

EXCURSUS 1

Lee Jin-hie on
FREEDOM & DEMOCRACY IN KOREA

There is abundant evidence that the present international order is undergoing basic structural change. It seems clear that the political influence of Western Europe has entered a period of decline, while at the same time the Pacific Basin appears to be gaining in strength and influence. Furthermore, while there is a worsening of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, we see an increase in cooperation between the United States, China, and Japan. These changes in relations among the major powers directly influence Korea, located in an area that is particularly sensitive to international developments.

There are parallels between great power relationships and those of Korea with the outside world. For example, the Republic of Korea is pursuing a policy of cooperation with the U.S., China, and Japan. North Korea, on the other hand, attempts to take advantage of the confrontational policy of the Soviet Union and is consciously intensifying tensions with the South. It is therefore quite clear that one of the imperatives in preserving the peace and security of East Asia and the prosperity of the Pacific Basin is to deepen mutual understanding between the United States and Korea, especially at this juncture in international relations. Like the international order, the Republic of Korea is at a turning point.

A hundred years ago Korea entered upon a tragic course that eventually resulted in the loss of its independence. The Korean nation and people were a virtual shipwreck, a battered hulk aimlessly adrift in the currents of international power politics. The Western powers had emerged from the Industrial Revolution as modern nations intent upon enriching themselves and increasing their strength. Japan had successfully adopted Western methods and techniques. And all of these nations had imperialistic or geopolitical designs

on Korea. This had the effect of forcing Korea into the rapidly changing international order of East Asia. Korea's traditional isolation ended at this point.

The unfortunate fact is that at precisely the time it was being subjected to international pressures, the Kingdom of Korea had entered a period of internal decline. There has been a persistent tendency to blame the *yangban* (aristocratic) ruling class of Korea for all the problems and conflicts of the last years of the Choson period. This, I think, is too harsh. It is not correct to say that no effort was made by this class to overcome national difficulties. Whatever efforts they made, however, failed for a variety of reasons. Even without examining them in detail here, I would insist that the fairly ruthless international pressure exerted on Korea at that time of great internal discord and weakness contributed as much to our problems as the failures of the *yangban* class.

China, Russia, and Japan were constantly engaged in efforts to gain control of the peninsula. And just when the ruling dynasty was at its weakest, Korea became the battlefield of the Sino-Japanese War. Its downfall was, thus, hastened even more. The culminating tragedy, in Korean eyes, was its annexation by Japan in 1910. The anti-Japanese tradition, which is sometimes highly visible in the Korean national character, is a direct result of the cruel nature of the occupation. The occupation had another result: It implanted in the Korean mind the idea that national independence and sovereignty rank highest in the scale of national values. This is a lesson that many other former colonized nations have learned as well.

The idea of freedom and independence held by Koreans should, therefore, be understood chiefly in this historical context. If it sometimes appears to be quite militant and incapable of modification, Americans above all can understand why. It is a kind of fierce, Patrick Henry-type of idea. Traditionally, when a Korean speaks of freedom, he almost always means freedom from foreign domination. And it was quite common for Korean freedom fighters to quote Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" when they gathered together.

In the Korean view, liberty and freedom mean that the



independence of the Korean people is guaranteed by the independence of the Korean nation. It cannot be otherwise. And only when this independence is guaranteed can our democracy be enriched by other kinds of freedom for everyone.

The idea of freedom has grown even firmer since Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945. It was strengthened by the partition of Korea in 1948 and by the Korean War. It is also strengthened and reaffirmed on a daily basis by the no-peace, no-war confrontation between North and South. This freedom of nationalism, as we might call it, is the traditional aspect of the Korean aspect of freedom. But there has grown up in the meantime another concept of freedom, one that places the freedom of individuals before the independence of the state and the existence of the people. The idea of democracy is based on this notion of freedom. The fact is, the political history of the Republic of Korea has been characterized by a conflict between these two ideas—the traditional, nationalist notion of freedom and the concept of pure democracy.

