



Korean Sahmyook Vocational Training Institution, 2013.

Photo courtesy of Korean Sahmyook Vocational Training Institution.

Korean Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute

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Kuk Heon Lee graduated from Sahmyook University (B.A.), Newbold College (M.A.), and Sahmyook University (Ph.D.). From 1990 to 2009, he served as a pastor at Korean Union Conference. In 2010, he joined Sahmyook University as a lecturer and professor at the Theology Department. His research and teaching interests are in Church History. He wrote several books and published several papers on the subject. Currently, he is also the Dean of Planning at Sahmyook University.

Korean Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute (Sahmyook Gisul Hak-won) was a specialized technical education facility belonging to the Korean Union Conference. Formal vocational education began in 1969 when Yungnam Sahmyook Academy established a vocational class. In 1978, the Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute opened with government approval, and in 1984, it moved to Dongdaemun-gu (82 Mangwoo-ro, Dongdaemun-go, Seoul), the site of Seoul Adventist Hospital.¹ Until its closure in 2019, the Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute

produced more than 1,000 graduates.

Organization

In the 1960s, as modern industrialization progressed in Korean society, interest in vocational education increased among the nation's youth. Pastor Ok-jin Yoon, president of the Southeast Korean Mission, built a vocational education center and started a vocational class at Yungnam Sahmyook Academy in 1969, believing that Adventist young people should have the opportunity for vocational education.² The center taught its students such skills as metal painting, mechanical work, and welding, enabling them to obtain jobs after graduation.

The Yungnam Sahmyook Academy appointed Sung-ki Cho in charge of vocational education. He had been working as an engineer at the K2 U.S. Air Force Base in Daegu. Pastor Ok-jin Yoon asked him to serve as a technical educator for Adventist young people, and in response to the request, he volunteered to teach technology at Yungnam Sahmyook Academy.³

Sung-ki Cho headed the vocational program at the academy for 10 years. As it gained recognition in the local community, the Korean Union Conference promoted the establishment of a vocational training institute run by the Korean Adventist Church. Church leaders first sought to locate it at Daejeon in the center of Korea. However, they finally decided to form a full-fledged vocational institute at Yungnam Sahmyook Academy, where the vocational training center already operated. Accordingly, on July 2, 1978, the Korean Union conference opened the "Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute." Pastor Ok-jin Yoon became its first director.⁴

History of the Institute

When Ok-jin Yoon immigrated to the United States in 1979, Sung-ki Cho assumed charge of the institute.⁵ As the director, he focused on two goals. The first was to develop the institute into a true vocational training entity by allowing its students to obtain national technical certificates. The second goal involved expanding its resources. He purchased a building of 200 pyeong (661 m²) and equipped it with the necessary machinery. As a result, a study conducted in June 1983 acknowledged it as a well-designed facility.⁶

Sung-ki Cho, re-appointed as director at the twenty-seventh general meeting of the Korean Union Conference, moved the institution to the premises of Seoul Adventist Hospital in April 1984.⁷ The reason for the relocation to Seoul was to provide students opportunity to earn money for their tuition and to develop the school into an institution professionally recognized in the realm of high school education. The Sahmyook Vocational Training Center helped students raise tuition through the work they did in their studies and prepared an educational program to qualify them for high school graduation through broadcasting and communication courses. Sung-ki Cho devoted his entire life to the vocational training of young people.

On May 14, 1997, Director Sung-ki Cho died, and Pastor Bo-seok Eom became the third director of the institution. Bo-seok Eom worked hard to improve its educational environment. Through his efforts, the institute gained a practice room, lecture room, tool room, library, and lounge on October 22, 1998. And on September 26 of that year, a Vocational Training Institute Church was organized. During this period, the number of students remained at 30-40. In addition, the school developed additional offerings for indoor architecture and interior design. The training center also expanded to the second floor of its building.⁸

The twenty-first general meeting of the Korean Union Conference appointed Pastor Chun-seop Kim as director in May 2000. During his tenure, the Vocational Training Institute sent students to paint the headquarters of the Japan Union Conference. In addition, they painted classrooms at Taegang Sahmyook Elementary School and built houses at the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. They also went to Mindor Island in the Philippines during the summer of 2004 to construct a church hall.⁹ Through such activities, the training center students participated in both practical and volunteer projects.

