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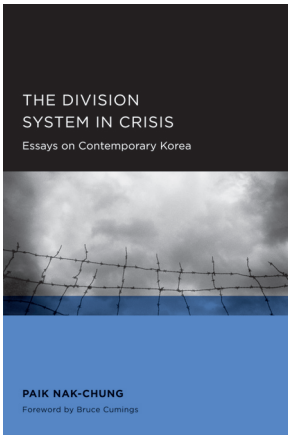
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# The Division System in Crisis

## Essays on Contemporary Korea

Paik Nak-chung

*Foreword by Bruce Cumings*

*Translated by Kim Myung-hwan, Sol June-Kyu, Song Seung-cheol, and Ryu Young-joo, with the collaboration of the author*

*Published in association with the University of California Press*

Paik Nak-chung is one of Korea's most incisive contemporary public intellectuals. By training a literary scholar, he is perhaps best known as an eloquent cultural and political critic. This volume represents the first book-length collection of his writings in English.

Paik's distinctive theme is the notion of a "division system" on the Korean peninsula, the peculiar geopolitical and cultural logic by which one nation continues to be divided into two states, South and North. Identifying a single structure encompassing both Koreas and placing it within the framework of the contemporary world-system, Paik shows how this reality has insinuated itself into virtually every corner of modern Korean life.

"A remarkable combination of scholar, author, critic, and activist, Paik Nak-chung carries forward in our time the ancient Korean ideal of marrying abstract learning to the daily, practical problems of the here and now. In this book he confronts no less than the core problem facing the Korean people since the mid-twentieth century: the era of national division, of two Koreas, an anomaly for a people united across millennia and who formed the basic sinews of their nation long before European nation-states began to develop."

**BRUCE CUMINGS**, from the foreword

**PAIK NAK-CHUNG** is emeritus professor of English literature at Seoul National University. **KIM MYUNG-HWAN** is professor of English at Seoul National University. **BRUCE CUMINGS** is professor and chair of history at the University of Chicago.

*The Seoul-California Series in Korean Studies, 2*

# THE DIVISION SYSTEM IN CRISIS

Essays on Contemporary Korea



**PAIK NAK-CHUNG**

Foreword by Bruce Cumings

*The Division System in Crisis*

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# Foreword to the English-Language Edition

Paik Nak-chung (Paek Nak-ch'öng) is a remarkable combination of scholar, author, critic, and activist. In our time he carries forward the ancient Korean ideal of marrying abstract learning to the daily, practical problems of the here and now, the real world. In this book he confronts the core problem facing the Korean people for the past sixty-two years: the era of national division, of two Koreas, an anomaly for a people united across millennia of time and who formed the basic sinews of their nation long before European nation-states began to develop. To Americans this may seem like someone else's problem, yet another tragic story from a distant country. But Americans first divided Korea, in the immediate aftermath of the atomic obliteration of Nagasaki. A charter member of the postwar "wise men" at the core of American foreign policy, John J. McCloy, instructed Dean Rusk and an Army colonel to go to an anteroom, find a map, and figure out a place to divide Korea. They chose the thirty-eighth parallel because it would put Seoul, the highly centralized capital city, in the American zone. So Dr. Paik's book is also for Americans, who plunged into an unknown political, social, and cultural thicket in Korea in August 1945 and have yet to find a way out. Nearly 30,000 American troops remain stationed there, constituting a core element of Korea's division system.

Why is it a division *system*? Paik was the first intellectual to grasp that both Koreas, North and South, participate in a symbiotic relationship designed not to bring about unification but to perpetuate division. These are two divided *states* within one nation, two highly organized but separate systems engaged every day in maintaining the status quo and enhancing their own status. Those who most vociferously rail against the other side are the true patriots, the ones most rewarded by the governments in Seoul and Pyongyang. Those who try to bridge the gap between the two

Koreas are the most vulnerable—for decades the surest ticket to jail and personal oblivion in the South was to praise the North, and prison awaits anyone who in the North praises the South, even today. International forces also reinforce the Korean division: Korea is a central nation in the postwar world-system, one of the critical pivots, nodal points, and arenas wherein the structure of world politics was formed and sustained, made and remade. The thirty-eighth parallel, the unsettled Korean War, and the DMZ still retain an imminent power to destroy the system, at least in Northeast Asia if not the world. (Dr. Paik returns frequently to the worst possible result of the division system—war—and its continuing possibility.) Again it is the United States that plays the greatest role here, as the ally, backer, coach, sometime quarterback, and virtual creator of the Republic of Korea. Supporters of U.S. policy in Korea would say that we have been most steadfast and courageous in sticking by the ROK for so long. Paik Nak-chung would say, you have helped to perpetuate the very division that you authored.

This is not, however, another anti-American diatribe from an ungrateful ally. In truth the United States appears infrequently in this book. This is a complicated account of the myriad ways that national division has insinuated itself systemically into just about every facet of Korean life, and how in spite of so many mountainous obstacles, it might be overcome. It illustrates how so much that happens in Seoul and Pyongyang is oriented toward or caused by the other side, often unconsciously, as both states find themselves caught up in an interdependent—or, one might say, co-dependent—relationship. This book is a humble and self-critical excursion into theorizing how and why a division that Koreans say they hate, one that had no original rationale apart from the dictates of the Cold War and was supposed to be temporary, could not only last so long but become the structuring armature around which so much else is organized. Dr. Paik explains the systematic mechanisms by which the division system produces deformations in both Koreas (perhaps much more obvious in the North, because it has long been the weakest side), and prevents both the ROK and the DPRK from being “self-complete” on their own terms.

A particularly fascinating passage also explains why South Korea has its own “division system”—coming from the stark regionalism that appears so frequently in elections, but which has its roots in the systematic development of the southeast in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, and the corresponding underdevelopment of the southwest. Here, too, Americans are involved, as they participated in and backed the suppression of a major rebellion in 1946 that began in the southeast but had its most concentrated

impact in South Cholla Province, in the southwest. This uprising is less well known than the determining Kwangju Rebellion of May 1980, which was used by General Chun Doo-hwan (Chŏn Tu-hwan) to finish his slow-motion coup d'état, and which convinced an entire generation of young Koreans that the United States supported dictators rather than democracy. Once Korea democratized in the 1990s the key southwestern leader, Kim Dae-jung (Kim Tae-chung), was elected president and not only pursued a deep reconciliation with the North but also found many ways to reconcile southerners with each other. In many ways his tenure in office and that of his successor, Roh Mu-hyun (No Mu-Hyŏn), brought the southwest back into the Republic of Korea.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) this unfortunate history, Westerners will learn much more in this book about the domestic, internal struggles of Korea, which, after all, are the main concern of all Koreans. Dr. Paik does not shrink from showing us a people who are both victims and perpetrators, the strong and the crippled, and ultimately the only realistic source for overcoming the division system—for if Koreans don't care enough about their sundered country to bring it together again, surely no one else will. En route he also deals with popular movements, issues of class and ethnicity, and gender discrimination, which also have their determinate effects on the division system. In this way great events—the Korean War, the Kwangju Rebellion, the 1987 people's movement for democracy, and the North Korean atomic bomb test on October 9, 2006—appear in a new light, each one idiosyncratic in its own right, but each one impossible to imagine without the national division. Dr. Paik uses this history to show why the best example of overcoming division—Germany in 1989—cannot be a model for a Korea with a very different background.

Transforming Korea and making it whole again is also something that can contribute to the transformation of the world-system, as Dr. Paik shows time and again, because the fault lines of global division—strategically, socially, and economically—run through Korea, with its promontory position in the Cold War, its “two Koreas” that chose diametrically opposite paths as postcolonial states, and the challenges of globalization—which the North long rejected, to its detriment, and the South long embraced in a path that generated rapid growth and a severe crisis every decade (the early 1970s, the early 1980s, the late 1990s, and the global financial crisis that is still ongoing as of this writing). The ROK's dreams of “entry into the advanced nations” still seem impossible within the division system; instead the South Korean model of growth came *out* of that system and still limits the future of all Koreans. If Korea were unified its

population would rival that of unified Germany and its GNP would soon match that of Italy or France, but so long as the division lasts that cannot happen, and neither Korean state can be either authentically socialist or a genuine liberal democracy. In particular North Korea could not maintain its paterfamilias patriarchy without the national division, something that also gives a kind of immanent and permanent power to the South Korean right wing.

Perhaps Paik Nak-chung's most refreshing perspective comes with his discussion of divided values and how to overcome them. To some extent he invokes Korea's long Confucian heritage in urging "a wise combination of personal self-cultivation and collective action," but also its neglected Buddhist past and present: these teachings can establish self-awareness and also a "spirit of grand accord [*taedong*]," a term that returns us to the days when the national division first occurred in the 1940s, with many calls on all sides of Korea's political spectrum for a *taedong tan'gyŏl*, or unity through a grand accord. But when we examine these virtues, we also come to understand that he exemplifies them in his own person: his long career as a professor in the English department at prestigious Seoul National University, his continuous participation in the popular politics of his time, his probity and his ethical concerns growing out of a careful self-cultivation, and, in the end, his wisdom.

Bruce Cumings  
March 2009

# Foreword to the Korean-Language Edition

If there is such a thing as a division system on the Korean peninsula, it would be hard to deny that it is in a severe crisis. North Korea for many years has been failing to fulfill the basic task of feeding its population; the crisis in the South that culminated in the IMF bailout,<sup>1</sup> though not so serious as that in the North, is bringing forth unprecedented plights, suddenly turning a much-boasted rapidly growing economy into one of negative growth, accompanied by skyrocketing mass unemployment, bankruptcies, and crime.

I try to argue in this book that these crises on both sides are no mere coincidence but signal the shaking of the “division system,” and that they represent a more fundamental crisis stemming from a situation in which those systems-management or development models adapted to a solidly sustained division system will no longer do, either in the South or the North. Of course, this predicament across the whole Korean peninsula is not necessarily unwelcome for those who have contended that the division system is something to be surmounted. But even in the course of dismantling an unjust social system, we must try to avoid unnecessary loss or injury to lives; moreover, it is possible for the breakdown of a bad system to be followed by a worse one. That is why I have been emphasizing that we need an in-depth understanding of what the division system is, and how it works, if we are to make a proper breakthrough and overcome it in a desirable way. Recent events, including the IMF bailout, add urgency to such thoughts.

Responses in the South at the moment are focused first of all on economic recovery. This is natural enough. Ideas for alternatives such as overcoming the division system and transforming the world-system constitute an important part of this book, but I also remain consistently wary

of the kind of idealism that disregards the immediate task of maintaining a certain level of competitiveness in the capitalist world market and people's living standards. As a result, my views may look too radical in some respects but too compromising in others, giving rise to conflicting responses or even confusing impressions. I am convinced, however, that this is an unavoidable burden for the middle-of-the-road position, which I have reached after due reflections, and which in my view remains valid until the division system is surmounted.

At any rate, I readily agree that, at least for South Koreans, economic recovery, or restoring a reasonable rate of economic growth, represents the central task in coping with the present crisis. But it is both plausible in principle and in accordance with the actual tendency of world capitalism that a "recovery of the economic growth rate" should end up with continuing mass unemployment (though somewhat less serious than this year's), drastic downgrading of national self-reliance, and even the possibility of additional financial crises. We have only limited resources to counter that tendency. Korea has few natural resources, and its much-touted "quality labor force" is applicable mainly to the early phases of industrialization; in the present reality, however, that quality is rather something yet to be attained. Nor can it be attained merely by deciding "to pursue democracy and the market economy simultaneously," as the new administration of President Kim Dae-jung<sup>2</sup> has proposed. It will be done only if the overcoming of the division system, which will have historical significance both for the Korean nation and for the whole world, should indeed provide a driving force for democratization and adaptability for the market economy as well, hence providing a quality labor force, managerial competence, and capacities for self-rule such as are not to be easily created elsewhere. What we need is our own brand of "coping with the IMF situation," which, though concentrating immediate efforts on economic recovery, directs the specific contents of that recovery toward the longer-term project for overcoming the division system and, on an even longer term, envisions an epoch-making civilizational change via the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

To put forth such an agenda is the task of intellectuals, artists, and activists. For policy makers in the narrow sense of the word, it is enough if they show dedication and professionalism in their endeavors for economic recovery. As for political leaders, it would be remarkable enough if they remember to stress—supposing they keep doing so to the end—"democracy" alongside "the market economy," and even more so if they have visions as well for the reconciliation and reunification of the two

Koreans. However, in view of the fact that realities, not personal wish, are what moves a political leader, the future of countless human beings, including Koreans, will obviously depend upon how far our practice for overcoming the division system can deepen, and how widely that project may become rooted in people's lives.

When I published a collection of essays with the title *The Path of Practice for Transforming the Division System*<sup>3</sup> four years ago, I hoped that it would serve as an occasion for me to move away a little from the main stage of this particular discourse. Not that I meant to wash my hands of all future debate, but I did hope that active interventions by more knowledgeable experts would relieve me from the burden of coping with what is not my specialty. In fact, we were fortunate enough to have some productive discussions, and it is pleasing to see, after much futile debate on whether the term needs to be used at all, the expression "division system" gaining considerable currency, thus leading to a fuller examination of the nature of Korea's divided reality. However, on this occasion of publishing another collection of essays on the topic, I cannot avoid mixed feelings, and I pause to ask myself whether I am not exaggerating the timeliness and validity of a discourse of which I have been the main proponent.

Such self-questioning is all the more inevitable because the financial crisis has turned into objects for reexamination numerous discourses deemed beyond doubt until quite lately. My conclusion, which indeed may be a delusion on my part, was that precisely now, and before it was too late, I should present these essays with all their imperfections and ask for a renewed public debate. With some trepidation I beg the readers to judge independently whether I have made the right decision.

The above-mentioned book represented a more rudimentary discussion of the division system, but since each essay in that book was dictated by a specific occasion, many people remarked that it was not easily accessible to uninitiated readers. I prepared the first chapter of the present volume more or less mindful of such remarks. In addition, the exclusion of essays not directly connected with the topic of the division system may also help. I must, however, make plain in advance that readers would find nowhere, neither in the first chapter nor in any other, a systematic summary of my whole argument or a neat answer to, for example, the question, "What is the division system?" Regardless of my ability to provide something of the sort, part of my purpose in discussing the division system is to show that we must free ourselves from the obsession for finding "the correct answer." Such obsession certainly is not confined to the issue of the division system,



but I believe that the crucial part of the project for overcoming the division system consists in willingly undertaking efforts for self-exploration and self-renewal, based upon a keen recognition that the very consciousness of those who believe they have the correct answers for overcoming the division is seriously distorted by that system.

Chapters 1 and 2 make up Part I. I wrote chapter 2 while watching the process of the IMF bailout. Both chapters are intended the better to engage readers relatively unfamiliar with my topic. Part II arranges in more-or-less chronological order essays written after the publication of the preceding volume. There are some overlappings in my discussion. Aside from the impossibility of removing them altogether, I thought it would not be meaningless to let the readers trace the unfolding debate, in which I invested considerable pains. Unless stated otherwise, therefore, revisions have been limited to minor corrections. That many of the pieces are highly polemical has meant more to me as reward and satisfaction than anguish. Though we should avoid needlessly hurting each other, it is my conviction that, for anyone who has taken up the critic's pen in any field, a certain amount of polemicizing is both a duty and a way for seeking accord. In this respect, I always feel special personal gratitude to those who gave opportunities for debate.

There come to mind, of course, many other faces and names deserving thanks. But this book I would like to dedicate to my children, including my son-in-law. By now even the youngest has grown old enough so that each has his or her own point of view and will respond differently to what I have to say. At any rate, they belong to a generation sure to see reunification, and I give this book to them as representatives of a generation upon whom it will greatly depend whether that reunification will be at the same time a genuine overcoming of the division system.

Finally, I would like to commend and thank Mr. Sin Ch'ae-yong of Changbi Publishers, who has done editorial and other chores, for his patient and meticulous professionalism.

*Paik Nak-Chung*  
May 1998

# Preface to the English-Language Edition

The original Korean edition of this book was published in 1998. That is quite a long while ago for a book addressing topical issues. Moreover, it dealt mainly with South Korea and the Korean Peninsula, distant enough in geographical location, and perhaps also in interest, from most English-speaking readers. Given these facts, authorial vanity alone cannot justify the issuing of an English version at this late date; so let me now begin by trying to give my sense of the work's continuing relevance, and by recounting how the project came to be conceived and then so unconsciously delayed.

The essential question for the readers would be what value the contents of the book still hold after so much change has taken place in the real world. The formidable weight of that question may be surmised by going over some of the major developments in Korea over the past thirteen years.

A true watershed in the history of inter-Korean relations took place in June 2000 when the top leaders of the North and South, meeting one-on-one for the first time since the country was divided in 1945, produced the June 15 Joint Declaration. The breakthrough was followed by a speedy progress in U.S.-DPRK (North Korea) relations in the autumn of that year, but the momentum was lost and the whole process reversed by the election in the United States of George W. Bush.

South Korea itself has seen two new presidents since then (and the death of two former presidents in 2009). After Kim Dae-jung, the reformist Roh Mu-hyun came into office in 2003 and did manage to contribute, though with ups and downs, to the improvement of inter-Korean relations by helping to produce the September 19 Joint Communiqué of Six Parties in 2005 and bringing off the second inter-Korean summit meeting in October 2007. But another reversal, much like what happened during

George W. Bush's first six years, took place when Lee Myung-bak (Yi Myŏngbak) took power in early 2008.

Meanwhile, after the first nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula was resolved through the Geneva Agreed Framework in 1994, the world has seen two more such crises. The crisis of 2005 led to the first nuclear test by North Korea in 2006, which was more or less resolved by the six-party agreements of February and October 2007 regarding the shutdown and "disablement" of North Korean nuclear facilities. The latest (or "third") nuclear crisis witnessed Pyongyang's second bomb test (May 2009) and a sharp confrontation between, on the one hand, North Korea and the United States under the new Obama administration, and between the two Koreas on the other. But in the wake of former President Clinton's visit to Pyongyang in early August 2009 and subsequent bilateral U.S.-DPRK and ROK-DPRK contacts, the situation seemed to be undergoing another thaw. However, 2010 saw inter-Korean relations reach possibly the worst crisis since the end of the Korean War, with North Korea's shelling of a South Korean island in November.

Naturally, none of these major developments received any mention in the 1998 book, although the present edition adds three chapters that cover some of the events up to December 2010. What, then, does the book offer that may merit readers' attention today?

For one thing, the brief recapping of the breakthroughs and setbacks over the past decade or so should bring to notice a curious phenomenon: for all the turbulence, the division of the peninsula has shown a surprising persistence. By the late 1990s it had already outlived the comparable partitions of Vietnam, Germany and Yemen, and today it seems to remain basically unchanged. Hence, if what was said about Korea's division in my book made any sense at the time, some of the observations at least must remain valid to this day.

The notion of the "division system" is the chief conceptual tool in my understanding of the reality in question. It finds in this reality a certain "systemic" nature, a durability worthy of a social system (though a "system" only in a loose sense), which calls for an analysis more systematic and holistic than studying each Korea as two discrete components of the world-system. While the concept cannot be said to have gained wide acceptance even in South Korean intellectual circles, I believe that we need it now more than ever if we are to properly understand the reality of contemporary Korea.

*The Division System in Crisis* was the second of my books to carry the term in the title,<sup>1</sup> and I have published (also in Korean) two more volumes

on the subject.<sup>2</sup> In none of them have I attempted a formal definition of the concept and I will not attempt one now, in part out of diffidence regarding my definitional powers but also because I tend, as a literary critic, to think of the division system not as some fixed entity to be pinpointed but as a “text” to be read against the larger background text of the world-system. I shall try instead to sketch its contour by determining what it is *not*, and by exploring the difference that this particular conceptualization may make in terms of praxis.

I have already indicated that the two Koreas should not be viewed as two discrete components of the world-system (whatever that term may mean). This implies that the confrontation between the Koreas represents a radically different situation than that between two “normal” states. In fact, the most important contradiction of the division system is found elsewhere than in the opposition of the two Korean states, whether this opposition is presented as an ideological battle (capitalism vs. socialism), a zero-sum struggle between two ruling groups, or enmity between two peoples. The existence of a common system encompassing the whole peninsula implies a certain congruence of interest (though admittedly with mixture of enmity and real difference) among a set of forces active throughout the peninsula, which militate against the larger population oppressed and alienated by those forces (a preponderant majority insofar as the system is an iniquitous one).

The discourse of the division system thus accomplishes a crucial shift from a state- or ideology-oriented approach to a people-oriented one. In practical terms it prompts closer attention to the frequent, even if not always conscious, collusions between the vested interests on either side despite the habitual rhetoric of confrontation. The rhetoric or even the actual aim of reunification can also serve to sustain the system by shifting the blame to “the others” (whether within the peninsula or without) who oppose the proclaimed goal of national unity.

This leads me to another important change accomplished by the discourse of the division system, namely, a turn toward a global rather than a narrowly national (and nationalistic) perspective. For the division system is conceived not as a self-enclosed social system but a subunit of the world-system, a local manifestation of the latter’s operation at a particular conjuncture of its history. The goal for the people opposing the division system thus becomes not unification as such, but a genuine overcoming of that system—in other words, building a better society across the entire peninsula (whether in the form of a unitary nation-state, a federal state, or a confederation of states) than is possible under the division system.

That task will still have to proceed within the parameters of the current world-system, but would represent a crucial step forward in building a better world-system and a better regional order.

Emphasis on the *sui generis* nature of Korea's division system also helps clarify the practical stance called for in dealing with it. If the division of Vietnam was essentially a phase of a decades-long war of national liberation and thus open to solution by one side's military victory, the partition of Korea was imposed by victorious Allied powers before the eruption of the Korean War. After three years of devastation and internecine slaughter, the war ended in a stalemate, thus solidifying the division into a much more stable structure than any established in Vietnam by the United States and its South Vietnamese collaborators. Germany's division also presents notable differences. On the one hand, it appeared for many years to be much more stable and was in fact far less brutal than that of either Vietnam or Korea. On the other hand, the division of Germany was abolished with remarkable swiftness once the East-West Cold War ended—precisely because it was largely a locus, albeit a crucial one, of the Cold War and had involved neither civil war nor any issues of Third-World popular struggle. Thus distinguished from the precedents of both Vietnam and Germany (and from the case of Yemen, too, which will be dealt with later in the present volume), Korea's division needs to be addressed in a correspondingly differentiated manner: not militarily nor in hasty annexation of one side by the other, but gradually, step by step, and by going through the intermediate stage of a loose union or confederation of the two existing states.

This was precisely the agreement reached by the top leaders of North and South in the Pyongyang summit of 2000. From the people-oriented perspective, the singular merit of such an agreement (embodied in Article 2 of the June 15 Joint Declaration) lies in its opening the space for ordinary people to participate in the reunification process actively and without being regimented. And at least in South Korea, there exists a vibrant civil society (in the wider sense, which includes the market sector) ready and willing to exploit that space for its own ends. The ends won't have been uniformly conceived and are bound to be pursued with varying degrees of efficacy by different participants. But precisely that open ground for competing forces, which in all probability the population of North Korea will increasingly enter in one form or another, gives "unification Korean-style" its "participatory" character.

It now remains to be examined whether the thesis of "participatory reunification" still holds at this juncture, with the "third nuclear crisis"

of the peninsula in progress and with the Lee Myung-bak government actively undermining much of the gains in South Korea's democracy and civic participation, as well as in inter-Korean relations. The short answer is yes, for two reasons.

The division system, which I judged in 1998 was "in crisis" and later (in my book of 2006) argued to have begun its period of instability since 1987, the year of nationwide demonstrations that brought military dictatorship to an end in South Korea, has if anything become even more dangerously destabilized in recent years. North Korea's nuclear tests and the attendant tension in the peninsula do not signify a return to the days of relatively stabilized confrontation; on the contrary, North Korea now has to resort to the extreme measure of nuclear armament to challenge the status quo that has become increasingly unbearable; South Korea, in its turn, provides abundant evidence that both peninsular and domestic tensions are approaching an intolerable level.

Obviously something in the division system has to give. But resolving the division in the manner of Vietnam, Germany, or Yemen still remains a sheer impossibility, while North Korea, with or without nuclear arms, will not be able to pursue a Chinese- or Vietnamese-style economic reform and development unless some inter-Korean political framework is devised to assuage its sense of insecurity in the face of its capitalist neighbor to the South (a problem that had been effectively resolved in the case of Vietnam and China by the time they embarked on "opening and reform"). All this rules out any quick solution by governments, whether of two Koreas alone or in collaboration with foreign powers, and necessitates the gradual, step-by-step process that is the precondition for civilian participation. In the meantime, the antidemocratic and Cold War tendencies of the new South Korean government are educating its citizenry to the inextricable inter-relatedness of domestic and inter-Korean politics and the need to carry forward its tradition of resistance and participation.

Many of these current themes I have set forth in this preface are, I believe, already present in one form or another in *The Division System in Crisis*, starting with the concept of the division system and the diagnosis of its "crisis" and including such ideas as confederation or union of two Korean states, the crucial importance of popular input in the reunification process, and the "middle way" as the most effective (and hence truly radical) route toward transformation of the entire peninsula. The first two chapters, constituting Part I, present the most recent observations at the time of the original edition, while the chapters in Part II bring together occasional pieces, many of them polemical interventions, that should give

some sense of contemporary Korean political history and South Korea's intellectual scene.

