

Korean People's Life Security in Her Geopolitical 'Destiny'

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Christian Missions in the Post-Reformation Combining Nationalism and Absolute Denominationalism

01. The Reformation was one of the ways which provided the birth of nation state combining nationalism and absolute denominationalism. The clash of nation states in the Europe had been expanded into the non-western world during the colonial period, and accordingly Christian missions followed their national flags. The colonialism was justified and theologized by the Western Christianity in the name of "white men's burden" and "manifest destiny". In this regard, the history of the Western Christian mission was unfolded with the two integrated projects, that is, Christianization and civilization, which were the two sides of the same coin. By Christianization the Western Christian mission tried to whiten the people's souls of the colonial world in the name of salvation, and by civilization to westernize the culture of the colonial world in the name of modernization. Within the colonial world it was natural that Catholics and Protestants, nationalized churches, their established and non-established governances, and mission boards worked for the interests of their nation states in a competitive way rather than the colonized people's interests, in spite of few individual exceptions. In Korea those colonial powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula and their mission boards performed the same manner for the sake of their nation states' geo-politico-economic interests, compromising with the Japanese colonialism; they gave the priority to protecting the security of mission boards rather than the Korean people's security and sovereignty. The marriage relationship between the 'imagined-reconstructed' nationalism and the absolute denominationalism has shaped the modern framework of the world Christian ministry in spite of some positive impact of the western-driven ecumenical movement.

Historical Unfolding of Imperial Domination over Korea

02 In a history of North East Asia, the Korean people have been destined to suffer the violent vortex of hegemonic struggle among imperial superpowers with series of foreign invasions and colonial dominations which have eventually led the Korean people into the tragic national division. In this historical unfolding the Korean people have 'innocently' suffered as refugees, as forced migrants, as direct war victims, and as the geometrically and ideologically divided people, and characterized as a "Queen of Suffering" in an 'arduous march' as shackled in the chain of the cold war-division system.

03 Being successful in the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan intended to block any other power from annexing or dominating Korea, resolving to end the centuries-old Chinese suzerainty. The Meiji reformers developed the *Seikanron*, i.e., the advocacy of a punitive expedition against Korea, recognizing Korea as a strategic foothold toward the Asian continent. Using the Tonghak Revolution in 1894 in Korea as a clue to intervene in the Korean affairs, the First Sino-Japanese War was brought out from July 1894, and in the end the Treaty of Shimonoseki, mediated and drafted with the former American Secretary of State, was signed on 17 April 1895. The Treaty recognized the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea from China. For the first time regional dominance in East Asia shifted from China to Japan.

04 Since the end of the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan feared Russian encroachment on its plan to create a sphere of domination in Korea and Manchuria. Russia demanded Korea north of

the 39th parallel to be a neutral buffer zone between Russia and Japan, though Japan proposed the 38th parallel. After negotiations broke down in 1904, Japan issued a declaration of war, and the war concluded with the Treaty of Portsmouth, mediated by the USA President Theodore Roosevelt. It was the first major military victory of an Asian power over a European one, transforming the balance of power in East Asia. Japan also expressed her interest in Korea by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in 1902.

05 In the aftermath of Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the Taft-Katsura Memorandum on 27 July 1905 created a basis agreement regarding the status of Korea and Philippines. The Japanese Prime Minister Katsura Tarō stated Japan's reasons for its making a protectorate of Korea, and the USA Secretary of War William Howard Taft had acquired the Philippines following its victory over Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898. As the result of all these Japan and USA-involved foreign affairs, Korea became a nominal protectorate of Japan in 1905, and was completely annexed by Japan in 1910, opening a 36-year Japanese colonialism until the end of the World War II in 1945.