On February 27, 2006, Pastor Chun-seop Kim retired, and Pastor Hak-bong Lee assumed the position of director. It was the thirty-seventh anniversary of the institute's founding. The school moved into new facilities on March 14, 2006. Now the students could receive lectures and practice in one place. However, since the building belonged to Sahmyook Health University, the institute rented it. In 2006, the vocational training institute consisted of about 40 students and six faculty members.¹⁰

In January 2007, the Southwest Korean Conference elected Pastor Hak-bong Lee as president, and Pastor Sung-gu Park assumed the role of director of the Vocational Training Institute. At this time, the number of students had reached 50, but the educational conditions needed improving, so a committee organized to study the further development of the institution. The Development Research Committee decided to erect its own facilities to house the Vocational Training Institute. In accordance with the resolution, the school completed its own building in October 2008, once again providing opportunity for institutional growth.¹¹ In January 2011, Pastor Sung-gu Park received an appointment to the pastorship of the Cheonho-dong Church of the East Central Korean Conference. As he moved to a local church, Dong-seop Shim became director of the vocational training institute. At that time, the number of students had decreased to 30.¹²

The thirty-fourth general meeting of the Korean Union Conference elected Pastor Young-tae Choi as director of the Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute in December 2011.¹³ During this period, the number of students increased to 40. Also, the institute completed another new building in 2013. Most of the students now went to college after leaving the institute, with about three students per year finding employment immediately after graduation.¹⁴

The thirty-sixth general meeting of the Korean Union Conference assigned Pastor Chi-yang Moon as director of the institute.¹⁵ During his term, a difficult problem arose, and on March 6, 2019, the Committee of Board of

Management decided to close the vocational training institute.¹⁶ The year 2019 marked the fortieth anniversary of the opening of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute. It was unfortunate that the institute ceased during such a meaningful time, but the Korean Union Conference had no choice. Changes in Korean society made it no longer possible to continue the school. During its 40 years, Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute graduated more than 1,000 students, and most of them have obtained a job or entered college.

Role and Position in the Country

Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute greatly contributed to training professional employees. As Korea became industrialized, it was necessary to develop vocational skills. The Korean Union Conference established the institution to meet those social needs. Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute was recognized because of its good facilities and programs as an exemplary vocational training institution.

Above all, the Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute became a center for training Adventist youth, enabling them to earn professional certificates. Not only did many receive technical training but also missionary education, and they actively participated in missionary service projects both locally and in other countries. The school also served as a special educational institution that practiced Adventist education in Korean society by striving to instill vocational and character development based on the educational philosophy suggested by Ellen G White. After closing the institution, the Korean Union Conference has been seeking new vocational training programs through the Madalphy Youth Training Center.

List of Directors

Ok-jin Yoon (1978-1979); Sung-ki Cho (1979-1997); Bo-seok Eom (1997-2000); Chun-seop Kim (2000-2006); Hak-bong Lee (2006-2007); Sung-gu Park (2007-2010); Dong-seop Shim (2011) Young-tae Choi (2012-2015); Chi-yang Moon (2016-2019).

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NOTES

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3. Ibid.
4. "A Report of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute," Minutes of the 26th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1978).
5. "A Report of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute," Minutes of the 27th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1983).
6. Ibid.
7. "A Report of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute," Minutes of the 28th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1987).
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10. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), March 15, 2006.
11. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), October 06, 2008.
12. "A Report of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute," Minutes of the 34th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2011).
13. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), January 26, 2012.
14. "A Report of Sahmyook Vocational Training Institute," Minutes of the 35th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2015).
15. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), January 28, 2016.
16. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), March 19, 2019.

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