Three more pieces have been added as Part III for this English-language edition. Though far from giving a full update, they should bring in the issue of North Korea's nuclear test and some of the difficulties created under the Lee Myung-bak regime. In fact, readers unfamiliar with the Korean situation might even start with chapter 11, "Korean-Style Reunification and Civil Participation: South Korea's Civil Society as the 'Third Party' in the Korean Peninsula." For it conducts a sort of stock-taking in the wake of another watershed event, North Korea's first explosion of nuclear devices, and also provides elucidations of some crucial notions such as "Korean-style unification" and "participatory reunification process."

Chapter 12 represents a briefer speech at the eighth anniversary of the June 15 Joint Declaration and attempts to address the difficulties caused by President Lee Myung-bak's neglect of that declaration. In retrospect, however, even the cautious hope expressed in it for a relatively speedy rehabilitation of the inter-Korean reconciliation process must be judged overly optimistic. I do remain convinced that improvement in North-South relation is bound to come and probably is already under way, but I must confess I was at that time less than thorough in applying my own notion of the division system to the situation. The inextricable meshing of domestic and peninsular agendas, which represents one of the cardinal claims of that notion, effectively ruled out any serious "pragmatic" turn by a regime intent on reversing South Korea's democratic gains and serving the special interests of the rich and powerful. It is now more obvious than ever that the future of a "participatory reunification" hinges as much on civil society's political work at home as on its endeavors in the inter-Korean field.

Chapter 13 contains my reflections on Korea in 2010 on the eve of the New Year. Relations between the two Koreas entered a new phase of heightened antagonism after the sinking in March 2010 of the South Korean navy corvette *Chōnan*, then reaching the brink of war with the North's shelling of Yōnpyōng Island in November. The two incidents need to be considered in tandem, I argue, but not quite in the manner adopted by South Korean authorities, who lumped them together as double instances of Pyongyang's singleminded belligerence and lawlessness. While offering no conclusive theory of the still-unresolved Cheonan mystery, I try to apply some common sense and logic to the facts so far established, and in a way consistent with my conception of the division system in its terminal

crisis. My hope for a beginning of recovery of common sense in 2011 is also consistent with the tenor of the present book as a whole.

In closing I must offer some extenuating circumstances behind the long delay in the appearance of this English edition. When Korea was designated as the Guest of Honor Country for the 2005 Frankfurt Book Fair, the Korean Committee preparing for the event selected *The Division System in Crisis* to be included among "One Hundred Memorable Books of Korea" for a special exhibition there,<sup>3</sup> at a time when this book was still my newest. At the request of the Committee and with some financial subsidy as well, a crash translation program was launched, and a team of co-translators plunged into work with my ready blessing. As the time for publication drew near, however, it became obvious to both the translators and myself that this book, for one, was not suited to a crash endeavor. Then began an arduous process of collaboration between me and the translators, an unforeseen extra burden for all. For the Book Fair itself, we managed to assuage bureaucratic exigency by producing for exhibition a thin "sample binding" of the preface and the first chapter alone. By the time all the chapters were ready, more time had elapsed than anyone at first had anticipated, and the search began in earnest for a venue of publication with greater outreach than commanded by the Korean publishing house that had been part of the original project.

All the greater is my gratitude to the editors of the joint UC Berkeley and Seoul National University series and the publishers for accepting this book project. I naturally would like also to thank the three co-translators who have wrestled so heroically with a well-nigh impossible task, Ryu Yŏng-ju who did the same on chapter 11, and Bruce Cumings who generously agreed to contribute a foreword to this edition. I am also grateful to *New Left Review* for permission to reprint chapter 6. Thanks are due also to those friends and colleagues who have made my intellectual and practical work possible in the first place.

A note on the text: I have added some notes to the original essays to clarify some ideas for English-language readers. Notes by the translators are marked as such.

Paik Nak-Chung  
March 2011





## PART I



# 1. Making the Movement for Overcoming the Division System a Daily Practice

## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE REUNIFICATION MOVEMENT AND DAILY LIFE

The word “movement” implies an ambiguous relation with daily life. On the one hand, a movement should be composed of efforts to serve a purpose that is beyond the framework of the daily repetition of things; on the other, it is necessary for it to take root in people’s daily lives if it is to sustain itself as a movement. To be sure, certain kinds of movements are bound by “petty-bourgeois” goals, remaining mostly within the confines of quotidian life. And, depending on how you define it, “the quotidian” could signify the trivial and routinized, at odds with any truly meaningful life. But if we believe that creative changes can be brought about even through the daily lives of ordinary people, and, moreover, that no truth can be called a genuine truth unless it is realized in daily life, then a subtle tension and balance with what is quotidian must represent an inevitable burden to be borne by any historically meaningful movement.

The same goes for the reunification movement trying to unite the two Koreas. As division has persisted for more than half a century, it has taken root and “solidified” itself everywhere in the daily lives of Korean people. Hence, the kind of reunification that overcomes this solidified structure must entail changes that amount, in whatever way, to an epochal subversion of such daily lives. At the same time, this very solidification makes it impossible to accomplish the reunification of Korea unless it is pursued as a sustained movement rooted in daily life, insofar as we preclude such catastrophic changes as a war.

But it is open to question whether the reunification movement so far has acquired that delicate balance commensurate to these complex challenges.

The view, for example, that reunification would automatically follow if we keep up economic growth and bring “liberal democracy” to completion—even apart from the practical question of whether economic growth and democratic reform can go on forever without reunification—fails to show that subtle tension, since it uncritically accepts the given structure of daily life in South Korea. Specifically, it does not raise any fundamental question concerning the historical roots of our daily life or its moral legitimacy. In contrast, the more revolutionary projects that were very powerful in the 1980s and still retain some influence today have produced movements too far removed from the everyday lives and feelings of the masses—whether in the form of the reunification movement focusing on “national liberation,” or in the form of a movement for the systemic transformation of South Korea contending that a prior “people’s revolution” in the South would pave the way to reunification. Such projects could find little or only temporary resonance among the masses, as any movement that disregards daily life is bound to do.

As a result, we now find ourselves in a situation where the reunification movement in civil society has become very weak, while more substantial projects aimed at eventual reunification are mostly undertaken by the government and large corporations. In the 1997 presidential election, as in the 1996 National Assembly elections, specific proposals for reunification reaching beyond the well-worn logic of national security could not even find their way into the main issues bandied about by candidates. Only, as I shall discuss below, the aid campaign to alleviate the food crisis in North Korea has more or less settled itself as a popular movement; there are also signs among activists in the civilian reunification movement of attempting to break with the old practices that have become far too distant from popular sentiments. It is not yet clear, however, whether such phenomena will lead to making the reunification movement into a daily practice for the purpose of overcoming the division system.

No one can deny that we should have a more comprehensive and systematic view of the realities of division in order to make that movement a daily practice. Though opinions still diverge as to the usefulness of the concept “division system,” the term itself has come to be used by many. I myself have argued that it is necessary to adopt that concept if we are to understand more clearly the complicated (and structured) way the two different systems—that is, sets of social institutions—of the North and the South reproduce themselves in a curious entanglement with each other. But just as the term “system” in the expression “different systems of the North and the South” has a somewhat different denotation than it does in

“capitalist world-system” (which is a social system in a more proper sense of the term), this argument assumes that the term “system” in “division system” has yet a different meaning from either of the two.

In any case, a phrase like “the reunification movement for overcoming the division *system*” comes to acquire—unlike the tautology “the reunification movement for overcoming the division”—specific content only when the term “division system” goes beyond mere rhetoric and reaches the level of a *concept*. Furthermore, only then does it become clear that the phrase has a special relevance for the task of making the reunification movement a daily practice. As I have already said when touching on the relation between a social movement and daily life, a *system* signifies a social reality that to a considerable extent has taken root, for better or worse, in the everyday lives of the people living under that *system*. To say that the social reality of division has taken on a systemic nature is to say that with the solidification of the division this particular social structure has literally taken root in the daily lives of Koreans on both sides, and it thus has acquired a considerable level of self-reproducing power. This also means that even though the Korean peninsula was divided against the will of the overwhelming majority of Koreans, the kind of reunification that violently destroys people’s daily lives, such as by full-scale war—even apart from the high probability of any war leading to the use of nuclear weapons—cannot be a justifiable way for overcoming the division. At the same time, it suggests that since the self-reproductive power of the division system is a persistent and multifaceted one worthy of being called a system, any one-sided and superficial observation implied by phrases like “the confrontation between the two Koreas,” “the legacy of the Cold War,” or “imperialist domination of the world” will not be sufficient for an adequate grasp of that process. This is why I apply the concept of division system to our reality, even taking the trouble to add the proviso that the division system is a system in a unique sense.

## 2. THE CONCEPT AND DISCOURSE OF THE DIVISION SYSTEM AND THE REUNIFICATION PROJECT

It is hardly necessary to explain *ab ovo* the concept of the division system. Though I have never tried any systematic explication of it, I have commented on it often enough in numerous places.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, I am still not sure that I can construct a well-knit theoretical system; and, even if I could, I doubt if that kind of “model answer” would be conducive to thoughtful deliberations. So here I will confine myself to offering some

additional elaborations of the concept and a rough, far from comprehensive working plan for reunification as envisioned in the discourse of the division system. While it is undesirable as well as impossible to start with a preordained design in a creative task such as overcoming of the division system, some tentative sketch would be essential for putting the idea into practice; such a sketch, moreover, would in itself be part of defining the concept of the division system.

### *Three Different Dimensions of "System"*

I have said that the meaning of the term "system" varies according to which of the following we refer to: the world-system, the division system, or the respective systems of North and South Korea. This may invite the question of why we bring this confusion upon ourselves by dragging in the term "system" at all. But confusion to a varying degree is inevitable in our linguistic life, even in academic discourse. Actually, usage of the term is not confined to the three cases mentioned above. For example, the term "system" in the "Cold War system"<sup>2</sup> has a meaning different from that of all three. The important question, therefore, is whether reality itself makes it necessary to bring in the concept of system even at the risk of some confusion; if so, we should do our best to minimize the confusion by specifying the meaning in each case.

The theory of the division system assumes that the situation of the divided Korean peninsula cannot be satisfactorily explicated as long as we consider the two systems of North and South Korea separately or confine ourselves to only two dimensions of the word "system," that is, the world-system and the systems of the two Koreas. For the reality of the divided peninsula involves a certain degree of interdependence, as well as opposition, between North and South Korea, with foreign powers constantly exerting influence as well. In other words, a new dimension of "system" is introduced because things are so complicated and confusing that they require the notion of a division system to clear the confusion; the complexity of this task derives from the complexity of reality itself and is not the fault of the theory.

The fact that we are not arraying the three kinds of systems in a *linear* fashion may seem to increase the complexity, but actually it contributes to eliminating confusion. That is, the world-system, the division system within it, and the two "systems" that constitute the division system are realities belonging to different levels while having specific relationships among one another. We have said that of the three, the capitalist world-system corresponds to a social system in the proper sense of the term.

So what we call the capitalist system of South Korea, for example, is not a system complete in itself, but only a subcategory of the world-system, signifying something like "South Korea mostly equipped with capitalist institutions."

The question of whether the "socialist system" of North Korea represents another subcategory of the capitalist world-system entails intricate questions quite other than those relevant to South Korea. But if we admit that North Korea and even the former Soviet Union are countries where socialist revolutionaries took power and established certain (more or less) socialist institutions, rather than societies where socialism as such was realized, we can then agree that these socialist systems are not independent systems beyond the framework of the capitalist world-economy and its superstructure, the modern interstate system.

At any rate, the theory of the division system starts from the assumption that North Korea is not a self-complete system, either. Therefore, it disagrees with those lines of thought that see the main cause of the division in the "contradiction between the capitalist bloc and the socialist bloc," or in "the rivalry between two systems," "Bloc confrontation," it is true, played an important role in the birth of the division situation and in the course of its becoming a system, but bloc confrontation itself can be defined more properly as an East-West confrontation that is one phenomenon among many within the "Cold War system (or regime)," which in turn marks a phase in the history of the modern world-system, than as a contradiction between the two opposing world-systems. Therefore, even though antagonism between the two Koreas is obviously intensified by the fact that each advocates one of the opposing ideologies—capitalism (or liberal democracy) and socialism (or communism)—and each has constructed different politico-social institutions, we must realize that there is a peninsula-wide structure that exerts a more fundamental determining power on North and South Korea alike, mobilizing even that antagonism and opposition for the solidification of the division system.

Thus, neither of the two Korean societies can be a self-complete system, not just because they are merely subcategories of the world-system but because, unlike countries that have not been divided, the specific ways in which the two Koreas participate in the world-system and the determining power with which the latter operates in them are mediated by a more or less solidified structure constructed by the division. This makes inevitable the introduction of the concept of the division system. In other words, the operation of the "systems" of either North or South cannot be adequately explicated without the concept of division system as a middle term. This is



not merely an epistemological matter; it is also a matter of praxis in that on the Korean peninsula any effective movement is inconceivable separate from the task of overcoming the division system, whether the movement in question aims at reunification, or at amelioration within the bounds of a divided half, or—on a larger scale—at reform or revolutionary transformation of the world-system.

*The Practical Significance of the Discourse  
of the Division System*

It can no longer be overlooked that inadequate perceptions of the reality of the division have led to many failures in the sphere of praxis. Leaving aside the reunification movement in the narrow sense, even efforts to focus first on democratic reform within South Korea, for example, are often thwarted by problems involving the division. Forces related to the security apparatus say that this is only proper given the North-South confrontation, while democratization forces point out how apt the regime is to exploit that confrontation. There is some truth to both claims. But if we are to go beyond a vague common sense and accurately assess both the precise extent to which “national security” is a real problem and the degree to which it is likely to be abused, and thereby to cope with the situation effectively, we must recognize and scientifically clarify the subtle symbiosis, whether intended or not, between the national security interests of the two Koreas, even while they are in an extremely antagonistic relation. The co-existence and virtual collaboration of the so-called hardliners on both sides is an important factor in the self-reproduction of the division system.

If this is the case, then “division ideology” includes not only ultra-rightist anticommunism, denounced very often by dissident groups in South Korea. The “reunification above all else” doctrine, the official ideology of North Korea, can also function as a form of division ideology, serving to maintain the regime of the northern half and helping to reproduce the division system. And the regionalism quite prevalent in South Korea, though apparently unrelated to the division, may also be seen as a variation of division ideology.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, no movement can be successful—whether the democratic movement in the South or some possible future civic movement for internal reform in the North—without seeing through the North-South confrontation and identifying its underlying reproductive mechanism and its hidden workings, so as to check and undermine that mechanism.

In a different dimension, participation in the movements for the transformation of the world-system also vitally requires mediation of the

movement for overcoming the division system. Transforming the world-system is such a huge task that one simply gives it up as unimaginable or, conversely, falls into vain dreams such as triggering a world revolution by means of a working-class revolution in South Korea. But when we realize that the division system straddling the entire peninsula is a singular subsystem that composes an essential link in the present world-system, we can arrive at the awareness that undermining the division system is a much more meaningful achievement than building one more socialist system somewhere on this planet. Thus, to those many people in the world who long for the reform and transformation of the capitalist world-system, the reunification of the Korean peninsula emerges as their own cause. Moreover, people participating in this task will not be those old and narrowly confined groups expecting a "South Korean revolution" or a reunification led by North Korea, but vivid and broad-based forces who, while acting locally in their own daily lives, go on dreaming and pursuing a global transformation.

The movement for overcoming the division system thus serves as a middle term and a connecting link between a far-reaching transformation at the world-system level and internal reform movements at the level of each Korean state. And thereby not only the reunification movement but also much more far-reaching movements for the transformation of the globe can take root in the quotidian reality of specific reforms of South Korean society; conversely, here-and-now daily efforts to attain a better life will gain greater consistency and momentum by acquiring an outlook on the radical subversion of the daily fabric of human life. This is the way to bring together the dynamic forces of the three major lines cited at the beginning of this chapter—what we might call "liberalism," "national liberation," and "people's democratic revolution," respectively<sup>4</sup>—and, at the same time, to make possible a balance and subtle tension with daily life.

*A Plural Equation with Two States and a People Who Are Both One and Two*

Though the theory of the division system posits as the two major opposing terms those with vested interests in the division system, on the one hand, and the peoples of both Koreas as victims of the system on the other, it does not advocate a populist move that simply assumes both regimes as the enemy. True, there is a substantial symbiosis between the vested interests on both sides, including those with political power, and this symbiosis helps maintain the division. But, as it is a symbiosis of a very specific nature accompanying an antagonistic relation between North and

South, the interests of those two groups cannot completely coincide. In other words, the vested interests are as much divided between North and South as the popular forces, and neither regime can be an absolute evil or an absolute good. Of course, regarding an undivided country, too, it would be correct in principle to conceive the state as a field of conflicting forces, and, even in a phase when evil forces are exerting almost absolute power, one should avoid simplifying them as a permanent and absolute evil; but my point is that the relation between the reunification movement and each (or both) of the division regimes is even more complex and variable. One needs to judge and address from the perspective of the people, at each given point of varying political configurations, the precise degree to which each regime is impeding or facilitating the process of overcoming the division system. And since the "perspective of the people" itself, encompassing the sometimes conflicting interests of the two Korean peoples as well as conflicts among various social components within each society, has a complex character, the response to the two regimes and governments should be an intelligently flexible one, part of a high-degree equation with multiple variables.

Into this equation should be factored the operation of the world-system, of which the division system is a subgroup; nor should one neglect to include the neighboring great powers such as the United States, China, Japan, and Russia as important variables. Only, it should be noted that the roles of these powers also compose a high-degree equation, as they vary according to the world-historical conjuncture and political situation. For example, the United States as a hegemonic power within the world-system since the Second World War has exerted the greatest influence on the Korean peninsula and still maintains an obstinate stance inimical to a reunification on popular initiatives, but it is also in a position to feel the least threat from reunification by an agreement on the initiative of the powers-that-be of the two Koreas, provided the agreement leaves the capitalist world order unchallenged. Therefore, regarding the United States (though the same naturally goes for other countries as well), a reunification movement that demonizes it would fall short of the complex consciousness required for overcoming the division system.

One of the decisive factors that make the equation complicated is, as I have said above, the fact that the popular forces under the division system are also divided. This is not only due to the blocking of communication and exchanges between North and South. The more the reunification movement takes root in people's daily life, the more differentiated in their specific content will popular movements on each side inevitably become,

based as they are on very different daily lives. The theory of the division system, therefore, envisions an alliance between the peoples of the two Koreas around the common goal of a reunification that would maximize popular initiatives in their own lives, even while people on each side pursue separate agendas for internal reform or transformation as their immediate task. Thus they may start with different tasks, but their movements are bound to converge in one big stream toward the middle-term goal of overcoming the division system and the long-term one of transforming the world-system, for their different short-term agendas are basically derived from the operation of the same world-system and mediated by the peninsula-wide division system.

### *Confederation and After*

Then, how should this movement go about changing the two existing divided states? The state apparatuses of both Koreas are, to be sure, part of what should be overcome ultimately, in that each has a share in the maintenance of the division system. But, by that very reason, what is important from the perspective of the people is not the conquering victory of one state over the other but the *Aufhebung* of both by the enhanced power of the people. Therefore, it would be reasonable for popular movements on each side to start by accepting as a given reality the existing political order in which they find themselves. Similarly, it is necessary for them to admit that the state on the other side of the division also is an entity that residents living there need to accept, an entity that by its nature cannot be either an absolute evil or an absolute good. (To be sure, it is possible that at a certain juncture either of the two regimes becomes the primary target to overthrow.) This means accepting the coexistence of the two states, crippled as they are by the division, and starting from the proposition that the coexistence must be a *peaceful* one.

On the basis of this realistic attitude, the next task is to picture a state structure that will enable us to avoid not only a catastrophic collapse of the division system through a new war, but also other disasters almost as bad as the result of attempts to prolong the solidification of the division system indefinitely. This kind of state structure—a giant step toward reunification and yet a guarantee against sudden collapse of the division system—probably has to be a rather loose form of compound state, namely, a confederation.

As it is difficult for the two Koreas to reach any agreement, and much more so to carry out one that has been made, it may seem in vain to expect an agreement around state structure. But even apart from the fact that the

federal system the DPRK earlier proposed was called in the official English translation a “confederal republic,” and the “Korean National Community Unification Formula”<sup>5</sup> proposed by the South Korean government in 1989 contained a stage of confederation, we may note that a virtual agreement concerning confederation has already been reached between North and South. The simultaneous entry of North and South Korea to the UN in 1991 was a step more substantial than any joint communiqué in recognizing each other as an independent state; and the two mutually recognized governments planted a seed of confederation—in the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between North and South Korea, signed in December 1991 and in effect since February 1992—by defining the North-South relation as “not a relation between states but a special relation temporarily formed in the progress toward reunification.”<sup>6</sup> To be sure, some saw in this definition a reflection of North Korea’s intention to leave open the possibility of reunification by communist takeover. However, even if true, that possibility signifies little now that the balance of power has tipped notably toward the South. If follow-up measures are taken that will both strengthen the spirit of simultaneous entry to the UN and embrace that provision of the agreement as the basis for advancing toward the next stage, we need no longer be anxious about Pyongyang’s unwillingness to participate in a formal declaration agreeing to the formation of a confederation.<sup>7</sup>

The confederation itself is, of course, a temporary stage and invites the question of “what form of state will follow.” But we need not invite dissension and controversy by predetermining that form: the answer will be sought on the basis of the experience we shall acquire at the confederation stage, with our eyes on the basic needs of the people of both Koreas—needs that are bound to be different on each side but will come to have more and more in common. It will be even less appropriate to nail ourselves down to the existing form of the nation-state, for not only would it tend at this stage to provoke fears among many people (for different reasons), but it would not be in tune with the present age, either, when the search for various forms of a compound state has emerged as a new agenda of the day. We must look for an opportunity, in the process of overcoming the division system (including the confederation stage), to create a new form of federal state, which could answer the specific needs of the people who have passed through the division era.<sup>8</sup>

But what is most important for the movement to take root in daily life is attention to economic conditions. The movement for overcoming the division system will be in vain if it does not address this problem. Now

in South Korea "saving the economy" has become everybody's cry,<sup>9</sup> as its economy, whose worldwide status has risen through continued rapid growth, has recently shown symptoms of crisis. This emphasis obviously has an element of ideological manipulation, but it seems unlikely that a reunification movement will succeed in earning the support of the masses if, in a world of ruthless global competition, it dismisses the measure of competitiveness the South Korea's economy had attained or remains indifferent to the danger of becoming less competitive in the future. Regarding the economy, the theory of the division system maintains, first, that the ROK's rapid growth so far is the result of various favorable economic factors that are the flipside of its political and military dependency; and second, that at the present moment when such factors propitious for the early phase of economic development have been almost exhausted, dismantling the division system becomes essential to reinforce or preserve economic competitiveness itself. At the same time, the theory holds that whereas indiscriminate emulation of the advanced countries may eventually bring about the common ruin of humanity, the construction on the Korean peninsula of a society better than the division system can be a significant step toward the creation of a better world-system, even though it may not be possible for a unified Korea to go beyond the bounds of the capitalist world-economy. Here again we can envision a happy conjunction of the three levels of tasks: the domestic agenda currently facing the South Korean people, the peninsula-wide task of overcoming the division system, and the farther-reaching project of transforming the world-system.

### 3. CRISIS AND A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REUNIFICATION MOVEMENT

The greatest threat to this plan for overcoming the division system is, of course, a war on the Korean peninsula. Another war will certainly deal a crucial blow to a reunification process based on popular initiatives, even if it does not lead all the way to the complete devastation of the peninsula and internecine massacre much worse than during the Korean War of 1950–53. Therefore, the possibility of war should not simply be dismissed as propaganda or a threat by the ruling forces, but has to be seriously addressed from the perspective of the democratization and reunification movements.

Of course, that possibility should not be exaggerated. But neither should we overlook the fact that arguments dismissing any possibility of war have their weak points. For instance, it is noted that North Korea's

position was weakened by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the opening up of China, and the establishment of diplomatic relation between South Korea and China. But war is more likely when one side is overwhelmingly more powerful than the other (as in the case of the United States in the Gulf War), or when the weaker side is expected to weaken further as time goes by (as in the case of Japan immediately before the Pacific War), than when the two adversaries have almost the same levels of force. Moreover, we know from recent experience that local warfare has broken out more frequently since the end of the Cold War. If South Korea, in its current whirlpool of "total crisis," recklessly puts pressure on North Korea, especially when the latter is facing an overall crisis of political instability after the death of Kim Il-sung (Kim Il-sŏng), compounded by the ensuing food crisis, and so on, we cannot exclude the possibility that the situation may well precipitate war.

We also cannot preclude another possibility: a collapse of the North Korean regime or system owing to its internal dynamics. At present this also would deal a great blow to the task of rendering the reunification movement a daily practice. There are not a few among the South Korean ruling forces who regard this kind of collapse as the best opportunity to take the initiative for reunification at the exclusion of popular forces. But this, too, would in all likelihood be a miscalculation. To begin with, no one knows who will take charge in the event of total chaos in North Korea: the South Korean government, China, the United States, or a league of foreign powers, including even Japan. And if it should fall to South Korea or the United States to march into North Korea, it is all too evident that a great portion of the North Korean military, which includes veterans who fought in the Korean War and cadres trained by them, would wage guerrilla warfare and produce a confusion tens and hundreds of times worse than that caused by the submarine infiltration in the Kangnŏng area last year.<sup>10</sup> The first victim would be South Korean democracy, which is still limited, to be sure, but has been hard won with the blood and sweat of the people; economic development in the South, also achieved with blood and sweat, would probably be undone, too.