Cold War-Division of Korean Peninsula with Two Koreas

06 In November 1943, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek met at the Cairo Conference, and being mindful of the enslavement of the Korean people, they determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent. Roosevelt raised the idea of a trusteeship over Korea with Joseph Stalin, and Stalin agreed but advocated that the period of trusteeship be short. On August 8, 1945, two days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Soviet Union declared war on Japan. Soviet troops advanced rapidly, and USA became anxious that they would occupy the whole of Korea. On August 10, 1945 two young officers, Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel, were assigned to define an American occupation zone. Working on extremely short notice and completely unprepared, they used a map of the National Geography to decide on the 38th parallel. They chose it because it divided the country approximately in half but would place the capital Seoul under American control. They might be unaware of that Japan and Russia had once discussed sharing Korea along the same parallel. USA and Soviet Union occupied two parts of Korea, placing sixteen million Koreans in the American zone and nine million in the Soviet zone.

07 In December 1945 at the Moscow Conference, the Allies agreed to take part in a trusteeship over Korea for up to five years in the lead-up to independence. A Soviet-USA Joint Commission failed to make progress of a unified administration due to increasing Cold War antagonism and to Korean opposition to the trusteeship. Already in May 1946 it was made illegal to cross the 38th parallel without a permit. The UN's decision to proceed with separate elections was unpopular among many Koreans because it could be a prelude to a permanent division of the country.

08 On May 10, 1948, the UN-supervised elections were held in the US-occupied South only. This led to the establishment of the Republic of Korea in the South on August 15, which was promptly followed by the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North on September 9. On December 12, 1948, the UN General Assembly declared ROK to be the "only lawful government in Korea." USA supported ROK, Soviet Union supported DPRK, and each government claimed sovereignty over the whole Korean peninsula.

Korean Peninsula Shackled in the Chain of the San Francisco-Panmunjom System

09 From 1948, seeing the division as controversial and temporary, the armed forces of each

side engaged in a series of bloody conflicts along the border. These conflicts escalated dramatically when the North invaded the South on June 25, 1950, triggering the Korean War. UN intervened to protect the South, sending USA-led force. While UN intervention was conceived as restoring the border at the 38th parallel, Syngman Rhee of ROK and UN Commander in Chief, General Douglas MacArthur, stated their intention to unify Korea. Despite of the warnings from People's Republic of China, the South Korean and USA-led UN forces crossed the 38th parallel, and China unleashed a counter-attack which drove them back into the South.

10 In 1951, the front line stabilized near the 38th parallel, and both sides began to consider an armistice. Because Syngman Rhee of ROK refused to accept the armistice and continued to urge the reunification by force, the Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953 by the three powers; USA-UN Command, North Korean People's Army, and Chinese People's Volunteer Army. In the course of negotiating an armistice line, the two sides agreed to create a four-kilometer-wide Demilitarized Zone. The war perpetuated the division of Korea and led to a permanent alliance between ROK and USA and a permanent USA garrison in the South, irreversibly fixing the cold war division system. No final peaceful settlement has been so far achieved.

11 Soon after the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement, the Mutual Defense Treaty between USA and ROK was signed on October 1, 1953. The Treaty commits the two nations to provide mutual aid and allows the USA military stations in ROK. The Treaty strengthens their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive and effective system of regional security in the Pacific area. The Treaty states that ROK grants, and USA accepts, the right to dispose the USA land, air and sea forces in and around the territory of ROK. The Armistice Agreement along with the Mutual Defense Treaty is said to mark the beginning of the Panmunjom System.

12 During the Korean War, the San Francisco Peace Treaty was officially signed mostly between Japan and the Allied Powers, and came into force on April 28, 1952, officially ending the American-led Allied Occupation of Japan and Japan's position as an imperial power. Immediately following the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Security Treaty between USA and Japan was first signed. It permitted USA to act for the sake of maintaining peace in East Asia, providing for the continued presence of US military bases in Japan. The San Francisco Peace Treaty along with the Security Treaty is said to mark the beginning of the San Francisco System.

USA's Abrogation of Armistice Agreement Paragraph 13(d)

13 The USA has tried to synchronize the San Francisco-Panmunjom System both as the backbone and frontline, in fact, a great division line, of the USA-leading cold war rivalry in East Asia. In September 1956, the USA's military intention to introduce atomic weapons into ROK was agreed by the USA National Security Council and President Eisenhower. USA unilaterally abrogated the paragraph 13(d) of the Armistice Agreement which prevented the introduction of nuclear weapons and missiles into the Korean Peninsula. In January 1958 nuclear armed Honest John missiles and 280mm atomic cannons were deployed to ROK, followed within a year by atomic demolition munitions and nuclear armed Matador cruise missiles with the range to reach China and Soviet Union.

