands Gather to Say Goodbye

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Elected leaders, diplomats, clergy and academics from Korea and abroad are among 15,000 mourners who have gathered on Sept. 6, 2012 to pay their respects to Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the Founder of the Unification movement, according to a press release from the Tongil Foundation in Korea. The visitors gathered at the Cheongshim Peace World Center, a stadium complex in Songsan-ri, Seorak-myeon, Gapyeong-gun, Gyeonggi Province. Rev. Moon's body lies in state in a shrine at the Cheon Jeong Gung palace a short distance away on a mountain overlooking Cheonpyeong Lake.

The official visitors were welcomed by Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, Rev. Moon's successor, who began proceedings at 8:00 a.m., after which approximately 15,000 disciples and friends of Rev. Moon from all fields of life filed into the shrine to give thanks and to pray. These included 3,000 Japanese visitors came to pay their respects on this day alone. The Unification Church has also prepared shrines in regional church Headquarters buildings across Korea, as well as in mission countries worldwide, for guests to come and pay their respects.



The Wake at Cheon Jeong Gung



The Wake at Cheong Shim World Center

Numerous floral tributes expressing the condolences of various VIPs from Korea were on display in the shrine. Floral arrangements arrived from current heads of state, including President Lee Myung-bak, President Dioncounda Traore of Mali, President Johnson Toribiong of Palau and Prime Minister Ahoomey-Zunu of Togo, as well as former heads of state including former President Alfred Moisiu of Albania and former President Julio Maria Sanguinetti of Uruguay. Korean political leaders sending flowers included National Assembly Speaker Gang Chang-hee, Finance Minister Bahk Jae-wan, Unification Minister Ryu Woo-ik, Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Seo Gyu-ong, Floor Leader Lee Han-gu of Hannuri Party, and Chairperson Han Seon-gyo of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Broadcasting Committee.

Korean lawmakers who were present at the stadium included National Assemblyman Lee Jae-oh of the Grand National Party, National Assemblyman Jeong Byeong-guk of the Grand National Party, and National Assemblyman Kim Seong-gon of the Democratic United Party.



The Wake - Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the Chairperson of Seong Hwa Committee

Religious leaders paying their respects included Chairman Lee Hee-ho of Kim Dae-jung Peace Center, Head Executive Park In-gong of the Taego Order of Korean Buddhism, Spiritual Patriarch Dorim Beopjeon of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, and Head Executive Lee Hong-pa of the Gwaneum Order of Korean Buddhism.



The Wake - Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the Chairperson of Seong Hwa Committee

Leaders of commerce and industry included Chairman Yeo Sang-rak of SGI Korea (Foundation), CEO Shin Gyeok-ho of Lotte Group and CEO Cho Yang-ho of Hanjin Group.

The shrine prepared at Cheongshim Peace World Center was also visited Sept. 6, 2012 by members of the Seongnam Ilhwa Football Club, including Coach Shin Tae-yong and the Universal Ballet Troupe, who came in groups to pay reverence. Afterwards, Vice Chairman Kim Min-ha of the National Unification Advisory Council and former Director Yim Chae-jin of Public Prosecutions among other important personages came to pay their respects as well.



The Wake - Religious Leaders



The Wake - Visitors

The Cheongshim Peace World Center, where the Ascension (Seonghwa) will also be held, will receive guests to pay their respects until the Sept. 14, 2012, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. (6 p.m. on Sept. 14, 2012). Rev. Moon's residence and final resting place, known as the palace at Cheon Jeong Gung, where his holy remains lie in state, will be opened for three days from Sept. 9, 2012 until Sept. 11, 2012 to both believers and non-believers who would like to say goodbye to him and offer condolences to his family, according to the Tongil press release.

Press enquiries may be directed to the spokesperson for the Unification Church in Korea, Rev. Ho-yeul An, Tongil Foundation Public Relations Department