Insofar as the division system is something to be surmounted, the symptoms of crisis visible throughout the Korean peninsula are not totally unwelcome. We should not, however, unconditionally welcome every crisis, since a reunification that signifies the overcoming of the division *system* requires the strengthening of popular capacity to solve systemic contradictions and accumulating their input into the reunification process at least as one of the major variables. Fortunately, as in the saying that



crisis presents opportunity, the threat of a possible war or of chaos following North Korea's "collapse," together with the failure of the South Korean ruling forces in their crisis to cope properly with that situation, has opened up a new breakthrough in the movement for overcoming the division system in the spread of the civilian campaign to alleviate hunger in North Korea. Of course, the campaign is far from actually solving the food shortage, owing to the apathetic (sometimes actively obstructive) attitude of the South Korean government and the big media; and the growth of the movement itself has not been satisfactory yet.

From the perspective of a sustained daily practice for overcoming the division system, establishing self-awareness is as important for this aid campaign as the quantitative extension of the movement. Until now, the aid campaign has been based mainly on compatriotism and humanitarianism, which was an effective tactic in surmounting obstructions by the government and the ultra-rightist forces and in gaining popular appeal. It was, moreover, a good starting point in that every movement should be based on fundamental humane principles including love of compatriots and fellow human beings. But, in a situation where an early solution of the food problem is unlikely, and a counterattack—brandishing such phrases as "abstract humanism," "sentimental nationalism," "irresponsible reunification-is-everything attitude," and so on—is expected, humanitarian principles need to be supplemented in several respects and developed into a far more complex consciousness if the movement is to be sustained and is to make substantial contributions to overcoming the division system.

First, it should be recognized that food aid to the North is important even in terms of South Korea's own economy and national security, matters about which those with vested interests are constantly chanting and with which ordinary people, too, cannot help being concerned. In other words, we should realize that helping the North Korean population in need is helpful in terms of preventing war and protecting South Korea's economy as well. Even the South Korean government, after much talk of threats to national security because of the food aid being converted to military supplies, is now showing signs of awareness that sending food (and medicine, and so on) may accord with South Korean interests. (The United States, more adept at taking a broader view, is a step advanced in this regard, too.)<sup>11</sup> This makes it all the more necessary to highlight that those forces opposing the aid campaign are not only an immoral group lacking in compatriot and humanitarian feelings but also foolhardy and incompetent in crisis management, and thus to influence the government's North Korean policies in the right direction and, at the same time, to



weaken the diehard conservative forces in the South. Indeed, we find here yet another occasion for confirming that, under the division system, these two tasks are always two sides of the same coin.

Furthermore, this campaign is the surest way to secure and foster the forces in North Korea for opposing the division system. If the lifespan of the present regime in the North is to be indefinitely extended with food and other kinds of aid, not only South Korea's right wing but the popular forces themselves, who are against the vested interests on either side of the DMZ, should oppose the aid campaign. But, for one thing, a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime is not desirable precisely in terms of turning a movement into a daily practice, as I have indicated above; and at the same time, the more one believes in the need for an eventual judgment by the people upon the regime that forms part of the division system, the more urgently is it needed to secure the survival and good health of the legitimate agents of that judgment, namely, the North Korean people and the next generation in particular. Moreover, when North Korean people come to learn that South Korean people did much to deliver them from the danger of dying from starvation and disease, a popular solidarity between North and South would become a lived reality. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility of a certain time-lag in North Koreans' recognition of such a contribution, due to suppression or distortion of the fact by the authorities, but to think that such suppression or distortion could go on forever would be tantamount to believing in the omnipotence of the North Korean rulers or to unwittingly assuming the inherent idiocy of the Korean nation.

Nevertheless, the skeptical view persists that for the North Korean people to criticize or judge the division regime must remain a mere flight of fancy. We have so little information, it is true, as to how things are with them, and in any case we can detect no moves comparable to South Korea's tradition of popular struggles that have tenaciously continued since the April 19 Student Revolution.<sup>12</sup> The reason is hardly that there exists no gap in between the party and the people, as the North Korean authorities insist. Rather, it is a subject calling for close analysis, taking into account such elements as (1) the particular social institutions in North Korea that, though part of the same division system, are bound to be much different from those in the South precisely because they are part of the *division* system; (2) the ways of control by the state and the Party; (3) the governing ideology, including the North Korean version of the "reunification above all else" doctrine; (4) the "siege regime" imposed by the United States and its allies; and so forth. Only, as regards the "people's movement," too,

we should not think too exclusively in terms of opposition movements in South Korea. For instance, if the rationing system, which represents one of the most basic elements constituting the “socialist system” of North Korea, is malfunctioning due to food scarcity, and thus most North Koreans are driven for survival to every self-reliant measure possible including the underground economy, this tells us that in a certain sense a nationwide upheaval almost comparable to South Korea’s April Revolution of 1960 or June Uprising of 1987 has become an ongoing reality.<sup>13</sup> Of course, the popular forces involved in the upheaval are not an organized power, but nobody can be sure in what direction the spontaneity and initiatives of the people thus mobilized would run. We can expect, at any rate, that the aid of the South Korean people extended to their North Korean compatriots will not end up as a one-way benefaction.

#### 4. THE POSSIBILITY OF A REUNIFICATION MOVEMENT ON POPULAR INITIATIVES ROOTED IN DAILY LIFE

It is highly significant that the alliance between the two Korean peoples, dismissed only a short while ago as an idealist fancy, is now under way in the course of addressing the most urgent questions of daily life. Above all it has been demonstrated anew that the reality that has been so hardened since the Armistice of 1953 as to be called a *division system* is, after all, an unstable structure insofar as it is a *division* system. The aid campaign was triggered first by the crisis in the North, that is, by the government’s inability to feed its population, but there is a sense in which the utter disarray occurring in the governing circles of South Korea—inevitable since a systemic crisis in one half of the same system is bound to breed a corresponding crisis in the other half—has made it necessary for the civilian movement to come forward to address North Korea’s crisis.

Once we recognize that the work for making the movement for overcoming the division system a daily practice has already begun with the nongovernmental aid campaign, we can surmise that the recent disruption and stagnation in the national-democratic movement or people’s movements might be only a temporary phenomenon. Particularly remarkable is the fact that organizations that were divided into two camps, “citizens” [*simin*] and “people’s” [*minjung*] movements respectively, have participated in this campaign together. Of course, a line of separation is still visible between movements composed predominantly of middle-class groups and religious organizations on the one hand, and those composed of labor unions and grassroots militants, such as the National Alliance

for Democracy and the Reunification of Korea,<sup>14</sup> on the other. But on this occasion, mutual complementariness seems stronger than mutual dissension, and there is an organization, the Association of Writers for National Literature,<sup>15</sup> that officially participates in both coalition groups. It is always possible, however, that a moment will arrive when an emergency aid campaign sharing only humanitarian or compatriot love as the common objective finds it hard to go on, thus bringing ideological and practical differences to the surface and again breeding conflicts. As indicated above, North Korea's crisis is structural and likely to last long so that the support movements cannot be sustained on humanitarian and compatriotic principles alone. Therefore, in order for the aid campaign itself to continue, many streams should converge into a broader flow, which in turn should permeate the daily lives of the people. This is impossible without facing the problems caused by differences of political views and lines. However, if a common perception of reality and common programs for practice can be worked out so as to enable convergence and rootedness in daily life, it would be an achievement that reenacts on a higher level the broad alliance attained during the June Uprising.

In this context, I will examine three points that have caused the divergence of social movements in South Korea since 1987.

### *The Discourse of Class and the Theory of the Division System*

First, the sudden upsurge of labor militancy following the June Uprising of 1987, known as "the Great Labor Struggles of July and August," brought into focus as a real-life issue the problem of class, already the hottest subject of intellectual debate throughout the 1980s.<sup>16</sup> As a result of the labor struggle, the reform-minded middle class and the (generally conservative) opposition political parties, both important factors in the June Uprising, came to take some distance from the movement of the masses. Moreover, those radical groups that most fervently pursued the discourse of class wielded a highly simplified logic without anticipating the imminent collapse of Soviet-type socialism, and, as a result, added to the tendency of the discourse of class to fall out of favor in the 1990s. Of course, the domination of extremist discourse in the 1980s was to a great extent due to the suppression of the discourse of class as such, not only in labor movements but even in academe, under the constraints of national division. In any case, there is no need here to recount the situation in detail.

There are publicists who still adhere to a rigid class logic. But they fail to wield much influence with the masses since they take a lukewarm attitude, perhaps even more so after the unification of Germany, toward reunifica-

tion, keeping to the 1980s line of “democratic revolution first, reunification later.” A graphic illustration may be found in their failure to present any logic or practical program for supporting North Korean people in the face of the food crisis. This provides a sharp contrast to the active participation in the aid campaign by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions [Minju noch’ong],<sup>17</sup> one of the two axes of South Korea’s labor movement and the chief inheritor of the Great Labor Struggles of 1987. It is also interesting that the leadership of the Confederation of College Students’ Associations in Korea [Hanch’ongnyŏn],<sup>18</sup> most sharply opposed to the proponents of class position all along, have been much like their opponents in their lukewarm response toward the food aid campaign.

We must be careful, however, not to take the simplistic nature of sterile 1980s class logic as evidence for denying the reality of class. Is not the food crisis in the North a class as well as a national problem? Is it not the case that, though there are people starving, they do not include high officials of the party or the state and their families? And has that food crisis not become an issue in the South as to whether only a small number of people in ruling circles should determine policy on North Korea and the reunification process, or whether masses of ordinary people should be allowed to take part? These queries show that it is just another academic discussion to assert that since class contradiction is the more fundamental one, it should not be overshadowed by national agendas such as the aid campaign. At the same time, it is to be doubted how successful in the long run consciousness and movements can be that confine themselves to national perspectives and to the love of compatriots, ignoring the reality of the class question.

But will we not by bringing in class discourse run the risk of dividing the movement and inviting a counterattack from the ruling forces?

There is no way to escape this danger unless our understanding of the class question is an intelligent one. For instance, when we speak of social classes, we must first examine carefully what the unit of a society is. We have said that the food crisis is both a national problem and a class problem. Is this to assume a peninsula-wide class (or a coalition of classes called *minjung*, or the people) or the co-presence of two class situations with the North and South as separate units? It does seem to follow from the theory of the division system that neither the North nor the South can be posited as the basic unit for analysis in the discourse of class, given its tenet that there is a peninsula-wide system whose major contradiction manifests itself in the opposition between those with vested interests in that system, regardless of which Korea they belong to, and the people on both sides, but, even so, can we say that there is one “Korean working class” encompassing

the whole peninsula? Merely looking at the wage and working conditions, almost unimaginable for North Korean workers, of the South Korean laborers sent to the North to construct a light water reactor would make it difficult to posit a single class that includes both.<sup>19</sup>

The theory of the division system does not regard the division system as a self-complete social system; hence, it naturally does not try to argue for a single peninsula-wide working class or privileged class. Yet neither does it accept that North or South Korea qualifies as a “society” in the sense of a basic unit of analysis in the social sciences—a point easily assented to where divided countries or colonies are concerned; but we really need to pursue the point further and question whether the more normal states themselves, neither divided nor under the rule of a foreign power, can be considered a self-complete social system. The world-systems analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein and others consistently stresses that a single nation-state cannot be the basic unit of social analysis, since it is just a subsystem of the world-system, which, of course, is not to deny the presence of nation-states as social realities. The modern world-system has the capitalist world-economy as its base and the interstate system composed of nation-states as its superstructure. Therefore, class as an economic entity, strictly speaking, is determined in terms of the whole world-system, but the process of its self-formation or the unfolding of its political struggles cannot be meaningfully explained if we ignore the framework of individual nation-states. For this very reason, there can be no simple discourse of class in any case; it is only that in an instance like the Korean peninsula this complexity becomes even more salient due to the intervention of the division system as a middle term.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, it is not a mere tactical mistake to insist indiscriminately upon “the leading role of the South Korean proletariat,” thereby alienating many people and splitting the movement. It is in fact a much more serious fallacy by which, dazzled by the operations of the interstate system and the division system, one ends up impeding the formation of mature class consciousness at the level of the world-system. In other words, it blurs our perception of the economic reality of the world-system and obstructs the progress of movements relying on such a perception.

Since the theory of the division system is premised on the critique of this fallacy, pointing out the class relations embedded in the food crisis in North Korea does not lead to the hollow, nonstarter stance that the aid campaign ought to be led by the South Korean proletariat, or that it should grow into a revolutionary movement of the working classes of North and South Korea. On the contrary, the discourse of the division system culti-

vates the awareness that, in the extremely complex and fluctuating reality of class relations at the world-system level, most of the civic movement and people's movement forces in South Korea are more likely to be drawn toward each other in the long run than to split and diverge. At the same time, how these forces will diverge or converge, and what role they will play in the history of the world-system, will greatly vary according to the relation each of them will establish with the people of North Korea and with various classes and strata outside the peninsula. There may indeed be those among today's civic movement activists who, feeling uncomfortable about the long-range vision of joining in the peninsula-wide and global people's movement, would withdraw from any movement that has such a vision even if it might presently take the form of a humanitarian aid campaign. But if the difference of such a movement from any reckless and dogmatic South Korean proletarian movement becomes clear, only a small number will show that kind of reaction, and the majority are more likely to be inspired by the idea of participating in a world-historical task without having to neglect the demands of daily life each in his or her given situation. South Korea's labor movement in its turn, transcending the dilemma between a dogmatic proletarian revolution on the one hand and an economism representing the collective selfishness of laborers on the other, will develop ties with various kinds of citizens' movements toward the immediate agendas of political and social reform, and will learn to play a leading role in helping these broadly allied democratic forces grow into powers capable of transforming the division system and the world-system.

### *Ecological Questions and the National-Democratic Movement*

Another issue that had caused disruption or decline of the national-democratic movement during the 1990s concerns the environment and ecology. Major movement discourses up to the 1980s, by focusing on the questions of class and/or nation to the relative neglect of environmental problems, came to lose much of their theoretical appeal and actually gave occasion to the rise of the environmental and *life* movements with little sense of solidarity with the national-democratic movement. Of course, it has been widely accepted both by the older social movements and the newly fledged environmental movement that the problems of environment, class, and nation are interrelated in principle. Forging a firmer alliance between the two camps, and thereby maximizing their capacity and influence, is as yet an unaccomplished task, which demands urgent tackling in view of the serious environmental problems that exist and the symptoms of crisis in the division system.

Here again we find the North Korean food crisis richly suggestive. Insofar as the failure of North Korea's agriculture stems more or less from the failure in environmental protection and at the same time from defects of the command-based management of state and economy that underlies the environmental failure, we come to realize that the environmental and democratic movements are hardly separable. And the criminal wastefulness of South Korean society and its devastation of the environment, epitomized by the \$6.7 billion worth of food it reportedly throws away each year, would stand out in bolder relief against the amount of food immediately needed for the subsistence of fellow Koreans—in many cases actual relatives of South Koreans—than when we talk of famine in some remote country, say, on the African continent. Thus, the national feeling that such-and-such number of fellow Koreans in the North may be fed if only we spend our resources more wisely can develop into the broader "ecological awareness" that, even our North Korean compatriots aside, we should not live in this manner. Furthermore, the food crisis makes us realize anew that, while the North Korean way of life cannot sustain itself as it is, a reunification that leaves the South Korean way unchanged would also mean a misfortune for both the Korean peninsula and the whole world.

In order, however, that the national movement for reunification may form a firm tie with ecological thinking and practice, we need a fuller understanding of the relations between the division system and global environmental problems. It is true enough that the environmental movement in South Korea cannot maximize its influence without entering into alliance with the reunification movement, given the yearning for reunification on the part of a great majority of Koreans; in reality, however, it is the reunification movement that has a more pressing need for such alliance. Ecological problems are both directly related to everyone's daily life and capable of drawing global interest with the literally global aim to save the earth, and, consequently, the environmental movement has become the favorite NGO movement of the day, at least the general cause of environmental protection, enjoying a wide consensus at home and abroad among governments, corporations, and NGOs. It is therefore quite evident that the reunification movement will have only limited popular support unless it can draw on the environmental movement's power for mobilizing people, its variety of new organizations, its broad international solidarity, and so forth.

To state that the existing world-system is a capitalist one, and that capitalism is in essence an environmentally destructive system, provides no more than a starting point. We need a more detailed examination of the



anti-ecological nature of capitalism, but we should also be able to explain why, then, “actually existing socialism,” which claimed to be an antithesis to capitalism, often proved even more destructive of the environment. Even if we accept the basic proposition of the division system theory (and of world-systems analysis) that actually existing socialism fell short of genuine socialism, there still remains the problem of demonstrating how crucial ecological discourse is in the project of overcoming the division system (and transforming the capitalist world-system).

One way to approach this problem is to note that while the capitalist system by its nature has an environmentally destructive tendency, this became more salient around the middle of the twentieth century when U.S. hegemony was established, which also happens to be when the division system in Korea began to form and sustain itself. Here I find quite suggestive Peter Taylor’s proposal to perceive modernity as multidimensional in terms of world-systems analysis.<sup>21</sup> Taylor holds that the world-system has been going through—though within a larger framework of capitalist modernity—three different kinds of modernities, each dominated by the hegemonic nation of the period, namely, the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, Britain in the nineteenth, and the United States since World War II. The dominant features of the first and second stages are mercantilism and industrialism, while the third stage led by the United States is the age of mass consumption: “Whereas the great contradiction of British modernity was the rise of the proletariat resulting from new production processes, the great contradiction of American modernity is the depletion of the environment resulting from the new consumption processes.” Therefore, the failure of actually existing socialism was the inevitable fate of an antisystemic movement geared to the modernity of the industrial state—a failure that a movement for industrialization on the initiative of the proletariat and for equality within the boundary of a nation-state was bound to experience at the stage of “American modernity.” Hence, it is also natural that the leadership in worldwide antisystemic movements went over to the environmental and ecological groups. All the same, it is unpredictable whether these “new” movements can achieve their goals. Taylor suggests that just as American capitalism gave birth to the new process of consumption not by discarding the previous industrialization process but by merging it into the new system, the ecological movement should develop into a kind of environmental socialism inheriting the valid objectives and practices of the proletarian movement, the antisystemic movement of the preceding stage.

Taylor’s arguments would need further scrutiny, but it is not difficult



to accept that, if global environmental destruction, though an inherent aspect of the capitalist system in general, is a contradiction more specific to the present stage, the division system as a subsystem of the world-system must be an exceptionally unpropitious one for the conservation of the environment. It is a fact that not only the generally undemocratic nature of the reality on the Korean peninsula (though undemocratic to varying degrees and in different forms in the North and South), which puts constraints on any grassroots movement including environmental ones, but, more specifically, competition with other countries in the capitalist world-economy, combined with the rivalry of systems between North and South, has actually led to an indiscriminate pursuit of environmentally destructive developmental policies. Hence, even in terms of the global aim to "save the earth," overcoming the division system can be felt as an urgent task; but in view of the environmental movement's need for new perceptions and practices incorporating the seemingly outdated practices and discourses of national and class movements, the movement for overcoming the division system indeed provides a rare opportunity to form a model for such new practices.<sup>22</sup>

*Autonomy of the Feminist Movement  
and Possibilities for Solidarity*

Finally, I would like to add a few brief comments concerning the relation between the feminist movement and the movement for overcoming the division system.

During the 1990s feminist movements in South Korea tended to distance themselves from the national-democratic movement. As a matter of fact, the Korean feminist movement since the period of Japanese occupation (1910–45) has had a strong tradition of resistant nationalism and socialism and has tended to regard itself as part of the national-democratic movement, except in the organizations where government influence was predominant. However, deep-rooted sexist attitudes and conventions prevalent among male activists gave impetus to the search for an autonomous feminist movement, and in the context of an overall decline of the discourse of class and nation in the 1990s, such autonomy tended more to disrupt and weaken than to diversify the national-democratic movement. Nevertheless, feminist movements, too, need to respond to the popular yearning for reunification in order to secure their influence within Korean society, and at the same time, it is beyond doubt that the movement for overcoming the division system in its turn, if it is to achieve its aim, must

draw on the momentum of feminist movements that are becoming more and more powerful throughout the world.

In this instance, however, we find few clues of new combinations or alliances even in the aid campaign for North Koreans. For, while gender discrimination probably is also happening in the food crisis, such as giving what scanty food is available to sons first or more to them than to daughters, it is evident that nothing so heinously oppressive of women is taking place as the enforced sex slavery of Korean women by the Japanese imperial army, or mass rapes in Bosnia. In reality, as mentioned above, discrimination seems to be based mainly on class and rank, rather than on gender: *whose* son or daughter, rather than *whether* son or daughter, probably is the important fact. This may partly explain why the more radical feminist groups have had little to say concerning the current situation in the North.

That said, there seems to be little doubt that the division system itself encourages gender discrimination. True, we lack sufficient reliable data on the reality of women's lives in North Korea, but, even apart from the point that we cannot tell whether a remarkably high rate of female labor participation, a characteristic feature of actually existing socialism, signifies real progress in women's rights or merely an aggravated exploitation by forcing double duty on them, the fact that North Korea is a monolithic society with a male "parent"—literally the paterfamilias—as the supreme leader raises suspicion that for a self-proclaimed socialist country it may offer a rare example of patriarchal society.

South Korea in its turn is conspicuous by the low status of women compared to other social indexes, such as its educational level and economic growth, and sexist attitudes are quite prevalent even among a large proportion of women themselves, as well as among men.<sup>23</sup> Of course, empirical and comparative research based on comprehensive data covering other countries as well is needed in order to determine which of these social phenomena are determined specifically by the division, and which, and to what degree, by traditional factors such as Confucianism or capitalism in general, and so forth. As for indexes of women's empowerment, they call for a more fundamental analysis as well, so that we may distinguish true indicators of well-being for human beings of both sex from mere reflections of dominant discourses of the capitalist world-system and the modern civilization of the West.

At any rate, if the division system poses dire obstacles to securing equal rights for men and women, this alone should be reason enough for the

feminist movement to participate more actively in overcoming the division system, and this will no doubt decisively contribute to making the reunification movement a daily practice. One unique aspect, however, of the feminist movement is that producing a workable combination with other social movements could be both easier and more difficult than is the case with other alternate groups. Easier because women's interests are at stake wherever class, nation, environment, and so forth are at issue, the problem of the relationship between men and women never failing to present itself. But more difficult, too, because *separating from*, rather than developing ties with, other movements is likely to become the main objective, as has been the case with radical feminism, when the feminist movement attempts to locate some common concerns of women, who find themselves on both sides of those various issues, and tries to pursue an independent line based on such common concerns.

It is not my intention here to prescribe any agenda for combining or allying the feminist movement with the movement for overcoming the division system, but to emphasize the need, in the pursuit of that goal, for an intelligent approach that fully recognizes the uniqueness of the gender problem and the task of women's liberation. The first point to keep in mind is that the sense in which the women's question is about the relationship between men and women is different from that in which, say, the question of class is about the relationship between one class and another. In other words, whereas the question of class—at least according to Marxism, the classical discourse of class—calls for a class liberation through the ultimate abolition of the exploiting class, and thus is a question of achieving a classless society, feminist discourses, however radical they might be, cannot proclaim the “abolition of men,” but must pursue the coexistence, and a *harmonious one* at that, of the two sexes. Of course, insofar as some feminists make a strict distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender and advocate the extinction or abolition of the “male” (and the “female”) only as a gender, the analogy with the Marxist notion of the abolition of class may still be said to hold. It is nevertheless evident that the process of abolishing the male (gender) while on the other hand granting life to “men” that make up one half of humanity, and moreover, going on to share daily lives with them, must be very different from that of isolating the exploiting class, by definition only a handful, and eventually abolishing it as a class. Therefore, while we may talk about an overlapping of the Marxist task and the feminist one, it is hard to establish an analogy between them.

The ecological movement, however, in that it aims at a harmonious

coexistence of humankind with nature, has much in common with the feminist movement, which tries to achieve a symbiosis of men and women. But, whereas human beings, not nature, must make the effort for the conservation of ecosystems, and in that sense the ecological problem is a problem for humans rather than a problem for the ecosystem, the women's problem belongs to a different dimension insofar as it is a problem for men as well as women and both are responsible for a more appropriate relationship between the sexes.

Unless the feminist movement pays due attention to this uniqueness of its project, no matter what ties it forms with the reunification movement or any other movement, and what temporary tactical effect it may achieve, it is likely to end up either sacrificing its own specific objectives to the goals of other movements, or functioning as a disruptive factor within a larger movement. For instance, the Marxist notion of sexual inequality as a feature of the class society may either lead to the position that class liberation is the first thing to be achieved and women's problems can wait, or, by approaching the issue of the liberation of women with a simple analogy to the abolition of class, it may work to abolish legitimate differences between the sexes other than gender discrimination, thereby in a sense conforming to the leveling logic of capital. If so, this would amount to a form of mechanical egalitarianism with its Eurocentrism dating back to the Enlightenment.

In fact, how to distinguish unfair discrimination from legitimate difference constitutes a crucially difficult question for feminism. It won't do simply to make some conceptual distinction between sex and gender and then to acknowledge the one and demand the abolition of the other. Even socially constructed gender difference, inasmuch as it is constructed in relation to sexual difference, needs to be reexamined in terms of whether it needs to be accepted as part of the "legitimate difference," which in turn involves the extremely challenging philosophical task of defining in what sense it is an essential difference but in qualitatively distinct terms from so-called essentialism.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps a clue to this question could be found, beyond both Western metaphysical thought and Eastern traditions of male chauvinism, in exploring how the division into *yin* and *yang*, a conception belonging to a different dimension from metaphysical essentialism, may embody itself as the coexistence and harmony of living men and women.