14 DPRK responded militarily by digging massive underground fortifications resistant to nuclear attack and forward deployment of its conventional forces so that the use of nuclear weapons against it would endanger ROK and USA forces as well. Further in 1963 DPRK asked Soviet Union and China for help in developing nuclear weapons, but was refused. The current issue of the denuclearization of Korean Peninsula should be critically reconsidered from the

perspective of this historical unfolding of the USA's cold war colonialism and its strategical offence against DPRK.

People's Life Security in Crisis under the Cold War-Division System

15 The 1945 division of the Korean nation was the most undesirable historical consequence of the end of the World War II. It was the most reckless compromise between USA and Soviet Union based on a short term tactical expediency rather than a long term strategic vision for the suffering people under the Japanese colonialism. It embodies the most painful remnant of the ignominious ideological political turbulence of the Cold War Era. Painfully analyzing its historical root-causes, Korean churches have prophetically denounced the division as a social and geopolitical 'original sin' of the Korean nation, i.e., the structural violence and fundamental stumbling block against enhancing people's life security.

16 During the last 65 years of maintaining the San Francisco-Panmunjom System as a cold war-division system, i.e., a 'negative' peace system with the absence of overt violent conflict such as war, the cold war-oriented two Korean regimes and the superpowers surrounding the Korean Peninsula have escalated the inter-Korean tension for their own hegemony sake. They have devised various forms of structural violence, strengthening the government-centered nation state security system and policy at the expense of people's life security. People in the North and South have become antagonistic strangers against each other, and ideologically distorted and collectively marginalized in the world system.

17 As result, the Korean Peninsula has been now sunk into the quagmire of the global military weapon regimes of mass destruction on an apocalyptic scale. It has been proved that the San Francisco-Panmunjom System as an antagonistic symbiosis system cannot sustain the Korean people's security web of life. Without reconstructing the cold war-division structure, there will be no fulfillment of the liberation of the Korean nation and no full enhancement of people's life security. It is now crucial for people in Korea to transform the Armistice Agreement into a peace treaty and to reconstruct the San Francisco-Panmunjom System into a North East Asian common peace and security system, so that we may enhance a people- and life-centric security system as a 'positive' peace system.

18 People's life security is the essential parameter for sustaining peace with justice, upholding human dignity and rights of all God's people, and cultivating nature abundantly in the whole Oikoumene. People need to critically consider the existing gap between people's life security and the central role of state and its institutions in the maintenance of national security and its actual impacts on people's life security. During the last 70 years, people in Korea have found themselves in the structurally subordinated situation devised and enforced by the cold war-division system and its regimes. In the cold war-division situation, both the North and South Korean state regimes not only fail to fulfill its security obligations for people, but also become the principal perpetrator of violence against their own people using the protection of their system as a pretext; among the countless incidents we may point out some people's epics such as Jeju April 3rd Incident in 1948, Incidents of National Guidance of Alliance (Bodo-League) in 1950, Nogu-en-ri Incident in 1950, April 19 Revolution in 1961, Kwangju Democratization Movement in 1980 etc.

19 On the basis of their experiences during the 3-year division period and the 3 year Korean War, the Korean churches have deeply internalized cold war consciousness and recklessly developed her own anti-communist and pro-USA theologies so that some of them actively participated in the state violence against people in the name of a god of anti-communist ideology and of USA as the 'chosen' people. However it has been also true that the ecumenically oriented

churches such as the member churches of the National Council of Churches in Korea have sacrificially engaged in the human right democratization movement and the reunification movement realizing that in the context of the Korean Peninsula the democratization and reunification are two sides of the same coin.

20 People should no longer be seen as passive victims of the cold war-division system and its insecurity and as its tamed establishmentarians. Peace is too important to leave to the generals and nation states. People both North and South must play inter-subjectively a crucial role in stabilizing inflammatory situations and in preserving the foundation of justice and peace, and healing and reconciliation.