When World War II ended and Korea was liberated from the Japanese, it appeared at first that the long Korean national tragedy had ended. Unfortunately, since the liberation Korea has experienced one calamity after another, almost as if Pandora's box had been opened. The division along the 38th parallel took place in 1945. Three years later the Communist North Koreans proclaimed a regime that challenged the internationally recognized authority of the Republic of Korea as the only legal government of the Korean people. Two years later Kim Il-sung, with the backing of the Soviet Union, attacked the South and the Korean War began. The result was millions of casualties and widespread physical destruction. And it is not too much to say that the armistice in 1953 ended only the shooting phase of the war.

Since the armistice, constant and serious military provocations by the North have kept the peninsula only inches away from the threshold of a new war. The North has refused to disavow its intention to communize the peninsula by force though it has been thirty years since the armistice. The shooting down of a KAL jetliner by Soviet Air Defense Forces and the barbaric attempt on the life of the Korean head of state when he was visiting Rangoon eloquently demonstrate the vulnerability of the present armistice system. Should anything have happened to President Chun Doo Hwan in Rangoon, the North Koreans would have made full use of any vacuum that resulted. They would have re-invaded the South.

All of this keeps the Korean people in a state of high anxiety. This is made even worse by the behind-the-scenes negotiations of the great powers. It is understandable that we should look at any diplomatic negotiations among more powerful nations—and involving us—with great suspicion. We have bitter memories of having been victimized and betrayed by the political interests of world powers. It is also quite understandable that, with such historical experience, we should place national security at the top of the list of national priorities. However, this security-consciousness of the Korean people has not resulted in military preparations only. It has also had a profound effect on Korean economic development.

There is a powerful consensus between the Korean Government and Korean industrial leaders that national security depends not only on a strong military base but also on

successful development of the economy, as seen primarily in high annual rates of growth. Korea's success in becoming a model of economic development since the early 1960s is based on this commitment to security through development.

There is also an economic component in the quest for political development in Korea. Western democracy failed to take root in Korean soil largely because of the nation's economic and social weakness and vulnerability after World War II. But there is no doubt that the practical steps taken since the early 1960s to achieve modernization, to rid ourselves of poverty and disease by enlarging economic benefits for all, and to realize national unity by reducing conflicts among social classes and various geographic regions of the country have been given widespread popular support. Thanks to the sustained economic development made possible by the wide national consensus in favor of it, Korea emerged as a newly industrializing nation in the mid-1970s. And here is the first point to make when all this is viewed against the backdrop of Korean history: This national consensus and the development of national strength has enabled the Korean people to overcome problems resulting from international political turbulence. In other words, external factors do not now impinge as significantly upon Korea as they did during the years of decline prior to the Japanese annexation. And with increased affluence and the stabilization of Korean society has come increased individual freedom.

The modernization effort that began in the early 1960s has resulted in the pluralization of Korean society. Various new social organizations have begun to demand greater political participation. The younger generation did not go through the trauma of the loss of independence or the Korean War and has grown up with the affluence brought by modernization. Periodically, its members have resorted to unlawful collective action involving demands that emphasize personal freedom. This has caused social confusion. Such are the legacies inherited by the Korean Fifth Republic, which was inaugurated under the leadership of President Chun Doo Hwan.

President Chun has presented to the people the goal of an advanced nation characterized by democratic stability, development, and civic consciousness. Such a goal was impossible to achieve during the war years of the 1950s and the rapid development of the '60s and '70s.

Several things seem obvious. Industrialization and economic development must be pursued as top priorities in order to build an advanced Korea. As long as economic wealth is not secured and its distribution is unbalanced, individual freedom is nothing but empty, philosophical jargon. Democracy works only in countries with a broadly based and healthy middle class. And yet a stable democracy is not achieved by strengthening the middle class alone. It is also necessary to minimize social conflict. This is a lesson we learned from the political decay of the second half of the 1970s. The chief question in this context becomes one of how to broaden the national consensus. The president sees the peaceful transfer of power as the primary way to bring this about.

The Republic of Korea has never experienced a peaceful transfer of power in the forty years of its constitutional history. One of the most important reasons for this was the period of protracted rule by one person. Prolonged one-man rule inevitably brought about unreasonable and unfair po-

itical maneuvering. This caused unstable political conditions and even deeper social conflict.