To point to such a difficult theoretical task is, if anything, to reaffirm the historical responsibilities of the feminist movement, and certainly not to negate the necessity for the struggle to abolish discriminations and oppressions at hand. Likewise, the fact that various tasks of the feminist

movement including this theoretical question must be shouldered by men and women together does not negate the necessity for a movement independently run by women. It is a natural process of any movement that a group of people institutionally deprived of equal rights as human beings should form at first a combination among themselves to right the wrong. To respond to such a situation by taunting, "Why only a women's movement and not a men's as well?" would be nothing but a typical reaction of oppressors. The fact that this kind of reaction is widespread throughout Korean society reveals that sexual discrimination is producing a good many intellectually and morally debased men as well as depriving women of their rights. Possessing women as slaves or playthings, though it might make life easier for men for the time being, is sure to arrest the development of their self-reliant powers, and will end up producing a society full of inferior men whose chief pride lies in not having been born female—the way insecure whites tend to be all the more domineering toward blacks. In such a situation, even somewhat extreme self-assertion by women acquires a justification of its own, since it may help rein in despotic practices of those unmanly men and goad them to open their eyes. Therefore, indices for measuring the empowerment of women, though they often seem too mechanical or Eurocentric, cannot be an excuse for negating the feminist movement, but must be reexamined and modified in the course of the movement itself.

However, such justification of the feminist movement is quite another story from its probabilities of success. Unless the movement aims merely at temporarily shaking the complacency of inferior males, or at partial rectification of unfair discriminations, it must make the best of its uniqueness as a movement—a movement which has to tackle various crucial issues of our time (including the aforementioned colossal philosophical task) as goals for collective endeavor and at the same time as problems each one has to solve in concrete relationships in one's own life. Of course, it is true of other social movements as well that collective endeavors cannot bear substantial fruit without attendant moral cultivation and meaningful living of the individual participants. The feminist movement, however, is unique in that it requires, as the well-known proposition "the personal is political" tells us, the most highly individual level of moral cultivation and exceptionally intelligent political practices.

Therefore, the feminist movement in South Korea, whatever its starting point, should not be bound by existing interpretations of equality between men and women, but should find a way to reestablish the relationship between men and women so as to improve the reality at hand,

based on the exploration into the various contradictions facing South Korean society and the specific realities distorting each individual's life. In that way a natural affinity will emerge between feminism and the movement for overcoming the division system. As the latter pursues not any reunification whatever but a reunification under a better system than the existing division system, and this as part of the long-term transformation of the world-system, we must perforce come to a new awakening of our humanity itself in the course of the movement. That is also implied in the proposition that the division has established itself as a system within the Korean peninsula and secured a considerable power of self-reproduction. For even those criticizing and opposing the division system are more or less contributing to its reproduction as well and are not free from the distorted life imposed by this system.

A wise combination of personal self-cultivation and collective action is no less called for in the environmental movement, or any other meaningful social movement. Indeed, it was precisely the lesson in the fall of actually existing socialism that the working-class movement for equality, too, needs to go hand in hand with earnest self-cultivation and self-reformation of each and every working person. Here the affinity between feminism and the movement for overcoming the division system, which is already attempting a synthesis of class and ecological discourses by reinterpreting them, becomes all the more prominent. When the feminist movement struggling with the task of rearranging the relationship between men and women—one of the oldest problems for humankind and one most deeply permeating each individual's private life—turns such affinity to good use and builds ties with the movement for overcoming the division system, the reunification movement will critically secure a stronghold in everyday lives, while at the same time a decisive clue will present itself for the construction of a more equal and harmonious civilization.

There are of course other movements, besides the three discussed above, that require serious consideration in relation to the national-democratic movement in the 1990s. But my intention here is not to come up with a full theory of the movement, and even less to lay out all movements within a single theoretical framework. However, seeing that a reunification movement giving full scope to popular initiatives is bound to call for a far-reaching vision befitting the world-historical task for overcoming the division *system*, while at the same time attending to everyday tasks to which day-to-day responses are at once possible and necessary, I have tried to examine the relationship between the reunification movement and

some other representative movements which both have global validity and require everyday practice. It is none other than the possibility of building ties between these movements and the movement for overcoming the division system that inspires our confidence that we may intelligently abolish the division system now in crisis.

#### POSTSCRIPT (NOVEMBER 1997)

At the conference where I presented an earlier version of this paper, Ms. Cho Hyŏng and Mr. Yi Chong-ho gave comments as designated discussants, and I had an opportunity to respond briefly during the next day's general discussion as well. A record of the general discussion is to be published elsewhere, but to my knowledge there is no plan for recording the panel discussions on the first day except for presubmitted notes by the panel members. Owing to limitations of time, the panel could not ask all the questions prepared, and I myself had to give very sketchy and selective answers. This postscript, still short of an adequate response to their questions, is intended to record, if only partially, the discussion that day, and to supplement my argument in the present essay.

To begin with, I must confess that I felt flattered to hear the term division system widely used throughout the conference. Professor Yim Chae-hae's keynote address directly referred to my works, but most people used the term without any awareness that the concept had been proposed by a particular person. Which is an indication that the term is gaining *droit de cité* in the scholarly world; I did not, however, feel that it was being used as a precise concept. True, one is free to define a term any way one likes, but I would think one should accept a considerable part of the specific denotation I proposed if one recognizes the reality of the division as a system. In many cases, however, when people mentioned the division system, what they seemed to have in mind was only the anticommunist system or regime in South Korea, and even when they seemed to have reached the notion of "people versus the system" in the Korean peninsula, they tended to slip back to the idea that it takes only the agreement and coexistence between the two Korean governments to accomplish the task of overcoming the division system.

For some of the questions put by the panel, answers can be found in my essay itself. (I admit my failure to hand in my text in a completed form may have prompted at least a few of those needless questions.) For example, as regards Professor Yi's question, "What is the difference between overcoming the division and overcoming the 'division system'?"<sup>25</sup> or Professor



Cho's, "What is the difference between your project of making the movement for overcoming the division system a daily practice and the existing idea of 'reform first, unification later'?" it is very hard for me to give more adequate answers than are already made in the body of the present paper. On the other hand, it is true that I had not adequately addressed Ms. Cho's doubt, "One thing unclear to me here is the actual relationship between the ambitious project of transforming the system and daily practice." Moreover, regarding her question of "whether there is any guarantee that the existing theories of structural transformation (especially, class theory and structuralist theory of women's liberation) can be effectively grafted into people's daily practice for the reunification movement," I must confess there is no such guarantee, and I absolutely agree with her view that "it may take a totally new framework that goes beyond the logic of existing social movements in terms of theory as well as of practice." It was precisely my argument, however, that both class theory and feminism can join in the movement for overcoming the division system and reinvigorate themselves as well, only if they open up a new horizon beyond "the existing theories of structural transformation" as "the logic of the existing social movements." My essay examined (though far too inadequately) the possibility of "grafting" those discourses into the daily practice of the reunification movement.

I did manage to respond to the following among Cho Hyöng's comments: "It needs careful consideration whether it is feasible in practical terms to expect to popularize the reunification movement and make it a daily practice while leaving open the possibility of war or of the collapse of North Korea's regime or system." Let me roughly restate my position here. Under the division system we are all living with an ever-present danger of war or other catastrophes, so in order for a reunification movement to overcome that system it must accept as an inevitable burden the task of turning the movement into a daily practice, rather than asking whether it is "feasible in practical terms" to expect it. Everybody naturally wants more favorable conditions for what he or she has to do, but practitioners must act on what is given rather than wait till the situations agreeable to their wish have offered themselves. It may sound all too obvious, but a great weakness of our civic movements seems to be to regard all the disturbing and often perilous problems spawned by the division system not as an unavoidable condition for every movement in the era of division but as some unnecessarily protruding obstacles. The very prospect that neither war nor a sudden collapse of North Korea is likely to lead to something better than what we now have under the division system



makes more pressing the need to popularize the reunification movement and make it a daily practice as soon as possible. The danger Professor Cho is concerned about can turn, if anything, into a necessary driving force for the movement for overcoming the division system.

It is of course unpredictable how successful these efforts will be. In this context, Cho took up the example of the food aid campaign to point out that "such aid campaigns, too, may shrink and even turn to the reverse direction if some situation like last year's submarine incident [infiltration of North Korean agents on a submarine] develops again."<sup>26</sup> Remarking that the popular campaign brought about by the food crisis in North Korea "was launched purely by chance," she went on to ask, "Is it inevitable that our reunification movement can only depend on such chance elements?" While I myself doubt that the North Korean famine was brought about by chance, that is, mainly by natural disasters, it is precisely a *necessary* reality under the division system that such a *chance* happening as last year's submarine incident, which indeed had more chance elements than the famine, can break out at any time. Not that I propose to see everything in terms of some structural determination or some kind of conspiracy. Only, I would like to suggest that the people's movement should equip itself with a capability on a par with the flexibility of the vested interests of the two Koreas that know how to produce or exploit various incidents within the reality of the division in order to maintain the division system. In other words, we should secure a firm recognition of the reality of the division system and accumulate corresponding practices so that we may effectively deal with any "chance happening" like a new submarine incident without sustaining serious damage to the reunification movement. Indeed, it is partly because the level of Korean citizens' political consciousness has risen and democracy in South Korea has developed that, although the submarine incident in 1996 inflicted considerable damage to the South Korean reform forces, it failed to develop into an all-out national security phase of political regression.

Professor Yi Chong-ho, before asking five questions, put forth his own view on reunification and the reunification movement. He began with these words: "Does our reunification mean a reunion of long-separated brethren? Or is it more like a marriage between a man and a woman from each part of the divided nation? If we have until now regarded unification as a reunion of brethren, from now on we should regard it, I think, as a newly married relationship." He continued: "So what we should do for reunification is to improve our health and foster compatriotic affection. If each other's health and mutual affection can be ascertained to some degree,

engagement can take place, and if the affection grows after engagement, they can have a wedding in testimony of a more responsible relationship as husband and wife." Fully agreeing with him that reunification is the establishment of a new relationship and should be a gradual process, I tried to remind him that the condition for the establishment of that relationship was much more complicated than could be expressed simply as "health and affection." In a sense, what mattered was not so much whether the relationship was between family members or between man and woman of different families, as the fact that all of them had a more or less complicated past. If, for instance, we adopted the metaphor of a married couple, then reunification needed to be viewed not as a fresh union of two innocent youths, but a reunion of an old couple who had quarreled and separated for a long time, leading different lives and perhaps even having other love affairs, but now finally trying to reestablish their relationship after coming to a belated realization that this kind of life would no longer do.

It is in part Yi's comment on Professor Kang Man-kil's notion of an "equal reunification"<sup>27</sup> that prompted me to take issue with his notion of "health and affection." Yi observed that Kang's notion of equal reunification itself "seems based on the way a married relationship is formed; for a harmonious relationship is possible only if each of the married couple respects the other's family traditions and customs." Which is certainly true as far as it goes. It is one thing, nevertheless, to respect each other's family's traditions and customs but quite another to adopt both family's ways on an equal basis. Just as it was the rule in Korea for the bride to follow the groom's family traditions, so it is an undeniable reality that the stronger party, not just militarily but in the totality of various powers, including the economic and cultural, will take a stronger (thus unequal) initiative during the course of a peaceful reunification. It is nothing but an abstract idea to propose a reunification on a literally equal basis for both Koreas, unless it is a way of pointing to the basic principle that reunification should not be accomplished by a unilateral conquest. Moreover, I strongly doubt that the idea itself—that of establishing a common lot on a strictly equal footing through an agreement between the two Korean powers-that-be—is good enough. If we take the conflict between the division system and the Korean people as the pivotal axis of opposition, the most desirable outcome of the agreement between the two Korean authorities is one that can maximize the benefit of the people of both Koreas, and it is less important whether or not the two governments' positions are equally reflected in the agreement. We should say otherwise if we could assume that each government fully and exactly represents the people's interests on

its side, but the overall antidemocratic nature of the division system makes such an assumption hardly acceptable.

As to Yi's comments on the necessity of implementing the 1991 Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea, and the importance of local self-government, I have no objection. Most of what he asked about in his five questions, too, has, I think, been already answered in the present essay (though not quite in the version prepared for the conference), so I would like to skip further discussion. I will only add a few words concerning his fourth question, "What kind of efforts should South Korean NGOs make at this stage in order for them to take the initiative in formulating South Korea's policy toward the North and the reunification process, and what would be the government's role in such a situation?" This question is also related to the first of the two questions Mr. Yi Chin-söl, the president of Andong University, asked of Professor Sö Chung-sök, namely, whether we should not be more appreciative of the government's role in discussions and policies concerning reunification up to now—a topic which I had to pass over during the conference for lack of time.<sup>28</sup> While I myself often use the expression "a reunification based on popular initiatives," it would be more accurate to say "a reunification that gives the fullest possible scope to people's initiatives and creativity," for to what extent the people will actually *lead* the reunification process remains an open question. Moreover, when it comes to the *policy* toward North Korea, we must grant that designing one and carrying it out is in principle the government's share, insofar as we accept the legitimacy of our government; only we should be active in watching, checking and sometimes encouraging the government through civilian movements so that its making and execution of policy may reflect the people's interests to the utmost. In fact, a series of governmental measures—starting from the Joint North-South Communiqué of July 1972<sup>29</sup> through President Roh Tae-woo's Northern Policy<sup>30</sup> and the Korean National Community Unification Formula (1988) to the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea (1991), and so forth—were responding to popular pressure to a significant degree. If the impact of the civilian reunification movement rather decreased since the mid-1990s, this is partly due to the unrealistic attitudes on the part of many activists, who either condemned various advances in the relationship with North Korea as a political ploy by the ruling circles to remain in power or unduly celebrated them as exclusive triumphs of people's power. As I pointed out in the present essay, the relationship between the movement for overcom-

ing the division system and each of the division regimes cannot be either totally friendly or totally hostile but must be complex and variable; therefore, while acknowledging the respective roles of the government and the civilian sectors according to the historical phases and immediate situations in the reunification process, and among civilian sectors the different roles of *chaebŏl* and working people, we must try to maximize the input by the common people whose possibilities of humane existence cannot but be threatened by the continued existence of the division system and the current world-system.

## 2. The Reunification Project in the “Age of the IMF”

If we choose to speak of “the age of the IMF,” few will object that it began on December 3, 1997, when Deputy Prime Minister Yim Ch’ang-yŏl submitted “A Letter of Intent for Requesting a Stand-By Loan from the IMF” to Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund. Less clear, however, is by what standard and at what level this era may be distinguished from the “pre-IMF age.” For instance, many talk nowadays about “the greatest national disaster since the Korean War.” If the phrase is taken literally, it means that in the half-century since the tremendous destruction and bloodshed of the war that ended by establishing the division system across the peninsula, the most far-reaching transition (at least among disastrous transitions) took place in December 1997. However, a leading newspaper columnist, taking issue with popular indignation over “economic trusteeship” or “the second National Shame” (i.e., after the annexation to Japan in 1910), suggested that the current crisis was simply a matter of taking an emergency loan due to shortage of cash. If this is the case, to speak of “the IMF age” rather than “the IMF situation” would be a frivolous exaggeration, even though paying back the debts will surely take some time and people’s lives until then will be considerably hard-pressed.

It is too early to say conclusively, but at least up to now it is not a national disaster comparable to the Korean War. To cite only one example, can it be deemed more disastrous than the military coup of May 1980, when hundreds of civilians were killed or went missing in Kwangju, and illegal imprisonments and dismissals swept over the whole country?<sup>1</sup> But it is equally obvious that, on the basis merely of the mass unemployment and business bankruptcies that already have taken place, a new stage or phase has begun, so that the word “age” or “period” would not altogether

be an extravagance.<sup>2</sup> All the more urgent is the need to assess the precise content and nature of the change that has taken place. This is an issue going beyond mere intellectual curiosity, for upon this assessment will greatly depend questions such as when the IMF era will come to an end and what kind of stage or phase will follow it.

Along with the IMF bailout, conditions of the reunification movement and reunification project also have greatly changed. Indeed, many of the debates on reunification suddenly seem outdated. Whether this applies also to the theory of the division system naturally needs to be examined, which can be another way of indirectly asking how we should understand the IMF era. If this bailout, too, can be said from a wider viewpoint to have occurred under the division system and therefore to mark a particular stage or phase in the age of division, an examination of the theory of the division system will help to confirm at least certain key features regarding what this affair is about. Conversely, if the IMF era is of such a nature as to invalidate the theory of the division system, we shall be able, in the course of humbly accepting that verdict, both to develop more proper ways of discussing the reunification issue and to obtain a closer understanding of the IMF bailout regime.

#### THE IMF BAILOUT IN LIGHT OF THE DIVISION SYSTEM

It must be admitted that no one engaged in the debate on the division system, myself included, predicted the financial crisis resulting in the IMF bailout. In that respect, the theory of the division system, too, failed to play a sufficient role as a discourse concerning social reality. That said, the notion that "entry into the ranks of advanced nations" while keeping the division system intact is an illusion, and a dangerous one at that, seems to have gained greater purchase in the IMF era. In particular, we can now realize more vividly that German-style unification cannot be an appropriate model for overcoming the division: having arrived at the IMF bailout while merely dreaming about "unification by absorption," it has become clear to us what a tremendous economic catastrophe must result from a sudden absorption of North Korea.

The division system theory has also emphasized that the high growth of the South Korean economy up to now is a particular phenomenon directly connected to the reality of division. In this sense, the theory differs to a considerable extent from the theory of "neocolonial state monopoly capitalism," or of "colonial semicapitalism," which dominated progressive social-science circles during the 1980s, or from the theory of "middle-level

capitalism" that has gained broader acceptance since the later years of that decade. For example, the first of the three, while taking note simultaneously of the substantial growth of South Korean capitalism, its economic dependency and political repressiveness, saw South Korea merely as an example of the general model that applied—or was thought to apply—to numerous nondivided societies. The second theory, embracing national liberation as its supreme task, emphasized South Korea's political and military subordination and overall backwardness; while the third, taken by the notion of South Korea as a society of middle-level capitalism, gave prime weight to the exceptionally high growth of its economy. In contrast, the division system discourse took note of both the economic accomplishment that often evoked talks of South Korea being on "the threshold of advanced country status," on the one hand, and political and military subordination and ideological restrictions exceptional in comparison with such an accomplishment on the other; but it saw the coexistence of such contrasting characteristics precisely as a feature of the division system—a peculiarity of the South Korean model that cannot be explained away by simply appending the epithet "neocolonial" to "state monopoly capitalism"—so that these theorists had to end up enumerating *ex post facto* its particularities as a divided society.

Insofar as the division system is a historical system (or, to be more exact, a spatiotemporally further restricted subsystem within the historical system called the capitalist world-system), it is inevitable that such a feature of the South Korean model has a temporary character. In other words, the power of that model was generated and has sustained itself under the condition that the East-West Cold War regime was firmly buttressing the division system. Hence, it is equally inevitable that the South Korean model, just like the entire division system, should face a serious crisis as a result of changes in world-historical circumstances and domestic conditions, such as the end of the Cold War, the democratization of South Korean society, and so on. Of course, for a correct understanding of the financial crisis we must also take note of the new aspects of world capitalism, which since the 1990s has been accelerating its rush toward an unchallenged rule of capital, and, in doing so, we need to reexamine the various discussions that go beyond the South Korean model to the larger Asian model. But the perspective of division system theory is indispensable even for the purpose of properly taking into account differences from the still-flourishing economy of Taiwan, or from the Japanese economy, which, though going through difficult days, still keeps a potential alto-

gether different from South Korea's, not to mention the fact that the crisis itself is of an entirely different kind.

At any rate, if the South Korean model was formed to suit the division system, and its economic strength was limited to a particular phase of the age of division, the diagnosis would clearly fail to hold that the IMF bailout signifies no more than the obtaining of an emergency loan—in other words, simply a temporary liquidity crisis. Nor can we unconditionally endorse the contrasting view that the IMF represents not just a financial crisis but a general failure to emulate the advanced countries by neglecting to adapt ourselves to the universal standards of global capitalism, and that the IMF bailout thus has provided us with a golden opportunity for reform and restructuring to meet “advanced standards.”

As we must live in a world ruled by the laws of capitalism, we have to admit the necessity of various reforms for “advance” in capitalistic terms and take advantage of given opportunities for such advance. But if the very failure of becoming advanced was directly related to the division system, we need to ask how to change the division system, even for the sake of such advance; furthermore, if this system cannot be truly surmounted by capitalistic advancement alone, the necessity becomes more urgent for us to ask afresh what “advance” really means and what “overcoming the division system” is.

At the same time, the theory of the division system keeps a distance in principle from those who, touting phrases like “economic trusteeship” and “a second National Shame,” in effect impede necessary reforms by excessively provoking nationalistic feelings. It surely makes some sense to call the stringent prescriptions of the IMF as “economic trusteeship.” But both South and North Korea, while each having acquired much of the framework of a nation-state, are both peculiar social units that participate in the world-system (and the interstate system as its superstructure) via the division system, and in this regard, each finds itself in the status of “a half-built nation.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, to give oneself to frenzy and indignation as if we were experiencing another “National Shame” after having fully succeeded in nation-building would only betray another symptom of our consciousness that has been domesticated by the division system. Conversely, to feel no remorse over the serious infringements on sovereignty, which, though incomplete, we had achieved and nurtured over the years, or even to rejoice at getting a chance through intervention of outside forces to implement reforms that we had failed to carry out on our own, would also reveal a kind of slave mentality, a national inertia fostered under



long years of incomplete nationhood. Reflecting on the fact that in a sense we deserved what we got in the IMF bailout, not only because we had neglected to secure advanced institutions but also because we lived distractedly without accomplishing real nation-building, we must apply the criteria of our immediate task of overcoming the division system in evaluating and actively coping with the demands for "reform" by the IMF and other leading forces of world capitalism, which have no concern whatever with nation-building in this particular sense.

#### CHANGES IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE REUNIFICATION MOVEMENT AND HOW TO RESPOND TO THEM

Quite naturally, the IMF bailout has very much changed the circumstances of the reunification movement. As seen in the greater indifference to the ongoing miseries of their Northern compatriots shown by South Korean people, who have themselves fallen into hard times, recent developments have caused many disadvantages to the civilian reunification movement. Governmental aid, too, will certainly come under greater constraints, even if the will to deliver such aid remains firm.

The launching of the Kim Dae-jung government last February, however, has certainly created a situation in many ways favorable to North-South reconciliation and the reunification movement. Apart from the important fact that someone who has maintained a progressive stance toward national reconciliation and has long been conversant in the issue of reunification took office as president, the expansion of civic liberties and critical space due to the transfer of power to the opposition party also represents no small advantage. For example, although one cannot predict what the investigations into "the North Wind operation" (or attempts by North Korea to influence the election outcome in favor of the governing party)<sup>4</sup> will turn up, popular awareness of how the division system functions has reached a new level, with new circumstantial evidence that the collaborative relationship between hardliners on both sides goes beyond the level of unconscious symbiosis. Besides, the four-party talks (of China and the United States plus the two Koreas) took place,<sup>5</sup> and vice minister-level talks were resumed after four years of deadlock, although they failed to reach agreement; moreover, restrictions on people doing business with North Korea have also been much softened. All these things clearly show that inter-Korean relations are entering a new phase.

As a matter of fact, the IMF crisis itself is not wholly disadvantageous to the reunification project. From the perspective that sees German-style

reunification as not only an impracticable but a highly dangerous illusion as well, we may say that South Koreans, by going through an economic crisis, have found an occasion to shake themselves out of daydreaming in order to try to devise a more reasonable reunification plan. The North Korean authorities, too, who up to now may have placed no trust in the claim that South Korea has no intention to absorb the North, are more likely to come to the negotiating table, giving greater credence to the assertion that South Korea now has no *ability* for such absorption. True, the gap in capabilities between North and South Korea still remains huge, and one can hardly escape the impression that the ability of the North Korean regime to manage the division system in crisis has almost reached its limit. All the more should we in the South, both the government and civilian groups, each in their way, abandon any ambition for unilateral mastery, yet wisely exercise just that much initiative corresponding to our real capabilities—including not merely economic strength but also the potentialities of the people accumulated in the course of the national-democratic movement since the April 1960 Revolution.

An immediate task for the civilian reunification movement is to continue in accordance with the new situation the campaign to help North Korean compatriots, which last year reached a rare level of nationwide mass participation. Despite general indifference—indeed, sometimes active obstruction—by the authorities and much of the news media, the fundraising campaign for sending food, medicine, and clothing to compatriots in the North achieved an outcome that made some activists' claims that it was the biggest national movement since the March 1 Independence Movement of 1919 sound none too absurd.<sup>6</sup> However, a campaign that relied on the catchwords of compatriotic feelings and humanitarianism was not likely to last permanently even if it had not been for the financial crisis; and now that the majority of South Koreans have become preoccupied with their own sustenance, the appeal of such a campaign is bound to diminish substantially. It is fortunate, of course, that obstruction by government authorities and the mass media has diminished, and international interest has gradually increased. As a result, the total amount of this year's relief collection possibly could reach last year's level. However, the popular sentiment that the time has come for the two government authorities to take on the problem has gained in strength, and, at any rate, it is a fact that initial enthusiasm for the campaign as a mass movement has ebbed.

Love for fellow Koreans and human beings still remains a valid cause, since the difficulties faced by South Koreans, however dire, cannot be com-

pared to the disastrous situation in the North. Moreover, insofar as the campaign to help North Korean compatriots meant not just a move to give away what was left over in the South, but an occasion for repentance and self-renewal regarding our overly wasteful and senseless way of living, our proper response now should be to accelerate that campaign, even as we reflect on the financial crisis as a self-inflicted hardship. But appealing to a cause or moral imperative is not sufficient to move popular sentiment in the age of the IMF. This becomes clear when we compare it with the nationwide popular response to "the gold collection campaign" to repay the national debt and save the South Korean economy.<sup>7</sup> True, the major networks, including the Korean Broadcasting System, led the campaign and other powerful institutions joined in, but it achieved such success because the campaign had a direct appeal to the national sentiment.

In a nutshell, the task of helping fellow Koreans in the North can become a successful mass movement only when South Koreans actually feel it directly affecting issues of their daily lives. The likelihood that the nongovernmental campaign for helping the North would confront difficulties during the financial crisis was already pointed out by one of the leading activists in the movement, who suggested that the rejection symptoms apt to erupt during the IMF age may be minimized through the establishment of a consortium between Korean and U.S. NGOs, so that foreign funds might flow into the South Korean market to purchase their resources for agricultural aid to the North, thus combining the task of restoring the South Korean economy with that of helping the North.<sup>8</sup> Of course, the April 25 international campaign for a one-day fast to help starving North Koreans, promoted by the Korean Sharing Movement, achieved no small success thanks to the participation of many international luminaries, including Pope John Paul II, and the backing of domestic mass media. However, the campaign was something of a one-shot event, and the cooperation of the conservative mass media definitely was that. It certainly seems high time to create a new mode of campaign for helping the North.

Without insisting on foreign funds, there are all kinds of ways of linking the use of domestic contributions with the task of helping hard-pressed South Koreans. For instance, they could be divided in a certain ratio between relieving the South Korean unemployed and helping the North; or, in order to help revive the domestic market, certain funds may be allocated as a matter of principle for purchasing home-produced (even though more expensive) crops, farm machines, and medical supplies as relief items for the North. Some might object that in that way the absolute quantity to

be handed over to the North will severely diminish; however, the ultimate meaning of the civil movement lies less in the absolute quantity than in ordinary citizens' doing their best, and even in terms of absolute quantity it is open to question whether we could deliver more by clinging to the previous method of collection intended only for the North.

Moreover, this is not just a matter of tactics to get around the negative responses of some people. The so-called dissident organizations and the civilian reunification movement groups have often tended to be preoccupied with North Korean situations, delegating the responsibility for the South Korean people's livelihood to the government or big corporations. Even when concerned with the issues of the South, they have rarely approached the two tasks in tandem. Is this habit not another example of the inertia produced by the division system? If the division system is one that can be properly understood only when North and South Korea are *viewed as one as well as two, or two as well as one*, its overcoming will be achieved only when numerous North and South Koreans have trained themselves to wisely combine, each from their respective positions, the task of helping North and South Koreans simultaneously.

#### MULTIPLE AGENTS OF THE REUNIFICATION PROJECT

Just as the reunification movement demands a pluralistic perspective that takes North and South together—by extension, takes into account the entire world at the same time—so the agents of the reunification project also need to be imagined multiply. I have long emphasized that even though the people of North and South Korea are designated as the agents of the movement for overcoming the division system, in reality the popular movements of the two sides, whose specific interests obviously cannot coincide fully, should operate in a form of "alliance." Also, the argument has gained increasing acceptance that popular movements on either side should in themselves proceed as a loose coalition, given the great diversity in the constitution of the people within each of the divided country. To add another point in the midst of the IMF age, the South Korean people, while demanding popular initiatives in the reunification process, should also admit the roles of nonpopular sectors—to be specific, of the government and large corporations—and show the wisdom of building alliances with them as the need arises.

To cite the IMF age as a new occasion does not mean that such wisdom was not necessary before. Insofar as the movement for overcoming the division system does not concur with the aims of 1980s radical move-

ments—whether the overthrow of the pro-U.S. regime and national liberation through autonomous reunification or reunification along the line of people's democracy via the transformation of the South Korean system—it naturally should admit not only the government's role but also that of the large corporations that are indubitable presences in South Korea and indispensable agents in North-South economic cooperation. However, alliance with the government in the reunification project was a mere idea in the period before the 1987 June Uprising, when the government was hostile to all popular movements and bent on exploiting North-South relations for the preservation of the regime. The onset of a new republic following the constitutional reform and Roh Tae-woo's more open policy to the North entailed not a few changes; however, even under the Kim Young-sam regime, it looked premature to talk about an active alliance between the government and civilian reunification movements. At the same time, business ventures in North Korea by big corporations have been mainly engineered by the big conglomerates [*chaeböl*], which, already close to the ruling politicians, had every reason to cling to the government that issued licenses for the ventures and felt little need to make any alliance with popular movements.

Things have greatly changed with the combination of the IMF "cold wave" and the launching of the Kim Dae-jung government. On the one hand, South Korea's economic crisis shattered the illusion of German-style unification—actually, worse than German-style, as it would have to be engineered totally by the government, *chaeböl*, and foreign powers, without any popular participation comparable to the East German democratization movement or the West German experience of civilian exchanges across the border. At the same time, some change is discernible in the attitude of the regime, which in the past would limit to a token level the participation of nongovernment sectors other than *chaeböl* and government-organized groups. To cite only the example of food relief to the North, both the government and civic groups are financially hard-pressed enough to hope that the other would do more, nor does either side show any eagerness to criticize the other's ways of dealing with the issue. If the past pattern were followed, the government would have cast suspicious eyes onto those who were enthusiastic about helping North Korea even during the IMF age, and might have launched another strict investigation into allegations of violations of economic donation law. The NGO forces in turn would have severely blamed the government for causing the breakdown of the Beijing talks and the delay in fertilizer support by its rigid adherence to "the principle of reciprocity," whereby the South

Korean government demanded Pyongyang's assent to the construction of a meeting place for separated families in return for Seoul's aid.

In the reunification project of the IMF age, the roles of *chaeböl* and large corporations more than anything else demand fresh consideration. In fact, it was the North Korean authorities who most welcomed them, and the national liberation camp of the South Korean radical movement forces has tended not to take issue with it seriously. In contrast, the generally Marxist-Leninist democratic transformation camp has repeatedly argued that a reunification driven mainly by the *chaeböl* would be worse than the status quo. Whether reunification should be opposed because the role of the *chaeböl* surpasses that of the people is in itself a matter of doubt, but in this matter, too, the IMF age is bringing a number of changes. First of all, the *chaeböls* are facing a situation where they must change themselves to a great extent. Of course, to what extent they will restructure themselves and cut their illegal collusion with politics remains to be seen. But they have certainly been placed in a position where they cannot survive without great changes, whether into an American type of big corporation as suggested by the IMF and some reformists within the government, or into a Japanese *zaibatsu*-type combination of affiliated companies. However, in view of either the new administration's profession of "the principle of overcoming the collusion of business and government" or the general global trend of the increasing dominance of the logic of capital, it has become undeniable that any discussion of reunification would go nowhere if it excludes the role of large corporations.

For example, opposition to *chaeböl* ventures into North Korea because they weaken the collective bargaining power of South Korean workers has lost much of its persuasive power. From the beginning the logic was subject to suspicions of collective egoism or blind dogmatism running counter to the cause of reunification, rather than representing genuine class consciousness. It has become far more evident with the IMF bailout, however, that it is not the Southern *chaeböls'* investments in North Korea but the logic and power of world capitalism that made havoc of the living conditions of South Korean workers and weakened their collective bargaining rights to the extent of their having to accept large-scale layoffs. Indeed, the former is no more than a minor dependent variable in comparison with the latter. Even so, North-South economic cooperation constitutes a kind of exceptional economic activity somewhat free from the unilateral dominance of world capitalism, in the sense that, while being trade within a region in which the free flow of capital is not yet allowed, it qualifies as not international but intranational trade; and it does provide one practical

way of alleviating even by a little the distress of the South Korean people under the IMF regime. Moreover, if North-South economic cooperation both helps the North Korean people and manages to expand the space independent of the political logic of the North Korean authorities—something all the more inevitable as struggling South Korean companies after the IMF crisis grow more reluctant to participate in unprofitable economic ventures—its importance in the process of overcoming the division system will not be inconsiderable. Still, with due attention to the fact that large corporations may aim at surmounting the IMF regime or even Korea's division itself but certainly not the genuine overcoming of the division *system*, popular movement forces should exercise due wisdom to combine cooperation and confrontation in their relationship with big corporations, as the circumstances may call for.

#### SEARCHING FOR A NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL

While highlighting the deep conflicts existing among workers, employers, and the government, the IMF crisis also forces the three parties to seek points of consensus and gives birth to a new awareness of possibilities for such consensus. For example, labor unions and companies are bound to be in conflict over the issue of layoffs, but either party is ready to admit the fact that, from a long-term perspective, unlimited dismissal is of little help to the company, and, conversely, that the bankruptcy of the company disables it from keeping employment up. Even on the *chaeböls'* part, as they are forced to restructure themselves through abrupt debt redemption and rapid fire-sales of assets, they might consider themselves no less victims of the IMF bailout than the laid-off workers. Indeed, if such a kind of restructuring benefits only international speculative capital and some foreign industrial capital—putting aside the question of how far the *chaeböls* themselves are responsible for this crisis—it may not be an utterly groundless illusion that both the *chaeböl* (plus other corporations) and workers may come to reach some consensus in the capacity of "common victims."

One could even imagine a united front of workers and employers against the government on particular issues, if the South Korean government unilaterally takes sides with the neoliberal line of reforms suggested by the IMF and the U.S. Treasury department. Fortunately, the new president has diagnosed that the root of the present economic crisis lies, above all, in the deficiency of democracy, and put forward the simultaneous pursuit of democracy and the market economy, an aim closer to traditional



liberalism than to neoliberalism. But there are not a few persons even among presidential aides who do not hesitate to make extremely neoliberalistic remarks, and, as long as inducement of foreign capital continues to be regarded as the supreme goal, neoliberalism will be likely to overpower traditional liberalism in the long run, regardless of the intention of the government. In particular, the economic recovery as envisioned by the government, with its primary concern being to restore the growth rate in GNP or GDP rather than to reduce the gulf between rich and poor—which is widened by the IMF bailout—does not differ greatly from the common position of both domestic and foreign capital. Still, the objective interests of the government and foreign capital also have real differences, for while the latter can simply withdraw from South Korea in the event of unbearable social turmoil, the government has to bear the aftereffects of its exclusively neoliberal policies. Its position differs from that of domestic capital to a certain degree, as well, for its main posts are filled with officials who have to maintain their positions through the electoral process.

With the interests of the three parties so enmeshed in such complex ways, not only the government but also the other parties should not, in their search for a great tripartite compromise of workers, employers, and the government devote themselves exclusively to the immediate (and inevitable) task of making the economic environment attractive to foreign capital. Rather, while accepting those domestic reforms demanded by the IMF which will benefit all three parties in the long run, they should join together to resist those demands that will undermine not only the welfare of workers but even the fundamentals of the South Korean economy.

Is a great compromise of this nature really possible? If such compromise means all cooperation and no conflict, it can be nothing other than a deceptive strategy of combined domestic and foreign capital to exploit the people further on the pretext of responding to a national disaster. However, the movement for overcoming the division system does not adhere to the line of abolishing class, where "class" is defined within the analytic unit of a single state, or where the abolition of class is posited as a short or middle range project, and hence does not exclude a great tripartite compromise as a proper combination of class conflict and cooperation. Only, the word "proper" here means that the compromise should accord with the original aim of the movement for a reunified Korean peninsula to become a society more humane than South Korea under the division system and working toward the task of transforming the world-system. The short-term task, too, of keeping the competitiveness of the South Korean economy at a level at least not lower than now represents a defensive stance with its primary



aim as the overcoming of the division system, and thus differs essentially from the recklessly aggressive stance of trying to turn the divided South alone into an advanced country or to become a big power by absorbing North Korea.

I have already pointed out that the economic crisis symbolized by the IMF bailout implies the failure of the South Korean model constructed to fit a particular phase of the division system. No doubt, the current situation calls for the creation of a new developmental model. However, that model should correspond to our particular condition of attempting to overcome the division system while continuing to live under it, which means we cannot propose radical paradigm shifts as if reunification had already been accomplished or the task of reunification did not exist at all. For instance, we should be indulging in a romantic illusion if we declare an all-out war against capital, as attempted by the Mexican peasants in Chiapas, just because the IMF bailout has revealed the essence of world capitalism in its ultimate form; for, unlike the Zapatistas, we are in a position to look forward to a considerable, if a partial, resolution of our problems through overcoming the division system. It is another version of impractical idealism to argue, as do some ecological activists, against even the maintenance or restoration of our economic competitiveness within the world market just because the developmentalist ideology shared by the majority of labor leaders as well as by capitalists is precipitating the common destruction of humanity. It may be asked if there can be anything new in the model presented by the discourse of the division system, compared to those kinds of radical proposals. But the defensive stance that gives priority to overcoming the division system even to conduct an effective struggle against capitalism and developmentalism, and finds the maintenance of a minimum of competitiveness essential for the purpose, will make no small difference either to the content of the immediate issue of the tripartite compromise or to our responses to other matters concerning the IMF crisis. Indeed, if from the beginning we had addressed "international competitiveness" in this manner, we might have been able to avoid the IMF bailout.

What matters most, of course, is how we envision a reunified Korean peninsula. The defensive strategy we need to adopt at the moment will depend upon it. But if it is a valid point that the division system is a subsystem of the capitalist world-system and the latter will last longer than the former, then overcoming the division system is hardly expected to set us immediately free from the logic of the market economy. In other words, even in reunified Korea we shall need a defensive stance that accepts the logic of competition and development to the extent of enabling ourselves

to survive and do different things. On the other hand, it will become even clearer by then that a system that emphasizes the limitless accumulation of capital at the expense of humanity or, on the pretense of placing humans at the center, alienates human beings from nature and rids us of humanity itself does not suit humankind; and the Korean peninsula will become one of the important strongholds for those persons who have truly realized this fact. For the division system will not have been overcome except when real practical abilities have been combined with such awakening.

If the movement for overcoming the division system places its ultimate aim on the humane qualities of human beings rather than on the logic of capital, and on Lao-tse's "little nation with small population" to be established on the basis of global coexistence rather than on "a rich nation with a strong army," it may be inevitable sooner or later that the present agents for the reunification project will split up among themselves. The business sector, including the *chaebŏl*, regardless of the personal dispositions of individual entrepreneurs, is bound to strive for a strong unified capitalist nation and a world-economy grown even more prosperous through it; the government also will have difficulty disengaging itself essentially from developmentalism and the ideology of "rich nation with a strong army," even though it may add the goals of democracy and national culture. However, if the agents of the popular movements do not confuse long-term objectives with mid- or short-term ones and remain alert to the changes taking place at each phase within each sector of the tripartite structure, discrepancies within the forces of the movement due to their ultimately different aims will be unlikely to block the success of the movement. For instance, as the reunification project advances, the government itself may become more and more democratic and decentralized, evolving into a space for the expression of diverse ideas, and after reunification will hasten the pace of such evolution by having created a new model of compound state corresponding to the needs of the people who have surmounted the division system. Diversification will occur among business corporations, too, as some will succeed and others not in playing a certain role in the process of overcoming the division system as an all-Korean or citizen-friendly enterprise, even while they build up their international competitiveness through self-renewal. As for the labor movement, a road to new alliances is open—and already in progress—with the feminist and the environmental movements for the cause of overcoming the division system, comprising not only the classic industrial workers but also a wide variety of the working population, including white-collar and professional workers.

This radical yet middle-of-the-road perspective of the division system theory vis-à-vis a new developmental model has a good deal in common with "the internal tension between the aspirations for a powerful nation and for a small nation" proposed in the conference in celebration of the 100th issue of the *Quarterly Changbi* [*Ch'angchak-kwa-pip'yǒng*, or Creation and criticism].<sup>9</sup> The ideology of a powerful nation, essentially corresponding to the idea of a rich nation with a strong army, needs to be radically reexamined because it is harmful to humanity in the long run and inappropriate for a developmental plan for South Korea, and the aspiration for a small nation should come up for reconsideration; however, because neither the medieval attitude of being contented with one's poverty that disregards realities of the world-system nor a Taiwanese-type economic management comfortably ensconced in the division system of the world market adequately addresses our long-term goals, we need to keep alive, and rise to the tension between, these opposing aspirations. I once argued, though in a context related to the university, that "it is doubtful whether 'Korea's entry to advanced country status,' not a certain prospect to begin with, can be attained without the complete destruction of such humanist traditions as we have managed so far to keep," and that, instead, we had better put to good use "the merits of a country like South Korea, which is neither too rich nor too poor,"<sup>10</sup> and I feel this point has become more evident in light of the current financial crisis. If the immediate task of restoring the economy is a struggle not to lose such merits, we should not stop at overcoming the liquidity crisis and restoring to some degree the potential for economic growth; rather, we should turn it into an opportunity to search for a path different from the past when we were sacrificing virtually everything to the cause of economic growth. The reunification project in the IMF age constitutes not only the kernel of this task but also the key to making the economic revival fully worth the trouble.

## PART II



### 3. National Literature, the Division System, and Overcoming Modernity

*Some Fragmentary Thoughts*

#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

One hears that thoughts need to change with the years, but what really matters is that thoughts should grow deeper and more attuned to the truth. A thought grown deeper is new in one sense but remains the same in another, for it comes as a result of changing what needs to change, while preserving what ought to be preserved.

I bring up this truism because, though it has for years become a commonplace to say that things have changed or that we need to change, I have often been at once amazed that intellectuals in our society change with such ease, and frustrated that the intellectual climate hardly changes at all. It is not certain, of course, that I who say so am any exception. At any rate, a thorough safety check and a close examination appears imperative in the intellectual world. The space allotted to me does not allow a close examination, but I wish nevertheless to examine and, if possible, develop some of the issues that as writer and editor I have been endeavoring to bring into focus.

Among those issues, national literature, the division system, and the overcoming of modernity will be familiar to the readers of the *Quarterly Changbi*. Of these, the discourse of national literature, so far as our generation is concerned, came into prominence in the early 1970s, and I myself joined in the debate in 1974 and have been part of its history to this date. As for the discourse of the "division system," I initiated it in the late 1980s, and the term has since become fairly current, but as yet few seem to use it with any conceptual rigor. Conversely, the discourse of "modernity," even of "overcoming modernity," has flourished regardless of any initiative on my part and seems to be proceeding in an unbridled manner. If I myself

(along with a few colleagues) can claim to have added anything new, it would be the endeavor to render the discourse less abstract by placing the double project of achieving *and* overcoming modernity in line with the discourses of national literature and of the division system.

Apart from my individual interventions, the *Quarterly Changbi* also has made various attempts to further each of the three discourses or establish connections among them. One of these instances was the rather ambitious featured section in its spring 1995 issue (no. 87) entitled "Fifty Years of Division in World Perspective, and Korea's Tasks Hereafter" [Segye sok ūi pundan osipnyŏn, kŭhu ūi kwaje]. It brought together several contributions by distinguished scholars from abroad and also included a panel discussion titled "Modernity Reconsidered and the Way of Overcoming the Division System" [Keundaesŏng ūi chaejomyŏn kwa pundanch'eje kŭkpok ūi kwaje], in which young Korean scholars discussed many theoretical issues the journal had raised in search of a new paradigm. In fact, I had promised to write a piece dealing mainly with literature, but because of my failure to keep my word the feature section had to proceed without an examination of the discourse of national literature. It did, however, cover a fairly wide range of subjects, including the discourses of the division system and of overcoming modernity. Yet, except for its appearance in the panel discussion, the theory of overcoming the division system hardly played any role throughout the feature section, let alone being talked about in relation to other related subjects I had brought up. Bruce Cumings made a friendly reference to it, but the focus of his article, like that of Professor Wada's,<sup>1</sup> was more on the larger East Asian or global picture than on the internal situation of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, I felt a certain distance from either of them in the recognition of the national and world-historical need for overcoming the division system, which means something more than just peace on the Korean peninsula, or, for that matter, in the degree of awareness that, seen from a somewhat longer-term perspective, the world-system of the 1990s, too, calls for a radical transformation.

As for the thesis of the domestic contributor Kang Man-kil, I must point out though with due sympathy with his basic intent, that the very antithesis of "division statism" versus "unification nationalism" is a notion superannuated by the discourse of the division system. To affirm the *systemic* character of the divided reality is to claim that this reality is so complex that one cannot easily predict whether a particular act will contribute to the overcoming or reproduction of the system, and that both societies, North and South, have sufficient flexibility to turn even a pure

striving for national reunification into a resource for the maintenance of the respective regime. Further, the prolongation of division has certainly produced something like a national sentiment at the level of one particular society, in addition to the (pan-)national sentiment for the whole Korean nation. To confuse the former with “division statism” will most probably lead to a reunification movement cut off from popular sentiments and thereby serve to solidify the division system.<sup>2</sup> Whether it may be correct or not to define as nationalism the ideology that will creatively mobilize this sentiment for overcoming the division system, no meaningful progress in the discussion of reunification could be made without a scientific explication of the division system.

#### DISCOURSES OF NATIONAL LITERATURE AND THE DIVISION SYSTEM

The discourse of national literature and that of the division system involve two different areas as their respective primary concern, so it is pointless to ask which of the two represents the higher concept. Depending on the topic at hand, the former could base itself on the latter, or vice versa. In the context of my personal history, however, the discourse of national literature (as indicated above) came first, and only at some point in the course of its development did I put forth the notion of the division system.

It would be an act of unnecessary kindness to recapitulate here the doctrine of national literature, which I first presented in the 1970s. I would only remind readers that mine was different from the conservative version in identifying as the core of the nation the multitude of people actually living in history—whose character and formation, therefore, could vary with time in all kinds of ways. It also differed from the progressive version that emerged immediately after the Liberation in 1945, in setting up the overcoming of the division as the primary national agenda, having come upon a time when division had already been consolidated and even systemized. Accordingly, when in the 1980s radical movement forces were split into the so-called National Liberation and People’s Democracy (or democratic transformation) camps, the discourse of national literature, even while sympathizing with the former’s devotion to reunification and the latter’s aspiration for popular emancipation, had to distance itself from the rather simplistic logic of either.<sup>3</sup>

The occasion for this position to develop into the theory of the division system was the well-known social formation debate, which from the mid-1980s swept over progressive intellectual circles and even a portion of



the literary world. Aside from many other problems, what seemed doubtful, from the perspective of national literature, concerned the *unit* of the so-called social formation. Following orthodox Marxist-Leninist practice, the majority of participants in the debate took the nation-state as the basic unit of analysis, discussing the nature of the social formation under the assumption that South Korean society was a self-enclosed unit. Only some publicists in the national liberation camp objected to this “half-nation” perspective, instead stressing the “one-nation perspective” that took the whole Korean peninsula as the basic unit. Neither position, however, was consonant with the felt experience of those who had engaged themselves in the creation and reception of national literature. Given their devotion to a national literature of the whole nation rather than that of the southern half alone, they could hardly accept the assertion that North and South had already firmly settled into separate nation-states or social formations, nor could the literary practitioner’s sense of reality accommodate the argument that the whole Korean peninsula constituted a single social formation, with one half of it merely remaining under foreign occupation or (inversely) “unreclaimed” from communist rule. At this impasse, encouraged by the argument of Immanuel Wallerstein and others that the very positing of a nation-state as the unit of analysis—a notion basically shared by both the PD (People’s Democracy) and the NL (National Liberation) camps—is theoretically untenable, even apart from the particularity of a divided country, the point was raised that the whole debate should begin by settling the fundamental question of the basic analytic unit in the social analysis of South Korea and the Korean peninsula.

Along with the question of the unit of analysis it was also pointed out that the proposition that the fundamental contradiction is that of class, while the main contradiction is national, chiefly voiced by the PD camp with considerable resonance in the NL as well, was much too vague to indicate the concrete realities of division.<sup>4</sup> Especially imperative, I felt, was to explain *both* the perniciousness of division and the undeniable achievements made by the South and the North, each in its own way and despite the tremendous costs of the division. As a matter of fact, it has become a familiar sight that radical movements and progressive intellectuals, having neglected this double study, were either confounded or suddenly enraptured by the partial reforms achieved in the South since 1987, particularly after the inauguration in 1993 of the civilian president Kim Young-sam. The demand by the discourse of national literature for elucidation of the “contradiction of division” and for recognition of the division system represented a demand for practical answers as to the actual

pursuit of a real movement, from the perspective of a literary intellectual who could be neither satisfied with reforms confined to the South nor blind to the limits of such reforms.

Seen within the context of the development of the discourse of national literature, the emergence of the theory of the division system was related with the recognition that, as national literature had entered a new stage after the 1987 June Uprising, new tasks were presented and a new response at a higher level of synthesis demanded. It is for this reason that the first (relatively) elaborate discussion of the division *system* appeared in a piece of literary criticism that aimed at defining somewhat more specifically the character of the new stage.<sup>5</sup> In other words, a partial victory in the struggle with dictatorship made it the immediate task in terms of either literature or social movements to reflect on the questions of reunification, of gradual reform in the South, and of the more long-term task of popular emancipation, in a manner both holistic and sequential.

#### THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE ON THE DIVISION SYSTEM

So much for my personal account regarding the emergence of the discourse of the division system. Now let me roughly trace how the topic has since fared in public debate. Regrettably, here again my account will not escape the impression of being self-centered. For, as mentioned above, response in the academic world to the notion of the division system has been quite limited, which has compelled me to dance all by myself, as it were, sometimes virtually soliciting others for an occasion for polemical exchange. But as this essay was begun with the aim of inviting readers to a close examination of one's intellectual work, I hope they will pardon a somewhat self-centered retrospect.