What is urgently needed now is the rock-solid unity of the Korean people and their strong faith in the aims of the Fifth Republic. The full political and national development of Korea will be guaranteed only when national unity and social solidarity have been fully established. What is also urgently needed is the further strengthening of American-Korean relations. This means not only the strengthening of our mutual security system but also an increased understanding between us in the political, social, and cultural fields.

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EXCURSUS 2

Charles MacCormack on A NATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

Today, H. G. Wells's admonition that "history is a race between education and catastrophe" is more than ever a call to action. At a time when hundreds of billions of dollars are being spent on armies and weapons, our relative ignorance of peace-making and peace-keeping is everywhere evident.

In the context of our central role in maintaining world order, the efforts in the United States to create a National Peace Academy can only be applauded. The notion of an academy for peace analogous to the military academies but focused on avoiding rather than applying the use of force is a clear and attractive one. Nevertheless, given the relatively limited amount of funding that will be available even under the best of circumstances, there is reason to question whether a new academy, requiring facilities, faculty, and staff, is the most productive way to promote peace research, education, and training.

The peace and conflict resolution field in the United States is marked by a number of factors that limit its effectiveness. It is fragmented into hundreds of small projects, organizations, movements, and programs that lack critical mass and common focus. Much of this activity tends to be sporadic and discontinuous. Public concern, temporarily mobilized by events such as the Vietnam war or the current breakdown in U.S.-Soviet arms talks, subsides when the immediate crisis ceases to be front-page news. These efforts are almost universally underfunded, leading to an absence of professionalism, an inability to sustain initiatives over time, and a preoccupation with the need for fund raising that can overwhelm program activities.

The scarcity of financial resources also makes it difficult for bright, practical young people to contemplate serious careers in the peace field. Where are the jobs going to be? How reliable and diverse are the employment opportunities? What is the potential for upward career mobility? Take an example from my own organization. The Experiment in International Living's School for International Training concentrates primarily on preparing highly motivated young people for international service careers. Although we have

a concentration in peace studies and the field is of great interest to our students, most of them choose to focus their academic work and their career plans in such sectors as development administration and international education, where the institutional base of the field is more organized and the employment opportunities greater.

The problem with the National Peace Academy is that it will not focus directly on producing a creative, catalytic, galvanizing impact on the field as a whole. Just to provide the necessary facilities, administration, and infrastructure for a new world-class education and training institution will utilize a significant portion of the budget. And such an institution may well draw off some of the best leadership, faculty, and trainers from existing peace-oriented organizations, who will see an opportunity for greater visibility and job security. The academy may find itself in competition for tuition and trainees with existing organizations, such as the International Peace Academy. In sum, it may become another autonomous, underfunded organization whose need for additional resources simply puts it in competition with the many organizations already doing similar work.

A better model would be a National Endowment for Peace, its mission and programs analogous to those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the National Endowment for the Arts. These two organizations also function in fields whose membership is extremely diverse, decentralized, and competitive and whose programs are usually underfunded and small in scale. Nevertheless, by strengthening the capacities of their entire sector as well as the best individual programs and organizations, they have introduced a missing overview and catalytic force into their fields. Rather than functioning as another competing, quasi-governmental entity, they build on the resources that are already there and bring them together in new and innovative ways. By "topping off" existing fixed costs, they also avoid allocating major portions of the budget to their own internal infrastructure.

Illustrative of the kinds of activities a National Endowment for Peace might support are some of the educational programs of the National Endowment for the Humanities, as described in its *Overview of Endowment Programs for 1984-85*:

- *Undergraduate Education:* Grants supporting costs associated with establishing or sustaining the disciplines of peace studies in a central role in undergraduate education and with achieving long-term institutional improvements. This includes improving introductory courses, promoting excellence in peace studies fields, or fostering coherence throughout an institution.

- *Elementary and Secondary Schools:* Institutes for teachers, institutes for principals, and collaborative projects bringing together school systems and universities; and planning grants for the development of syllabi, planning meetings, and so forth.

- *Exemplary Projects:* Grants to promote the development and dissemination of projects in peace studies that build upon the best work currently being done to utilize them more broadly as models.

- *Fellowships, Individual Grants, and Seminars:* Fellowships for individual scholars, researchers, or practitioners to attend existing courses and programs in peace studies; youth grants for out-of-school programs involving young people under the guidance of teachers and youth profes-