From the late 1980s on, my discussion of the division system proceeded sporadically, until I presented a somewhat elaborated, though still far from systematic, view in "Toward an Understanding of the Division System" [Pundan ch'eje ūi insik ūl wihayō] (*Quarterly Changbi* 78, winter 1992). These essays, excepting those in the form of literary criticism, were put together in part 1 of *The Path of Practice*. To this call for debate serious responses were few enough in the literary world, but when it came to social scientists, all the responses up to the publication of that book were limited to a total of three critiques, by Yi Chong-o, Chōng Tae-hwa, and Son Ho-ch'öl, all solicited by *Quarterly Changbi* (and published in nos. 80, 81, and 84, respectively). Of these, I made brief comments on Yi's and Chōng's arguments in "A Supplement: Toward Further Debate on the

Division System" [Poron: pundan ch'ejje nonüi üi chinjõn ül wihayõ], in *The Path of Practice*, while to Son I offered a more detailed answer in "Recent Developments in the Division Age and Division System Theory" [Pundan sidae üi choekün chõngse wa pundan ch'ejje ron] (*Quarterly Changbi* 85, fall 1994).<sup>6</sup> Professor Son then published another rejoinder entitled "Reconsiderations of 'the Theory of the Division System'" (*Quarterly Changbi* 86, winter 1994; referred to hereafter as "Reconsiderations"). If our polemical exchange had continued, it might have drawn broader popular interest to the theory. For several reasons, however, I came to doubt the productivity of such a debate and decided that it would be more desirable for the issues to resolve themselves through a multiparty discussion such as the featured panel, or through other interventions by a third party.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the panel discussion, there were, as far as I am aware, also Pak Sun-sõng's "The Division System and the Transformation Movements" [Pundan ch'ejje wa p'yõnhyõk undong], in *Tonghyang kwa chõnmang* [Tendencies and prospects] 24 (winter 1994); and Yi Pyõng-ch'ang's review in *Sidae wa ch'õlhak* [Time and philosophy] 9 (Tongnyõk Publishers, 1994). But rather than responding to their comments one by one, I will proceed with my fragmentary thoughts by selectively addressing several issues that I think particularly important for the development and application of the theory of the division system.

One of the factors that make discussions of the division system complicated is the intervening problem of how to understand the closely related world-systems theory proposed by Wallerstein and others. This complication is entailed in the premise that the division system is itself not a self-completed entity but a peculiar subsystem of the modern world-system. What is important here, however, is not to decide whether or not we should accept in toto Wallerstein's theory of the world-system, but to make use of his methodology of world-systems analysis to suit our needs. Therefore, it is more often than not desirable to refrain from exegetic polemics based on partial knowledge of his work. It would, for instance, be very enlightening to witness a serious debate among specialists on Wallerstein's and Marxist theories over whether his position on the whole represents a circulationist deviation. Yet of greater immediate significance to the discourse of the division system is to remark that placing the actually existing socialist bloc or North Korea as a (very singular) part of the capitalist world economy will by no means "exempt one from the task of scientific investigation" ("Reconsiderations," 299) regarding the specific character of the society of North Korea or that of the erstwhile USSR. Indeed, to paraphrase a remark by Yun So-yõng when criticizing the application of the concept

of semifeudal society to South Korean society,<sup>8</sup> we may reflect upon the poverty of imagination of those who, faced with the partially socialist or socialist-oriented political and economic institutions that were established on the strength of the prodigious elasticity and inclusive capacity of the capitalist world economy, could not understand them except as a socialist world-system that had overcome capitalism or extricated itself from the capitalist world economy.<sup>9</sup>

Yet it is, after all, the issue of the unit of analysis in social research which both the theory of the world-system and that of the division system have raised in the methodology of science. Yu Chae-kōn stressed this point when he referred to Wallerstein in the panel discussion "Modernity Reconsidered and the Way of Overcoming the Division System" (132), and Son Ho-ch'öl himself fully agreed, saying, "we cannot stress too strongly his contribution to the question of the unit of analysis" (137). One needs to add, however, that Wallerstein's contribution does not stop at pointing out that, in today's world where the capitalist world-system is operative, the basic unit of social analysis should be the world-system instead of the individual nation-state, but, as he emphasized anew in a recent essay, includes his continual reminder that "the unit of analysis is not just given; it is itself the very first question the analyzer faces."<sup>10</sup> In other words, even if the world-system is ultimately the proper unit of analysis, one ought not merely to deduce mechanically from the character of the world-system, but to identify when necessary a more conveniently placed subunit according to the nature of the research at hand.

As a matter of fact, in writing "Recent Developments in the Division Age and Division System Theory," I felt a certain pride in having adopted a new, multidimensional approach to the unit of analysis called "our society" when we talked about "the contradictions of our society." This novelty actually owed itself to the criticisms of Son Ho-ch'öl and others on the vagueness of the concept of the division contradiction, yet it hardly received any notice in Son's rejoinder or in the interventions of other commentators. (If it had had received any notice, one could well have been accused of adding to the confusion!) Faced with the query of how division could be the main contradiction of South Korean society, I, instead of fixing on South Korean society as the unit of analysis from the beginning, had posited three distinct analytic tasks, but these were to be thought of in tandem so as to arrive at a multidimensional practice: (1) the central agenda when supposing the unit to be the world-system and considering ourselves as its constituents; (2) the main task we face as inhabitants of the Korean peninsula, with the division system as the unit for primary

attention; and (3) the immediate tasks at hand when concentrating on South Korea.<sup>11</sup> Hence, Son's point that one need not find mutually exclusive the two alternative approaches to South Korean society, namely, a stance of adopting "the world-system centered perspective" while admitting the primary significance of South Korean society for inhabitants of the South and the alternative stance of "focusing on those contradictions of the world-system that appear specifically in the primary realm of concrete practice, though not giving up the world-systemic problematic ('the one-nation-centered perspective')," but that the choice between the two is a pragmatic one to be made on the basis of "the concrete content of theoretical practice and analysis, that is, the extent to which the adopted stance can dynamically comprehend both the national and world-systemic aspects" ("Reconsiderations," 302)—this point surely is plausible enough, but actually ends up excluding a problematic especially important to me. It neglects to note that the crux of the world-systemic problematic lies not so much in taking the world-system as the starting point of all practical research as in the insight that, while recognizing the world-system as the basic unit, we should determine afresh each time whether the world-system as a whole or one (and which one) of its countless subsystems should serve as the primary object of attention. This approach differs qualitatively from the one in which the world-systemic problematic complements the one-nation-centered perspective. Moreover, lost sight of once again is the problematic of the theory of the division system that puts emphasis on the indispensability of the peninsula-centered perspective as the intermediate fact between the one-nation approach and the world-systemic one.

The discourse of the division system proposes as its line of praxis the simultaneous pursuit of at least triple movements: first, that the people of the South should concentrate within South Korea on achieving democracy and autonomy to the extent that such can be achieved within the limits imposed by the division system, and on relating these tasks to reunification; second, that they, together with the people of the North, should achieve not just any kind of reunification but the overcoming of the division *system* so as to advance a step closer toward the transformation of the world-system; and finally that, along with the people of the world, they should search for a radical alternative to the modern world-system, which should engage us through the first two processes and beyond. In this regard, Pak Sun-sŏng's comments, though distinguished by his constructive endeavor to further in his own way the understanding of the division system without being tied down to issues of terminology, include something unacceptable regarding the central tenets of my position. I have

in mind his reinterpretation of the division contradiction: "If the division system theory attempts to define its own character basically as a subtheory of world-systems theory, the most fundamental contradiction in the division system is in the final analysis 'opposition between two different states or state-powers', which is predicated on a reunification based on a symbolic historical entity called the nation" (Pak Sun-sŏng, 176). Thus interpreted, the theory of the division system comes perilously close to turning into a discourse in which the people are missing; nor can it be distinguished from a sentimental demand for reunification since, despite the qualification of being "predicated on reunification," the demand for overcoming the division is divested of its character as a contradiction generated within the division system and is reduced to an emotional need "based on a symbolic historical entity called the nation."<sup>12</sup>

As for his proposition that the main agents of movements for overcoming the division system can no longer be the working class, I would like again to offer a somewhat different interpretation. Pak explains: "It is because the class contradiction in world-systems theory signifies not only the contradiction between the capitalist and working classes but also those within the capitalist class as well, and also because the contradiction between the working class and the capitalist class is limited by ceaseless 'half-proletarianization'" (179). He then goes on to observe: "Admitting that in a sense there have been restrictions on the use of terminology due to the political particularity of Korean society, I believe this point [that the working class cannot be the main agents of change] has already been well attested by the fact that the major task in the transformation of the division system has been described as democratization or that the agency for the change of the division system is defined as *minjung* [people]. To put it otherwise, we could go so far as to say that the concepts of democratization and people come to retrieve their original meanings through the discourse of the division system" (180).

It is a question calling for a closer study whether in Wallerstein's theory "half-proletarianization" will really go on "ceaselessly" or, on the contrary, even the half-proletariat will in the long run become proletarianized, so that the contradictions of capitalism as a historical system will become unmanageable.<sup>13</sup> But to return to our immediate concern, that is, the issue of agency in overcoming the division system, I certainly appreciate his remark "that the concepts of democratization and people come to retrieve their original meanings through the discourse of the division system," which indeed defines democratization as the primary task for inhabitants of the South and posits the people on both sides as antagonists

to the division system; yet this should not exclude the possibility that the working class will become the main agents in the long-term movements for the transformation of the world-system. Of course, the working class in this instance is a concept that presupposes the world-system as the unit of analysis, so that it can neither be taken for a properly formed class yet nor equated simply with the industrial proletariat, as in an older conception attached to a specific past stage of capitalist development. Throughout the 1980s, discourses of national literature and of the division system were attacked for foregrounding “people” and deprecating “the centrality of the working class,” but kept a distance from the proletariat-centered discourses, first, because with respect to practice nothing could be achieved without a wide-ranging people’s solidarity, and also because, as a theoretical point, the concept of “the South Korean working class” ran into the problem that, insofar as the working class is a concept determined initially by the economic base, that base must be analyzed with the world-economy as the proper unit.

#### DISCOURSES OF OVERCOMING MODERNITY AND OF NATIONAL LITERATURE

I don’t particularly like the term *jiyang* [sublate]. Coined by the Japanese [as *shiyō*] and then adopted by Koreans to stand for the German *Aufheben*, it has little prospect of getting assimilated into the Korean language. (Actually, not a few people today use *jiyang* simply in place of “to cease” or “exclude.”) Yet the import of the term—to overcome something while preserving what is valid and valuable in it—remains quite important. And this is precisely what is signified by the word “overcoming” in the expression “overcoming modernity.” Any overcoming short of that will easily veer into romantic antimodernism, and even involves the danger of following in the wake of the discourse of “transcending modernity” abused by Japanese fascism.<sup>14</sup>

I need not explain at length that division system theory is a discourse geared to the particular overcoming (*Aufhebung*) of modernity attainable in the Korean peninsula. If the modern era is defined as the period in which the capitalist world economy is born, grows, and expands until it transforms itself into something else (regardless of the latter’s exact identity and whether or not it will prove to be something better), the theory of the division system does not assume that the reunification of Korea will directly realize “postmodernity” on the scale of either the Korean peninsula or the whole world, and thus differs both from those advocates of



transcending modernity who dismiss the real achievements of modernity, and from those postmodernist theories that define the present period, in which the forces of modernity are predominant still, as the “postmodern” (or even “postcontemporary”) age. All the same, it is undoubtedly a theory of overcoming modernity in that a true overcoming of the division system could be a momentous event for a desirable transformation of the world-system, and that, toward this aim, it proposes a specific kind of popular mobilization that would avoid either German-style unification, with its total lack of any postmodern orientation, or the Vietnamese kind, which, for all its professions of postcapitalism, turned out after all to be a detour on the way to incorporation into the world market.<sup>15</sup>

The real question, however, is not whether division system theory can qualify as a discourse of overcoming modernity. Although I shall not be commended for modesty if I say this, I do think that the question we must ask, with due humility and seriousness, is whether, as inhabitants of the Korean peninsula, we could actually develop a concrete and practical discourse for overcoming modernity without attending to the theory of the division system. Questions of modernity and postmodernity (or the overcoming of modernity) were discussed at some depth in the panel discussion on “Modernity Reconsidered and the Way of Overcoming the Division System,” but if many readers still felt that the discussion was too vague, one of the reasons may be that the discussion of modernity proceeded in disjunction from that of the division system.

Of course, some of the confusion attended inevitably upon the terms “modern” and “modernity,”<sup>16</sup> while further confusion was self-inflicted by the failure by the discussants themselves to sort out their different uses. For instance, Professor Kim Ho-ki, after initially appearing to mistake the emergence of the symptoms of postmodernity for the arrival of postmodernity as such, did soon correct himself by saying that, in fact, “late’ modernity seems by far the better problematic for a self-diagnosis of our age” (111), yet he did not manage to provide due clarity, for many of his “symptoms of postmodernity” should be understood as features of modernity itself. This was pointed out by other participants as well, including Yu Chae-kŏn and Son Ho-ch’öl. But Son, after observing trenchantly that Kim tended to equate Fordism with modernity and to find postmodernity or a “symptom of postmodernity” in the supersession of Fordism, added in his turn to the confusion by citing “the theoretical task of articulating the modern problematic of the liberation of labor with the postmodern problematic of gender, knowledge, race, environment, et cetera.” Indeed, the “liberation of labor,” though a typically modern problematic in one



sense, must at the same time be a problematic of overcoming modernity both in the sense of being a postcapitalist project and of calling for a radical reconsideration of existing notions of rationality. Also, he seems to give in too readily to standard postmodernist positions when he defines the issues of gender, knowledge, race, environment, and so forth as pertaining to the postmodern problematic awaiting an articulation with the modern problematic. In any case, I myself believe that the most urgent articulation for us—if indeed “articulation” is the proper term in this case—is for movements of labor, feminism, and the environment to make the connection, with “the overcoming of the division system” as the mediating term and with due regulation of the actual priorities, between everyday tasks and the long-term agenda of overcoming modernity.

It needs no lengthy explanation, either, that the overcoming of modernity in the discourse of the division system represents the same overcoming of modernity espoused in that of national literature. One may, however, add some comments to convey the point that for sufficient concreteness the discourse of overcoming modernity needs not only the theory of the division system but the discourse of national literature as well. In other words, “national literature” has a general relevance not limited to the literary world or to persons with a special interest in the topic. The panel moderator intimated as much in the remark, “When we talk about the double project of modernity and postmodernity [or the overcoming of modernity], ‘postmodernity’ seems to have some civilizational dimension” (120). True, the civilizational dimension is bound to touch almost everything directly or indirectly, but a literary project aiming at a creative continuation and development of national culture and an honorable participation in world literature should no doubt be particularly relevant. Yet this is but a general statement, to be further elaborated and substantiated through examination of a wide range of actual products of national literature and through consideration of major issues raised by the discourse, neither of which, regrettably, I am in a position to pursue here.

Still, *vis-à-vis* the suspicion that national literature has at last become a thing of the past with the unfolding of the era of globalization, I should emphasize that the situation is quite the contrary. As I pointed out in “National Literature in the Global Age” [*Chigu sidae üi minjok munhak*] (*Quarterly Changbi* 81, fall 1993), the global age led by capital is lethal to world literature itself, and national literature does not merely offer negative resistance to this dominant current, but, by “providing a model for perceiving the local reality of the Korean peninsula from a global perspective,” turns into “an indispensable element for defending the idea of world

literature and for the emergence of a new world-literature movement" (94). A difficult question remains, of course, as to whether the very idea of world literature is really worth preserving, and if so, what its content shall be. The question is not something to be resolved by hackneyed apologies for literature or obeisance to established classics, but eventually leads to the question of the ability of art and literature to realize Truth.<sup>17</sup> "Truth" in this case should refer to something much more fundamental than one defined by science or traditional Western metaphysics, and something directly related to practice as well, which is to say, something in the nature of *dao* [the Way]. Only on this condition will it be able to reveal how essential it is to overcome the reality threatening the very existence of world literature. It was in pursuit of this line of thought that my discourse on national literature gave rise to questions of the scientificity of science and the nature of Truth as well as the nature of art.

My own work in this regard so far is limited to the essays constituting part 4 of *The New Stage of National Literature* and part 2 of *The Path of Practice*, and while those explorations are unsystematic enough, I have regretted that they failed to receive any real scrutiny by specialists. Consequently, I was quite pleased to see Professor Yi Pyöng-ch'ang in his book review extend the critique of the division system theory to that of my notion of truth. Only, his critique of division system theory does not seem to call for a separate rejoinder from me, as it relies mostly on Son Ho-ch'öl's essay discussed here; the portions concerning truth, too, also seem generally off the mark, for his critique proceeds on the arbitrary assumption that I present "the understanding of humaneness aimed at by the humanities" as "the candidate for fundamental truth" (277). The passage from the concluding section of my "The 'Scientificity' of Science and Nationalistic Practice" [Kwahak üi kwahaksöng kwa minjokjuüi jök silch'on], which Yi quotes before delivering the above statement, actually involves a different dimension from "the understanding of humaneness" that is part of the aim of the humanities.<sup>18</sup> The crucial issue of whether "the questioning of the more fundamental truth" that I emphasized is compatible with what he calls the objective truth, that is, "correctness" [*Richtigkeit*], should not be approached with such a prejudice.<sup>19</sup>

In any case, the reason the issue of the unique world-historical roles of East Asia comes up in the course of the discourses of national literature and the division system is not only because Korea's geopolitical location exposes the movement for overcoming the division system to influences from East Asia's political situations, but also because the utilization of the civilizational legacies of East Asia will be indispensable in resolving the

philosophical and artistic tasks attendant on the overcoming of modernity. But the point, of course, is how to *use* them in the actual course of performing “the double project of modernity and postmodernity,” and not a mechanical application of premodern resources.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Though it does not seem yet to have fully registered with most South Korean intellectuals, the general trend of recent First World discourse suggests that postmodernism has been increasingly crowded out of the center stage by a refurbished doctrine of modernity and modernization.<sup>20</sup> We could actually sense the trend in Korea, too. Witness the way discourses of democracy and civil society drive the existence of the common people or *minjung* out of sight and turn all national concerns except the pursuit of international competitiveness of South Korean corporations into either buffoonery or devilish reaction under the pretext of exposing anachronistic nationalism.

This signifies essentially the resurrection of the discourse of modernization prevalent in the United States and other Western nations up to the 1950s and from the 1960s on in South Korea. A recent spate of idealizations regarding the developmental autocracy of Park Chung Hee (Pak Chŏng-hŭi) are by no means the result of a mere maneuvering by the residual followers of the Yushin regime,<sup>21</sup> but are related to this global tendency. We should note, however, that this resurrection after decades of modernization discourse not only entails serious distortions of history but also a few theoretical refinements as well.

Some of the radical criticisms in the 1960s and 1970s against the original discourse of modernization may be said to represent a mixture of romantic antimodernism and a genuine move toward the overcoming of modernity. But mainstream postmodernism carried out both distortion and refinement by stigmatizing even a substantial portion of this move as “modern,” while inheriting the rest in a depoliticized manner so as to claim that we have now entered the “postmodern” period. But today’s new version of the modern proudly announces that it has surmounted even this radical critique of modernity on the part of the postmodernists, claiming that its professed genuine modernity does not define modernization as Westernization, as did the old discourse of modernization, but as the construction of a global democratic community that has incorporated postmodernist pluralism, hence as the universal agenda that has soundly

sublated even postmodernism. Modernization, succeeding communism, has come to pass as, so to speak, a new pseudoreligion of the world.<sup>22</sup>

Insofar as this is yet another distortion of the historical process up to the present, and represents nothing but a rosy illusion whether for the capitalist societies that have won the Cold War or for postcommunist societies of the erstwhile Soviet and Eastern bloc, the problematic of the national literature discourse of the early 1970s still remains valid. But considering that further theoretical refinements have been added to the partial refinements already accomplished by postmodernism and, moreover, that the newly industrialized economies of Asia, including South Korea, are especially vulnerable to rosy illusions because they currently occupy the limited beneficiary regions that are certain to exist in every crisis of the world economy, the discourse of national literature should not neglect its work, expanding itself into discourses of the division system, of overcoming modernity, and so forth, while also continuing to deepen and elaborate itself as a properly *literary* discourse.

## 4. The Ecological Imagination in Overcoming the Division System

### 1.

Korean reunification, conceived as the overcoming of the division system, has some important implications, of which I will examine the following three.<sup>1</sup>

First, insofar as it is a system that needs to be overcome, neither of its main components, North and South Korea, is a society that merits full support. In fact, neither constitutes a full-fledged system of its own but only a subsystem of the division system. Thus, there is a limit to how far their peaceful coexistence and respective developments may go in a state of perpetual division. Reunification of some kind is called for not by the mere fact of ethnic ties or of a unified existence in the past but by the *systemic* nature of the divided peninsula.

Second, though I said “reunification of *some kind*,” the kind of reunification must derive in principle from the nature of the division system. Inasmuch as it deserves the name of a system, it must, however deplorable, have acquired a certain basis in the daily lives of the people, not to be abolished out of hand, which is the root of the capacity for self-reproduction that belongs more or less to all systems. Consequently, unless the division system is *dialectically overcome* in the particular manner called for by its inherent contradictions, the lives of the people in question may suffer significant damage. This is why we need a reunification on the initiative of popular movements opposed to the division system’s antidemocratic and dependent nature, rather than its overthrow through force or reunification by unilateral annexation—especially by relying on foreign powers.

Third, if, as I have repeatedly argued, the division system itself is not a self-complete social system but a subsystem of a larger world-system, even

the most self-reliant reunification effort cannot be the exclusive task of the inhabitants of the Korean peninsula or of the Korean nation, and any real overcoming of the division system must involve specific long- and short-term changes in the world-system. Reunification called for by the nature of the division system ought to signify, in a larger context, such changes as are both possible within the current world-system and responsive to the demands of the people throughout the world for the transformation or reform of the existent system. That is why our reunification movement can hardly succeed without a world-historical vision and international solidarity.

2.

That the division system is an artificial system that needs to be overcome finds a dramatic illustration in the highly militarized state of the so-called Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Where can we find a border between two hostile countries blocked with such dense minefields and barbed-wire defenses? If we look at a country like Germany with a similar experience of division, even the Berlin Wall, let alone other areas of the East-West German border, for all the human casualties it caused, was a rather minor affair in comparison. But this is not because Koreans are inherently more warlike than Germans, nor merely because of the memories of the internecine Korean War. Rather, the Korean peninsula was undemocratically and heteronomously divided against the wishes of the majority of the population, and even after fifty-odd years of considerable solidification the division system remains too unstable to survive without reliance on overwhelming military force.

For instance, how could any one side, whether North or South, cope with the confusion if the DMZ were to be suddenly and completely thrown open? The balance of population movements from North to South and from South to North will depend on at what point in the history of the division such an imagined opening is effected. There is almost a consensus among knowledgeable observers in the South that if it should happen now the southward movement would far exceed that in the opposite direction, and North Korean authorities, too, seem tacitly to agree. Let us assume this prediction is true. The question is whether South Korean society can cope with such a large-scale movement of population. It would not be long before the authorities in Seoul revived a border similar to the DMZ and tried to control the influx of Northern compatriots, much as the United States has done with regard to refugees from Cuba or Haiti; and many

of the hard-won democratic rights in the South will be taken away in the name of controlling the social chaos. If, contrary to the current wisdom, the movement of the population turns out to be largely from South to North, or a substantial part of the Southern population goes to the North while a comparable portion of the North moves to South, it will similarly result in chaos and social regression. Yet it is quite unrealistic to assume that the movement of population between North and South, despite a sudden and complete freedom, will be both limited in its absolute quantity and more or less balanced in proportional terms.

A sudden and complete abolition of the intra-Korean border is of course a fantasy. Why then bother to discuss it? Nobody dreams that the intra-Korean border will disappear literally overnight; however, a rather widespread view is that the South could cope like West Germany with the consequences of a more or less German-style reunification if only sufficient "reunification cost" funds have been accumulated. Of course, South Koreans by now have grown considerably more levelheaded than they were immediately after Germany's reunification, and President Kim Young-sam recently declared that he did not want a rushed and unilateral integration. Still, many people either wish for a German-style reunification in the long run, or resignedly accept it as, after all, the only possibility. These circumstances all the more require us to learn to imagine the various consequences of our having shouldered such a reunification.

One thing not at all difficult to imagine is the disappearance—with the sudden abolition of the intra-Korean border—of the unique ecological domain formed within the DMZ over the past forty-odd years. True, some tasks such as preserving certain historic sites and designating symbolic conservation areas may be more or less safely entrusted to the authorities. In the event of a German-style unilateral annexation under the aegis of South Korea's ruling circles, however, the DMZ will most probably witness a wild spree of development and land speculation. Even in the case of the two governments' agreeing to add other points of passage in addition to P'anmunchŏm, it is quite unlikely that ecological considerations will enjoy top priority.

### 3.

The fact that the DMZ has resulted, as a by-product of the fierce armed confrontation between North and South, in a unique ecological space in the Korean peninsula, a large green belt providing a field of ecological experimentation almost unprecedented in human history and a habitat for

rare animals and plants, offers a peculiar illustration of the proposition that a system that has acquired certain self-reproductive powers, however deplorable its nature, must have some compensating virtues. The most obvious of such virtues in the Korean instance is that the division system has at least prevented the resumption of war even though it has encouraged continuous tension since 1953 and attendant undemocratic tendencies on both sides. This is a better outcome at least than another internecine (probably nuclear) war that could bring a virtual end to the Korean nation. This is not the only virtue of the division system, however. The sudden division forced each of the two Koreas to make extraordinary efforts to maintain a separate existence and not to lag behind in their systemic competition, and their efforts also drew unusual interest (and support) from the outside world. Thus, the North achieved what was once applauded as a model of a self-reliant economy, and today's South can be said, at any rate, to have joined the group of successful newly industrialized countries.

If these are more or less the intended achievements of the ruling powers, other results have been obtained in opposition to the system or regardless of its announced aims. Among such unintended achievements must be counted as the most prominent example the growth in South Korea of popular movements resisting the division system. At first, the popular movements were prone to go their separate ways as simply an antidictatorship movement or a naive reunification movement; even now many social movements operate in isolation from each other without focusing on overcoming the division system. But popular resistance to the developmentalist dictatorship that is a part of the division system not only has defended our society to some extent from total devastation by the ideology of developmentalism, but such resistance, having reached a new level of awareness of the correlations between democracy, self-reliance, and reunification, and of the world-historical dimensions of these tasks, has now built a momentum valuable not only to the Korean peninsula but to the future of the whole world-system. Besides such results of macroscopic significance, the very pain, sorrow, and sometimes utter meaninglessness of daily lives torn between North and South and fettered by the division system have been turned into lessons and produced other less visible but equally meaningful results, not to be lost even after reunification, embedded like hidden treasures in the lives of numerous people. The DMZ, usually an object of amnesia among most people, offers a peculiar yet highly symbolic instance of such unintended achievements.

What are the chances of preserving the ecology of the DMZ after, or in the course of, reunification? In a sense, this single question involves



numerous problems attendant on the overcoming of the division. To begin with, the idea of literally complete preservation after reunification is neither realistic nor theoretically defensible. Proposals for rebuilding at least the Seoul-Sinŭiju and Seoul-Wŏnsan railway lines have already been made and enjoy broad popular support. This project alone will cause considerable ecological changes. But will there be only railways and no motorways? And how many motorways, if allowed? Only rail and motorways but not buildings? Shall we not need at least minimum facilities for managing railway lines, motorways, and the natural conservation areas? Also, if we should consider the notion of a peace park or a park for national reconciliation in some part of the DMZ, this too would require some attendant facilities. And what about the consequences of bringing in tourists, or of the return of former residents and prospective farmers to settle in the area?

To the extent that the DMZ is a part, though an unexpectedly desirable asset as well, of the division system, it makes theoretical sense, too, that it should not remain intact in the course of overcoming the division. The difficult question is where to draw and how to keep the line once we have admitted the inevitability of some change and destruction to its current ecology. Attempts will surely be made at reducing or degrading the preserved areas in the name of effective utilization of the nation's land, respect for settlers' rights to a living, and development of resources for tourism, and the like, and it remains a fact that developmentalism prevails as the ruling ideology on both sides. (For those who believe that things will be different if reunification should come about on the initiative of the North should take a hard look at the path the reunified Vietnam has chosen.) Besides, the DMZ at present is a heavily guarded and highly restricted area. Not only is it impossible to stage any popular resistance action on the spot against development plans agreed upon by the ruling circles on both sides, but it would be difficult for the public even to know what decisions have been made regarding its fate and how they are being implemented. And then, the resistance will get nowhere if it is against only one particular government of the division system.

One may, therefore, easily imagine the difficulty of the task of ecological conservation and peaceful utilization of the DMZ. Only a broad alliance and solidarity of many movements and forces would produce meaningful results. But such solidarity involves not only organizational problems but complex questions of theory to reconcile the possibly conflicting aims of conservation and utilization. Also, while conflict with the authorities is unavoidable, nothing can be accomplished independently of them—that is, either governments on both sides of the division or a

confederal or federal government that might be established in the future; hence, an alliance with advocates of conservation and/or utilization within government circles—including those chiefly interested in the revenue from tourism—should not be excluded. But still more important will be international collaboration with individuals and organizations for environmental protection and ecological research. Without a global solidarity with individuals and groups abroad, including international organizations such as the UN, even the broadest solidarity at the domestic level will not by itself be a match for developmentalists' power.

4.

A broad, complex, and multinational solidarity movement, however, would require for its success a core group capable of providing intelligent answers to the questions of what to preserve, how to preserve it, and why. Common sense tells us that with the DMZ in question such a core should form itself inside the Korean peninsula. Insofar as both Korean governments are parts of the division system regardless of their respective merits and demerits, a movement that takes as premise the abolition of that system ought to be based on nongovernmental initiatives. But what are the concrete vision and practice needed for the success of such a movement?

Of course, concrete and detailed plans for conservation and utilization ought to be drafted by experts in the various relevant fields of geography, history, economics, zoology, botany, and so on, and to remain open to modifications and supplements as circumstances demand. But it is also evident that the question of the DMZ cannot be simply handed over to expert calculation, either. Indeed, measured solely in terms of the balanced development or sustainable growth of a reunified Korea, no expert calculation is likely to come up with a compelling argument for more than a partial and quite limited preservation of the DMZ. Moreover, as long as the current world-system remains in force, pressures of unlimited global competition will tell on the reunified country as well, and any nation's ability to resist such pressures must be limited. Only qualitatively new thinking—a leap of the ecological imagination—that goes beyond all existing logic of calculation could produce answers to the conservation and peaceful utilization of the DMZ.

If, however, any answer is to deserve the name of a vision, the ecological imagination ought to provide an insight penetrating the spurious logic of the current division system and world-system, a new idea that can make a substantive contribution to the transformation of both. Otherwise, it

will be a flight of fancy rather than genuine imagination, or merely add another variant called ecological fundamentalism to the many fundamentalisms that characterize the “postmodern” world. Ecological fundamentalism, as is often the case with other fundamentalisms, no doubt offers many valuable lessons to modern man. Its critique of anthropocentrism as an ideology of inevitable natural devastation threatening even the human species, or its resolute condemnation of the whole world-system as one of ineluctable hostility to the natural environment, remains indispensable to a genuine ecological imagination. That said, it tends to be short on specific analysis concerning such questions as whether one may not end up neglecting to protect human beings if, shedding anthropocentrism, one rejects any gradation from the human viewpoint of various living creatures, indeed of all objects in nature; or how the anti-ecological nature of the current world-system is related to the fact that it is a capitalist system. Particularly, it is a question frequently overlooked even by green movements not designated as a fundamentalist variant whether the environmental destruction in “actually existing socialist” countries was an inevitable fate of industrialist society as such or an outcome specific to those societies, which had never been free from the logic of the capitalist world-system. Lack of such complex thinking presents a curious resemblance to another naiveté that smothers the ecological imagination, namely, the argument that the accomplishment of a socialist revolution will easily solve all ecological problems.

Exercise of the ecological imagination can result in a movement of only limited practical power unless it offers a cogent analysis of the specific workings of the world-system and adequate ways of dealing with it. Not that the *will* to action has been lacking in most green movements. What they often do lack is a middle term to mediate between the short-term local struggles against pollution or for conservation and the long-term goal of a fundamentally changed relation between humans and nature, so that they are likely to oscillate between some local ameliorations and a grandiose ideal.

5.

Of intermediate terms, too, there is more than one, to be sure. But the power of a movement will obviously grow in proportion to the number of its participants sharing an intermediate term in the given situation. In today’s Korea such a crucial link in the actual mobilization of the ecological imagination appears to be the task of overcoming the division system.

Connecting the questions of division and ecology presents no difficulty at the level of general theory if one accepts David Harvey's thesis that "all ecological projects (and arguments) are simultaneously political and economic projects (and arguments) and vice versa. Ecological arguments are never socially neutral any more than socio-political arguments are ecologically neutral."<sup>2</sup> But the more important task is to realize how problems like class rule, sexism, and racism in the present world-system are related to its environmentally destructive nature, and how such a system actually operates in the Korean peninsula through the mediation of its peculiar subsystem involving national division. At the same time, starting from the opposite end, one must grasp how South Korea's large-scale destruction of the natural environment, with its disregard for nature and human life, are inseparable from such matters as the deepening gap between rich and poor, still-powerful sexism, nationalism that is taking on increasingly racist and (sub-)imperialist characteristics, and a continuous increase in Eurocentric ways of thinking, and how this particular combination reflects the essential nature of the capitalist world-system as mediated by the anti-democratic and dependent division system.

This is not the place for that analysis. But in the case of the Korean peninsula it needs little analysis to surmise that no movement, ecological or whatever, will attain to substantial influence without addressing the wishes of the majority of its population for a reunified national life. At the same time, few of its major tasks—especially those concerning the environment and the division system—are likely to be accomplished without involving forces outside Korea. Our ecological movement and political movement can be unified (as they should be) and exert substantial influence only when various local and particular movements in both Koreas find, on the one hand, the basis for a principled solidarity by recognizing the common determinations imposed on them by the division system, and then develop further, on the other hand, into a global solidarity movement by realizing the more basic determinations imposed by the world-system.

In this context, the goal of ecological conservation of the DMZ acquires a value beyond the symbolic. I indicated above that this goal is more a product of the imagination than of calculation, for calculation in this instance means calculating from mistaken premises, whereas imagination brings out the right answer. Preserving some nearly 1,000 square kilometers of a truly demilitarized green strip as a Grand All-Korean Park or Grand Peace Park in the middle of the peninsula neither accords with the interests of the division regimes nor makes practical sense in terms of the logic of the world market. Yet such impracticality has a decidedly practical

meaning for a movement that attempts to creatively use the assets of the division period and thus genuinely overcome the division *system*, refusing to accept a unification that leaves the logic of that system intact. So impractical a goal attained through a broad movement of popular solidarity inside and outside Korea will have inflicted on the world-system the utmost damage possible in the given time and place. Not only will the Korean peninsula become a more propitious field for creative interactions by the people of East Asia and the world, but there will have emerged a model for combining different levels of common endeavor—from personal cultivation to small-scale local movements to new literary-academic movements to a fully global movement for people's emancipation—for a different life from the one we now have, in which we must compete to earn more money than others and keep them down in order to escape being kept down by them.

It is all the more significant that a sizable movement simultaneously advocating the abolition of the military demarcation line and the conservation of the Demilitarized Zone has been launched by a group of artists, naturalists, and scholars of various fields in the form of a cultural and artistic movement. Today's world, faced with the crisis of ecological destruction and the threat of the devastation of human civilization, is in need of a creative mobilization of the imagination rather than stereotyped calculation. Therefore, it is proper that scholarly experts join in this cultural and artistic movement, and it is inspiring, too, that international solidarity has already begun to take shape. I hope the FRONT DMZ Movement, as part of a larger endeavor for overcoming the division system and transforming the world-system, will continue to increase its imaginative power and practical effectiveness.

## 5. The Culture of Reform and the Division System

I feel much honored that the Saeöl Cultural Foundation has invited me to its Morning Dialogue as it commemorates the foundation's tenth anniversary. My theme today is the culture of reform and the division system, and I think it is of great importance for the establishment and dissemination of what I call "the culture of reform" that a nongovernmental public-interest corporation like Saeöl has conducted its numerous activities with such steadfastness for the past ten years, all the more so since nowadays everything tends to be drawn into the capital city of Seoul.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, I would like to add heartfelt congratulations of my own before beginning this talk.

At the time I was asked to give this talk, I had only a vague idea of connecting the two themes of reform culture and the division system. But my topic has now become of immediate interest to a larger number of people, owing to a series of incidents that have recently broken out along the DMZ and the prominent media coverage of North Korea's responses.<sup>2</sup> As I have no special knowledge or intelligence regarding the actual state of affairs, I doubt that I can say anything new on these developments, but I believe they have offered a fresh opportunity to think over the issue of reform in relation to the issue of division.

### REFORM AND THE CULTURE OF REFORM

First of all, I will try to explain why, talking of reform, I take up the term "the culture of reform." The word "reform" has been on nearly everyone's lips in the present decade (the 1990s), especially after the launching of the civilian government in early 1993. Even those who oppose reform hardly profess their defense of vested interests outright, saying instead

that they are for “reforms on the basis of stability.” Compared to a not too distant past, it does feel like another era altogether.<sup>3</sup> During the 1980s, for instance, both the government authorities and radical movement groups cast a suspicious eye on any mention of the word “reform;” the former saw it as a kind of camouflage with the intention of subverting the system, while the latter tended to suspect that to argue for reform implied compromise and co-optation when the order of the day was to *transform* (or revolutionize) the antidemocratic and foreign-dependent system and the military regime.

The atmosphere has shifted so much in the past few years that the term has almost become cant. On the whole I think this change signifies that our society has progressed and improved. I would say that the basis has at last been laid upon which we may discourse on reform and build a reform culture of the proper kind. In other words, it is an undeniable fact that the new government under Kim Young-sam, apart from the question of how really democratic it is, has become a civilian one, much less likely to fear all advocates of reform and less in need of accusing them of being subversive. At the same time, among dissidents who advocated “transformation” rather than reform were always included many for whom such radical slogans were an expression of extreme zeal and determination in fighting the repressive military regime, and who really meant no more than the establishment of a democratic, civilian regime. The fact that those people can now talk of reform more freely without fear of being stigmatized as turncoats must be regarded as another sign of progress. Despite many ups and downs, I believe our society has witnessed a steady advance in democratization during the 1990s, including the many striking events of the past year, the biggest among them the imprisonment and trial of two ex-presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo. Some newspapers editorialized that after those events “one could hardly face foreigners for shame,” but I would say, first of all, that many foreigners do not regard it as a shameful but an enviable occurrence. In my opinion, too, we should feel ashamed that we did not expose or prevent their crimes at the time they were being committed, either during their tenures (bribery and embezzlement of public funds) or before they took the presidency (subversion of constitutional order through military coup); but if we bring them into the light, even though belatedly, and impose due judicial justice on the culprits, it surely becomes a feather in our cap, and actually a rare achievement in the record of similarly situated countries. Because of this affair, I have come to be prouder of our society, and I believe every Korean should feel the same.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that a reform culture has yet taken

root in our society. By "culture" I mean what sociologists or cultural anthropologists do, that is, the way we live our everyday life, rather than something limited to art or "high culture." Taking it in this sense, one can hardly say that the spirit and practices of reform have become so ingrained in us as to settle into a culture. For example, there is considerable backlash following the arrest of the two ex-presidents, with talks of giving consideration to "TK sentiments";<sup>4</sup> or, in the general election campaign now under way, almost all candidates who mentioned the need for reform at the start have rushed into a race toward conservatism as the election day draws near, with some newspapers blatantly encouraging the drift. Seeing all this, I cannot help concluding that we have a long way to go before a reform culture settles in.

Then, why has it not happened yet, even though the government itself is advocating reform and almost everyone in the country seems to favor it? No doubt the Kim Young-sam regime's tactical failures and mistakes must to some extent account for it. Also, what many call the congenital limits of the regime (i.e., the former opposition leader Kim Young-sam's coming to power through a merger with Roh Tae-woo's governing party in 1990) may have something to do with it. In my opinion, however, the fundamental reason lies in the failure of reform forces to thoroughly understand the connectedness of reform projects and the division system, with the consequence that they have so far lacked the competence to subdue the ultra-conservative forces of this division system. With this point in mind, I would like to examine, in the company of those of you present who occupy leading positions in the Inch'ön area, the relatedness of reform culture to the division system.

#### DIVISION AND THE SYSTEM OF DIVISION

The crucial and pressing nature of the North-South division was again made obvious by North Korea's behavior in the recent DMZ disturbances. I cannot predict how far these commotions will affect the outcome of the general election only two days ahead. About the intentions of the North, too, many people including myself can only make conjectures. Be that as it may, I think these incidents have made clear at least the tight interlocking of the reform projects inside South Korea with the issue of North-South relations.

As for the North's intentions, I would speculate, though I am far from certain, that they intended less to provoke a war or abolish the DMZ itself, as some South Korean commentators maintained, than to look for some



diplomatic advantage in the forthcoming negotiations with the United States, perhaps seeking a settlement by direct DPRK-U.S. talks while leaving South Korea on the sidelines. But why this particular moment just days before the election? Some may argue that the North chose the timing according to its own schedule irrespective of the South's domestic affairs, and others, quite to the contrary, may think that this was a conspiracy on the South's part designed to provoke the North. In fact, this interpretation would not seem wholly groundless in that, though the Team Spirit exercise<sup>5</sup> itself was discontinued, ROK-U.S. joint military exercises as well as independent exercises by ROK forces have to my knowledge been recently expanded.

Nevertheless, it is too facile an interpretation to attribute the disturbances either to the North's unilateral timetable totally independent of the South's domestic events, or to North Korea's so-called blind bellicosity, or, for that matter, to a South Korean plot. Looking back on past elections, we can notice that almost no election time passed without some incidents breaking out between North and South, whether due to some intention on the North's part or to machinations by the South. It is a fact, too, that the South's ruling group, especially under the military regimes, announced an espionage case or cooked up something just before election time, but such things, which created a favorable atmosphere for the conservative forces to the disadvantage of the reform camp, have cropped up too regularly for us to believe that the North happened naïvely to fall into the trap. Each of these cases demands a separate investigation into the real truth, but if one may observe a pattern underlying them, it may be judged that, whether in the South or the North, forces are enjoying a considerable degree of hegemonic power that do not want reform culture to take root and expand. In other words, such forces evidently exist in the North, too, and not just among the diehard vested interest forces of the South.

Therefore, to put exclusive blame on either of the regimes or to attribute everything to the interventions of foreign powers is too simplistic a reasoning to allow reform forces to take initiative in the world, and I don't think reform culture can take root as long as we adhere to that line. Whenever such an incident breaks out, response by the reform camp is limited to warning the government not to exploit it for electoral advantage. In other words, the initiative always belongs to the other side, whether it is the authorities of the South or the North, while those who advocate democratization and reform through popular participation have been apt to find themselves on the defensive, busy explaining themselves and hardly able to do anything except warning the government not to exploit it.

This is why I see the reality of the divided Korean peninsula, for all its sharp confrontations and mutual divergences, as constituting a kind of *system* in which these very confrontations, conflicts, and divergences subtly operate to maintain and reproduce the state of division. In other words, what has been established in Korea is not just a division of any sort but a system of division with a capacity for self-reproduction and thus enjoying certain stability. It is for this reason that I argue that without a correct understanding of how this system works, we cannot properly cope with the given reality.

Therefore, in pursuing reform projects, too, only those movements predicated on an exact understanding of the division system will contribute meaningfully to a culture of reform. As I turn, however, to a brief introduction to the concept of the division system, I feel some diffidence because, while many people have discussed Korea's division and the age of division, I myself was the first to introduce the term division system in the pages of my journal *Quarterly Changbi* and it may sound like self-promotion. I do not wish to give a prolonged account of how the discussion has developed, but I do feel rewarded as the notion recently has gradually gained currency in intellectual circles, with some social scientists expressing interest in it and a few even engaging in debate with me. As I have no time to give a detailed explication of the notion of the division system, I will address its implications for today's topic, namely, the relatedness of the division system and reform culture, and summarize my position under four headings.

#### SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIVISION SYSTEM

First, while all of us wish for reunification and therefore naturally think of the division system as something to be overcome, and no one present here will object to its overcoming as we have gone through a great deal of suffering while living under the division system, the reason I add the word "system" is neither to express more forcefully our will to fight against division nor to make the whole thing sound more sophisticated. My point is to stress that any system, insofar as it has come to deserve the name of a system, cannot collapse too easily; and, furthermore, that it ought not to be abolished recklessly. This may be misunderstood as a statement supporting the state of division, but any system, once established as such, should be able first of all to satisfy the basic needs of its members and provide a certain stability to their everyday lives. Only then is a system able to establish and sustain itself as a system. This applies to the divi-

sion system as well, under which, to cite my own case as an instance, I have managed to lead a life for decades within its Southern half, suffering much frustration because of the system but also engaging in some activities that I have found worthwhile. Thus, one conclusion we may draw is that such a system will not be easily abolished; that, if we attempt to abolish it by some unwarranted means like war, we may end up losing even those advantages the system has provided; and that, therefore, in order to overcome and abolish the system as indeed we must, we need to acquire a precise understanding of the way it works and to find an intelligent answer as to the best possible way of overcoming it instead of blindly advocating revolution or unification at any cost.

Second, the division system implies a view that the main contradiction within it is not so much between the South and the North as between, on the one hand, the vested interests on each side who, while pitting themselves against the other as two opposing extremes, find themselves in a curiously symbiotic relationship, and, on the other, the majority of the population of the North and South, who are alienated and suffer from that symbiosis. This leads to another proposition, namely that a desirable unification will not be attained by the political complicity of the privileged groups in the South and the North who have so far benefited from division, nor through a calamity like war, nor on the initiatives of foreign powers to the exclusion of the Korean people, but only through active participation by the people who constitute the oppositional term within the division system. Only such a reunification will amount to a genuine alternative and a true overcoming of the division system.

Third, because the two states that constitute the major components of the division system—even though each officially refuses to recognize the other as a legitimate state, they are virtually independent sovereign states, confirmed in that status by membership in the United Nations—exist in such a disconnection from each other, it is not possible right now for the people of the two Koreas to launch a joint drive toward reunification, even though we may grant in principle that they must become the agents of a peninsula-wide reunification movement. Therefore, movements for overcoming the division system in the South should proceed by focusing on reforms within South Korea, while in the North—although I am not in a position to know exactly the current situation nor to predict what will happen—some movements of the people aiming initially at changing and reforming its own society should unfold themselves in one way or another. Only then will popular movements of either side, while pursuing their respective domestic aims, join together to carry out a peninsula-wide

popular movement for reunification. The concept of the division system thus implies a series of tasks in a sequential order.

Fourth—and this has been a subject of some theoretical debate—I have, while arguing that neither of the two Koreas should be regarded as a full society but only as parts of the peninsula-wide division system, contended further that the division system, in its turn, is not a self-enclosed system. In other words, if we find a more specialized expression (though admittedly of a particular school) for now familiar phrases like “global village” or “one world,” we may say that today’s world has already been integrated into the capitalist world economy, or a single world-system. True, a number of states exist within it, but this does not mean that the world economy is divided into so many national units, but rather that the mechanism for the management of the integrated capitalist world economy includes a political structure consisting of many sovereign states. The Korean peninsula, however, represents a peculiar case where the system of the world economy does not realize its logic merely by a direct use of the state apparatuses of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea—though, of course, it does so to some extent—but by going through the additional mediating term of the division system. For this reason, whenever we deal with a problem in South Korea, we need to approach it simultaneously in at least three dimensions. First of all, we should place the problem within the South Korean context; at the same time, we need to think of it in the context of the peninsula-wide division system, since South Korea unlike other more normal states is one half of a divided country; and furthermore, we must also realize that the division system itself is not a discrete social system but a part of the world-system. To use more specialized terminology, we should regard it as a subsystem of the world-system.

When I insist that we should think of three dimensions simultaneously, some people fault me for making the problem much too complicated. My answer would be that they shouldn’t blame me but blame God, or at least those who are powerful enough to design and drive the contemporary world. My point is that because the world’s makeup is so complex, we must understand it in all its complexity; it isn’t as though I have made things complicated on purpose. And because the division system is not a self-enclosed system but only a constituting element of the world-system, in order to accomplish a proper kind of reunification we need a truly global perspective on the real nature of the world-system and its possibilities for change. Otherwise we shall not have an effective movement for reunification. This is the fourth implication to be drawn from the notion of the division system.

## IMPEDIMENTS TO REFORM PROJECTS

Having said this much to introduce the doctrine of the division system, I shall now address the question of how we can pursue our reform projects beyond the numerous obstacles facing them, and whether the understanding of the division system makes our struggles only more complicated and formidable, or instead, the application of a somewhat complicated notion helps us to tackle those obstacles more effectively. All theories need to be tested in the real world, since various doctrines are produced so that we may live and find more appropriate solutions to problems in reality. And as we encounter today issues of reform in every field of our life, including the election only two days away,<sup>6</sup> we have plenty of occasions for verifying a doctrine against reality.

One of the biggest obstacles faced by reform projects is, as mentioned above, the so-called logic of national security. Those who oppose reform are apt to say, "I don't object to reform, only I am afraid that reckless reforms may endanger our national security." This so-called national security issue may include, from a broader perspective, threats posed by Japan's or China's military buildup, but nine times out of ten it refers to the possibility of war with North Korea. As I mentioned briefly a while ago, in responding to such arguments, reform forces will not be able to persuade the larger public if they unilaterally stigmatize either regime, whether by putting all blame on the North, or by contending that the South Korean government is opposing democracy and reunification while North Korea is calling for national unity. Nor will it do to flaunt the simplistic logic that because we wish for a reunification based on popular initiatives, both regimes are wrong and must be equally opposed.

As a matter of fact, despite their unfamiliarity with actual conditions in the North, and perhaps due in part to one-sided brainwashing and propaganda by Southern authorities, most South Koreans feel that the South not only has a more advanced civil society than does the North but by now a better government as well. I myself, though I reject the simplistic view that the North is all bad and the South all good, must admit that to the best of my knowledge, if we apply several criteria to assess the quality of a government from a citizen's viewpoint, our government outdoes its counterpart in many ways despite all its flaws, of which I have been a long-standing critic. At the same time, there probably are a number of people in the South who regard the North Korean government as superior to our own. They would feel so without necessarily being agents of the North, but through sincere personal conviction, and though I think

they are largely wrong, they could probably be justified on certain specific points. For all these reasons the simplistic view that regards the North and the South as equally wrong will hardly prove persuasive; moreover, I believe comparison of the two regimes turns out differently according to the period or phase.

For example, the early 1960s was a time when a military regime seized power by a coup d'état in the South and began to intensify political repression, while the North Korean regime, though admittedly a dictatorship from the start, successfully managed to build an economy in its own style, and it is a fact recognized by most scholars of the world that its economic growth outdid that of the South. Not only is this an example of how a comparison of the two Koreas varies from period to period, but also how it varies from situation to situation. Therefore, people pursuing reform will effectively defeat the national security argument of the conservative forces only when they can discriminate exactly the merits and demerits of either regime at each given stage or situation. Of course, the quantity of information available to civilian groups is quite limited, and we should by all means demand more information. We should ask why even the daily papers must simply transcribe what the National Intelligence Service [formerly KCIA] feeds them when it comes to information about North Korea, and we need to raise our voice for the right to more information and also for greater rights to express our judgments honestly, so that we may come up, on issues like this P'anmunchŏm conflict with as informed and authoritative an analysis and judgment as any foreign civilian institution, speedily criticizing the North if necessary and so circumventing the charge that reform forces are insensitive to national security.

To sum up, what we need is a systematic and comprehensive perception of the nature of the division, as called for by the notion of the division system. We may wish to set aside the issue of North Korea while we complete our urgent reform projects in the South, but neither North Korea nor the Southern regime will leave us free to devote ourselves fully to domestic reforms. I suspect that the North Korean authorities might even wish to hinder reform efforts in the South.

#### "REGIONAL SENTIMENTS" AND THE IDEOLOGY OF DIVISION

Next, another serious obstacle to reform and the reform culture is what is often called "regional sentiments," a phenomenon particularly notable in recent elections. In my opinion, "regional sentiments" isn't quite right and

should be replaced by something like “regionalism centering on the hegemonic leader,” or “a regime of hegemonic regional leaders.” Love of one’s native place or home region and the desire to contribute to its development is a most natural and healthy feeling, which we also call regional sentiment. For this reason, we can hardly mount an effective criticism of the regimes of regional barons by deploring “regional sentiments ruining the nation.” Therefore, on the question of regionalism, too, we should distinguish precisely between the common emotion called regional sentiments and the current tendency for a regional leader to wield absolute authority in a certain region as if he were a feudal lord, maintaining his power in collusion with rivals in other regions. I give an example that shows the difference between natural regional sentiments and excessive dominance of the regional baron. According to newspaper reports, voters with a certain regional background will not vote for the “home boy” candidate if he doesn’t support their regional leader, but will rather favor another who does support him. If this is the case, it certainly differs from what we ordinarily understand as regional feelings. It is a perfectly natural and healthy regional sentiment if one would rather vote for a candidate from one’s own region as long as he or she is not inferior to other candidates, and we may even accept it as an understandable human feeling if one is inclined to vote for a candidate with regional affinities even though he or she falls a bit short of the others. But if people choose a blown-in candidate over one from their common regional background, merely because the latter does not support the regional leader for president while the former does, it is better described as a regionalism of hegemonic dominance by local barons.

Having redefined so-called regionalism this way, however, we still need to understand its exact nature in order to cope with it effectively. My point is that for this purpose, too, we must see the problem in connection with the division system. Only then may we avoid bickering over such meaningless questions as whether regional sentiments are a good thing or not, and whether it is a question of hegemonic rule by regional leaders or one of “equality of the regions,” and come up with a more persuasive counterdiscourse. In my view, this distorted regionalism or hegemony of regional barons will turn out, on closer examination, to be just another variety of ideologies contributing to the maintenance and reproduction of the antidemocratic and dependent division system. Those who have a simplistic idea of division tend to understand by the ideology of division only ultra-right anticommunism. But if our state of division constitutes a system that has been ingeniously sustained by a symbiosis that is combined with confrontation and conflict, such a system cannot be maintained



by utilizing the anticommunist ideology alone. Instead, by exploiting all kinds of ideologies available in a most complex, subtle, and flexible manner, it has endured for more than forty years since the 1953 Armistice. If Korea's division persists to this day even after Vietnam, Germany, and Yemen have all achieved unification, it cannot be due to anticommunists alone, nor to some ingenuity of Chairman Kim Il-sung or his son, nor to U.S. pressure and interventions, but because a good many factors in our society contribute to the preservation of the division system in complex ways, either directly or indirectly, and often without awareness on the part of the actors involved.

The ultra-right anticommunist ideology was undoubtedly the most powerful of the division ideologies in the period of military dictatorship in South Korea. As soon as dictatorship began to crumble, however, so-called regional sentiments emerged as an important auxiliary engine, whether the new situation was brought about by some conscious intention or because the division system simply had a way of moving in that direction. Looking back upon the past, it is true that the ruling group during military dictatorship, too, promoted and exploited regional sentiments for the purpose of maintaining power, but it was precisely when the Chun Doo-hwan regime yielded to the popular demand in June 1987 for the restoration of direct presidential elections that regionalism emerged in full force and engulfed even the democratic forces. What was the most decisive factor in the failure to launch a civilian government in the 1987 presidential election? There were, to be sure, many causes, but the chief one was regional split: the so-called democratic camp split into two regionally based groups, with Kim Young-sam representing the southeastern provinces and Kim Dae-jung the southwest. It is an elementary fact to anyone with any experience of precinct politics that a camp that puts up more than one candidate cannot win over a single candidate of the other camp, and things cannot be much different in a presidential race. Since then hegemonic dominance by regional leaders has raged rampant, and it has grown more unbridled as democratic space has expanded under civilian government and chances for reform culture to take root have increased. Given these facts, we can say that regionalism has come to be, at least in South Korea, almost as important a part of the division ideology propping up the vested interests system as ultra-conservative anticommunist discourse.

I have been talking mainly about the South, but in the North the dominant ideology is the very opposite of anticommunism. What is called Kim Il-sung-ism not only advocates communism but strongly favors reunification. But in analyzing an ideology, we should not take as an absolute



criterion how ardently its promulgators advocate reunification, but rather, we must examine whether the consequences of such advocacy actually contribute to pulling down the division system or something quite the contrary. With this point in mind, I would say that North Korea's state ideology, too, is a form of the division ideology which mobilizes the slogan of reunification for the preservation of the status quo, and that this ideology, too, needs to be changed. Therefore, only when we comprehend regionalism as part of the diverse ideologies that reproduce the antidemocratic and non-self-reliant division system, shall we be able to distinguish it from authentic regional movements for the self-rule of local residents that have their place in the popular movement for overcoming the division system.

Indeed, in the home grounds of regional hegemonic rulers we hardly see a local movement that matches the level of places like Inch'ŏn. Local civic movements are prosperous in such cities as Taegu,<sup>7</sup> Seoul, and the metropolitan area where no single politician dominates the scene. In the regions where such dominance obtains, almost all political organizations including the provincial and municipal assemblies are filled by members of his party, and whenever people try to start a local movement, they are asked to state as a first point whether or not they are on the side of the regional leader. Say yes and they lose their independence and become subordinate to his political calculations; if no, they fail to muster a sizable body of people. Such a situation makes reform culture difficult to strike root, and I suggest that it may be best understood in relation to the problem that we call the division system.

#### BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY OF "REFORM VERSUS TRANSFORMATION"

Another serious problem in today's reform culture is the exclusion of trade unions and the labor movement from the discourse of reform. It would be an exaggeration to say that they do not participate at all, but they seldom are allowed to do so. There are currently legal prohibitions against political activities by labor unions, and if a person outside the union happens to make even a comment favorable to it in a labor dispute, he or she can face prosecution on the charge of violating "the prohibition on third-party interventions."<sup>8</sup> Of course, dogmatism often was rampant as South Korea's labor movement, after a long abeyance, came back to life on a massive scale in the late 1980s, and even now many people are understandably doubtful whether the present labor movement as a whole is up to the task of mean-

ingly contributing to reform culture and the overcoming of the division system. But in the long run, there can be no reform culture that excludes workers and labor movements. Only a reform culture that embraces the working class and moves forward with them can properly realize its full potential, and if we ask why South Korea has fallen so far short while even in countries inferior to it in economic development or educational levels labor takes an active part in reform movements, I believe this shortcoming, too, should be ascribed to the functioning of the division system. In this sense, though some union leaders are to blame for their extremist views, the bulk of the responsibility rests with the division system, which, by recourse to the national security argument, regional antagonisms, and other ideological devices, has cut off at the source the opportunities for workers to participate in reform movements.

Finally, I want briefly to mention the importance of correcting the black-and-white dichotomy of reform versus transformation that is apt to dominate our thinking. I mentioned at the outset that the prevalent view of reform among democratic movement forces in the 1980s was quite different from the current one, and one of the fatal weaknesses of the dissident groups of the past decade, including both the democratization and labor movements, was in my opinion their espousal of black-and-white arguments that pitted reform against “transformation” (which often stood for “revolution”). Among them were the unrealistic revolutionary doctrine that reunification would be preceded by a people’s revolution of the Leninist or Maoist type within South Korea, and the equally fanciful notion that reunification more or less along the North Korean line will come first and then we shall build a socialist society on the entire peninsula. That such doctrines now have lost their purchase is a desirable development, and that is why I said at the beginning of this talk that I had a positive view of the shift of the situation from the 1980s to the 1990s.

However, belief in transformation not as unrealistic revolutionary discourses but in the sense of long-range and radical social change—in other words, not “transformation” as a euphemism for “revolution” in a threatening political climate, but a perspective or belief that profound, long-term, and fundamental changes need to take place in our lives—seems to have weakened in recent years and almost vanished. If this is the case, it would be very undesirable and detrimental to reform projects as well. Without a long-term perspective, a reform project would be reduced to a mere stopgap. The so-called surprise shows of the Kim Young-sam administration, for example, have incurred such criticism because they were improvised maneuvers without a long-term perspective. On balance,

I am not totally critical of what are called the regime's surprise shows. Some of its measures could not have been carried out in any other way, including the disbanding of Hanahoe (a clique of high-ranking army officers),<sup>9</sup> the introduction of a real-name financial transaction system, and the arrest of former president Chun Doo-hwan. Since an immediate, blitzkrieg-like maneuver was essential to get these things done, the government deserves credit for its speedy and decisive action, and blaming the regime, whether intended or not, is likely to play into the hands of reactionary forces. On the whole, however, the absence of a certain master plan has led to impromptu measures, leaving the government exposed to counterattacks from the ultra-conservatives. Only when equipped with a long-term vision of transformation can reform projects proceed successfully, and, conversely, pursuing transformation without a program of specific reforms would be no better than grand empty talk.

Therefore, the doctrine of the division system emphasizes that our aim is not any unification whatever but the kind of reunification that will overcome the system of division, and that in order for such unity to be achieved, we need a process of reunification based on the formation of a reform culture, which, in turn, is going to establish itself only through a conscious movement for overcoming the division system through popular initiatives and participation. At the same time, as has been mentioned before, because this division system is not a self-enclosed and independent unit in its own right but a constituent of the world-system, we need to equip ourselves from the start with a global awareness and a world-historical perspective and to pursue a broad international solidarity. Needless to say, Koreans should be masters of their own fate in the course of reunification, but to rule out cooperation with foreigners from a chauvinistic stance would neither bring about the intended goal nor qualify as national autonomy in the proper sense. This is why a world-historical perspective and a broad international solidarity are necessary.

However, we must also be realistic enough to admit that even a reunified Korea that has overcome the division system will still remain a part of the capitalist world-economy that has by now effectively incorporated the entire globe and is believed to have a considerable span of life remaining. There are plenty of people who believe that its lifespan is eternal, but while "eternal" is too much for me to agree to, I speculate that it will go on for at least several decades. And because of the continuing global dominance of the capitalist world economy, Vietnam, for example, is endeavoring to get back into the capitalist world market even after accomplishing a communist-led reunification. It is quite probable, therefore, that unified Korea will

remain part of the capitalist world economy. As I say, we should be realistic enough to admit it, but there are hundreds of versions of capitalism, and it would be unfortunate if a reunited Korea turns out to have no better kind of capitalism than obtains in South Korea at present, or even a worse sort. I believe, however, we may well undertake the world-historical task of not only building an improved capitalist society in the Korean peninsula that enlarges the freedom and equality of its inhabitants, but making thereby a decisive contribution to the transformation of the capitalist world-system itself. Only with such a sense of responsibility—a sense of responsibility deriving not from a vague feeling of self-intoxication, but from a precise recognition of the character of both the division system and the world-system—can we achieve both a broad international solidarity and a firmly established reform culture.

When we live and act within such a culture, we shall be able, whether we live in Seoul or Inch'ŏn or some other place, whether we are active in literature, business, or politics, to connect our daily activities and the pursuit of our particular share of the concrete reform project wherever we find ourselves, with the grander task of accomplishing an optimal type of national reunification and even of paving the way to a great turning point in world history. We shall be rewarded with an attendant pride, self-confidence, and sense of purpose in life, which in turn will add greater impetus to our everyday activities.

## 6. Habermas on National Unification in Germany and Korea

Jürgen Habermas's public lecture in Seoul titled "National Unification and Popular Sovereignty" came as a welcome intervention for those Koreans committed to a reunification process that would be both peaceful and democratic.<sup>1</sup> Although little of what he said, even on German unity, was entirely new to many of them, it was a rare privilege to enlist his international reputation and authority to drive home a number of the most important points. For instance, his warnings against adopting "a fast track" to unity following the German model should have a particularly salutary influence at a time when many, even in ruling circles, are entertaining doubts about South Korea's ability to bring about or bear the consequences of a "German-type" absorption but also when pressures to go for this option remain strong. Equally noteworthy, especially in light of his known reservations about nationalism, was his acknowledgment that "fortunately" in Korea the democratic forces were also the national forces promoting reunification—a timely reminder that at once bolsters the self-confidence of those forces and warns them that this link should never be taken for granted.

Outside Korea, the question of Korean reunification still awaits recognition as a matter of global concern. Here again Habermas's contribution, and the decision of *New Left Review* to publish an English translation of his text, should help to insert that issue into international discourse—which still remains a predominantly Western, even largely Anglophone discourse. True, Habermas's own perception of its global significance is offered tentatively. All the more reason to gratefully take up the opportunity to make some impromptu comments—both to continue the open discussion that Habermas began in Seoul, something on which he always places the greatest importance, and to explore the possibilities of practical solidarity, perhaps above and beyond what he envisages.

THE "GERMAN MODEL" IN THE KOREAN CONTEXT

The euphoria of the South Korean ruling circles at West Germany's absorption of its Eastern counterpart in 1989–90 did not last long. Sobering enough were the ensuing difficulties that severely burdened even the strongest of European economies. It was thus my judgment when I contributed an article to these pages that a new consensus toward "absorption in yet another sense" was being formed, namely, "a fuller integration of the two parts of the divided peninsula into the world market, the current state structure of North Korea helping to police its population for the benefit of South Korean and global capital as well as for its own self-preservation."<sup>2</sup> Nearly four years later, the prospective costs of a "German-type" absorption appear as daunting as ever, and they are more widely recognized. Yet other developments have complicated the picture, and the consensus against the German model has not been so firmly established as one might have expected. Among these, the death of the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung in July 1994 not only derailed the inter-Korean summit conference scheduled for that month but brought many uncertainties and instabilities first of all to the North Korean regime, but also to the powers-that-be of the entire peninsula, so that the mutual opening of the two Koreas has not been pursued to any meaningful degree. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the reaction of the government and the mainstream press in Seoul to Kim's death was almost as extravagant as Pyongyang's—a fact that reveals something about the nature of the division system (and to which I shall return).

Then came the disastrous flood that hit large parts of North Korea in summer 1995, and another, though lesser, flood this year. True, the economic difficulties of North Korea (DPRK) owe much to both structural factors—those attendant upon an unusually isolated and ossified command economy—and conjunctural ones, such as the sudden loss of Soviet bloc markets and sources of supply. Still there is no doubt that the floods have strained the country as never before. All this has given new credibility to the talk of the DPRK's imminent collapse and of the need for South Koreans to prepare themselves for an "inevitable" takeover. Indeed, some of President Kim Young-sam's recent pronouncements seem to indicate that this view represents his current personal conviction—though it is true that consistency has never been his forte.

Aside from these temporary factors, however—temporary above all because the United States government, still the major actor on the scene, appears bent on stability for the Korean peninsula, but for other reasons

that make a different course too risky for Seoul as well—it remains true that neither South Korean nor U.S. ruling circles have any long-term strategy of unification other than absorption. This is not to say that merger is anticipated in the immediate future, but that when it comes it will be of the swift “German type.” For, as Martin Hart-Landsberg persuasively argues, “One of the most important lessons of the German unification experience is that it is not possible to achieve a gradual unification by absorption.”<sup>3</sup> The choice between a fast and a slow track, if it means merely a matter of sooner or later or even much later, is therefore not the main issue. Here Habermas’s stipulation of a “way of proceeding which permitted broader discussion and opinion formation, as well as more extensive—and, above all, better prepared—participation of the public” becomes crucial.<sup>4</sup> But how shall we ensure such a way of proceeding in Korea when it was not possible in Germany? One may doubt that what Habermas calls “*Germany’s experience of a rapid, if not over-hasty, process of unification*” will serve as a sufficiently powerful lesson, particularly since, for all his italicized emphasis, he does not apparently regard that experience as disastrous.<sup>5</sup> Nor would “disaster” be the right word, despite the dire consequences for many citizens on both sides, though mostly those of the new *Länder*.

#### THE UNIQUE NATURE OF KOREA’S DIVISION

One must therefore look for different realities that would make a similar course in Korea more truly disastrous and, at the same time, factors that may enable Koreans, for all their numerous disadvantages as compared with Germans, to succeed in an alternative undertaking. Habermas offers some valuable insights on both counts. His explication of “the different starting points,” for instance, suggests how even the questionable success of Germany is unlikely to be repeated in Korea, while his remark on the fortunate identity of national and democratic forces not obtainable in Germany provides an important clue.

For all his caution about equating the two situations, however, one gets the impression that Habermas’s perception of Korean realities still remains heavily colored by analogies with the German experience. For instance, his judicious observation that “an *inevitable* implosion for endogenous reasons appears less likely than in the case of the GDR” leads to the inference that “the prospect of a non-violent self-transformation or dissolution of the People’s Republic will largely depend on how much citizens in the North—when the time comes—are attracted not only by the economic successes of the South, but also by its social relations and

political freedoms.”<sup>6</sup> Here he slides back precisely to the German model—at least to the East German experience prior to West Germany’s takeover. And questions of analogy apart, the conclusion does not follow from the premise. For, I dare say, Southern conditions for all their imperfections are already attractive enough to Northerners—or at least will be if and when they are more generally known—but such an attraction does not necessarily imply as its consequence “a non-violent self-transformation or dissolution” in the manner of the GDR. It could lead to either a violent upheaval as in Romania or, more likely in any foreseeable future, to a violent suppression of attempts at transformation or dissolution, if not a resumption of full-scale war, for the DPRK, unlike the GDR, has massive military forces at its command with not only traditions of fighting foreign enemies against enormous odds but bitter memories and vested interests that may dispose its cadres to risk another war rather than submit to a take-over by the South Korean Armed Forces.

In fact, this grim reality is the one crucial difference between the GDR and the DPRK that Habermas fails to address in his discussion of “different starting points.” It certainly would seem to render too forlorn his hope for a unification process “which permitted broader discussion and opinion formation.” Yet precisely this potential for violent explosion places a certain constraint on any solution other than “a detour through a confederation of the two states” for which Habermas, in spite of his entirely understandable reluctance to offer any concrete advice on questions of policy, entertains an obvious preference in the Korean as well as in the (counterfactual) German situation. But then it also calls for a mode of popular mobilization more radical than, though certainly not excluding, a “progressive democratization” that “makes living conditions more attractive for fellow-countrymen in the North, while in the South it initially strengthens cohesion so much that the liberal model of society is able to bear the mental and economic strains of a unification process.”<sup>7</sup>

What must be recognized above all else is the *sui generis* nature of Korea’s division. Of course, every concrete situation may be termed unique in its way, but the unique nature of Korea’s division is worth remembering, since over the course of its long duration, longer than anything comparable in Vietnam, Germany, Yemen, or China, it has taken on, as I have argued, a certain systemic nature quite absent in the Vietnamese wars of national liberation but different in kind, too, from the erstwhile division of Germany, which was probably the crucial, yet little more than a local, manifestation of the Cold War system.<sup>8</sup> One can hardly be severe with Habermas’s failure to recognize this particularity, for one finds the same



even in Immanuel Wallerstein, a very different thinker whose conception of an exceedingly variegated capitalist world economy might well have prompted recognition of another unique variant among its subsystems in the division system or regime of the Korean peninsula, but who, in justly stressing the difference between the wars in Korea and Vietnam, fails to note the elements of a Vietnam-like national liberation struggle in Korea. Thus he seems—though it is only fair to note that Korea is not the focus of his essay—to be content with the simplified view of the Korean War and the Berlin Blockade as “part and parcel of the Cold War world regime,”<sup>9</sup> and fails both to explain the persistence of Korea’s division in the post-Cold War world or to attend to the different emancipatory potential that may lie in overcoming this particular division. In short, the division system does invite certain analogies with both Germany and Vietnam—and admittedly more with the former than the latter despite assertions to the contrary by the North Korean leadership and one (much shrunken) sector of South Korea’s unification movement—but in the end presents a combination for which such analogies cannot account.

#### OVERCOMING THE DIVISION SYSTEM

It is this particular combination that has produced the different “mentality of what are called ‘progressives’” noted by Habermas: “In Korea, where there is the memory of Japanese imperialism, political and social criticism can also turn outward and combine with a strong national consciousness. In the Federal Republic, by contrast, there are good grounds for remembering the crimes of full-blooded nationalism in one’s own country. A German has good historical reasons to be cautious in handling national themes; it is no accident that the slogan of a ‘self-conscious nation’ has been commandeered by the New Right since 1989.”<sup>10</sup> My first comment, in view of the peculiar nature of Korea’s division, would be that what contributes to a relatively progressive national consciousness is not only “the memory of Japanese imperialism” but also the experience of U.S. imperialism *in both Koreas*. Second, because the division system has a structural bent toward state structures that are as vertically strong (that is, in relation to their respective citizens) as they are laterally weak (that is, unusually vulnerable to foreign manipulation and interventions), the shared though not identical suffering produced by this antidemocratic system, combined with a common anti-imperial experience, has the potential to produce a peninsula-wide solidarity movement in which national and democratic forces coincide. While these would be, again, not identical in strength nor

in short-term goals, they might share the midrange goal of overcoming the division system and the long-term goal of transforming the larger world-system. The success of such a movement would be another matter, of course, depending on many unforeseeable developments but necessarily including significant international solidarity and sufficient enlightened self-interest on the part of the concerned powers-that-be to prefer “a detour through confederation” to a more explosive course.

My third comment reaches beyond Korea and touches on a subject about which I can only speak under advisement, especially in a dialogue with Habermas—namely, the German political and intellectual scene. Granted that a “German has good historical reasons to be cautious in handling national themes,” this can hardly justify, only extenuate, the neglect by progressive intellectuals of the FRG to tackle the issue of national unity before it was suddenly thrust upon them. All the less so if consequently, on Habermas’s own admission, “the slogan of a ‘self-conscious nation’ has been commandeered by the New Right since 1989.” Indeed, did not that neglect give Kohl and the West German vested interests represented by him a more or less free hand in pursuing the “fast track”? To my mind, the fast track was more than a simply shortsighted or precipitous response to the collapse of “the alternative model of society”<sup>11</sup> represented by the Soviet empire, but a deliberate and, in its own way, perspicacious move “to ensure, if not actually strengthen, the economic and political hegemony of existing West German institutions in a new united Germany.”<sup>12</sup> This in a situation where mass movements in the GDR had opened up the possibility of an all-German solidarity movement working for a different outcome, but also when progressives on both sides were hampered precisely by the fundamental lack of an effective national discourse.

At any rate, in the Korean context, Habermas’s exhortation that “where there is a conflict between the two, the ‘demos’ of citizens should take precedence over the ‘ethnos’ of fellow countrymen”<sup>13</sup> fails to touch the crux of the matter. Of course, I have no problem with it as a general proposition, and even in the particular local context would welcome its salutary effects. For despite Habermas’s generous remarks on the progressive potential of our “national forces,” signs of a more virulent form of nationalism are becoming increasingly noticeable on both sides of the Armistice Line as the division system prolongs itself. Indeed, somewhat surprisingly, the North Korean version of communism seems to display even stronger features of a quintessential “ethno-nationalism,” with its emphasis on common lineage—from the ancestral figure Tan’gun who is said to have founded the Korean nation in 2333 B.C.—the uniqueness and superiority of

the Korean ethnos, and sometimes the implicit identification of “the Great Leader” as the latter-day Tan’gun.

#### PROGRESSIVE ETHNIC FORCES

Even so, championing a “republican or democratic conception of the nation” as against “an ethnic conception”<sup>14</sup> does not go much beyond the vague principle already embodied in our slogan of “peaceful and democratic reunification.” Not only does the ethnic conception still have a powerful role to play in a heteronomously divided nation of exceptionally high ethnic homogeneity, it can serve to raise theoretical and practical questions of possibly global significance beyond providing a warning against the pitfalls of “ethno-nationalism.” For instance, in the international solidarity I have already referred to as a vital factor for Korea’s democratic reunification, the Korean diaspora—numbering some four million in the strategic countries of the United States, China, Japan, and Russia alone—plays and will need to play a substantial role. This diaspora already constitutes a multinational ethnic community, and will continue to do so after reunification although its composition, distribution, self-image, and so forth will undergo certain changes. But are not such communities as much of a desideratum in a more peaceful and democratic world as multi-ethnic nation-states and unions of states? True, ethno-nationalism, taken in its strict sense of “one nation state for each ethnos” (whatever that may mean), amounts to nothing less than a formula for global chaos, but the question of cultural continuity often associated with it—sometimes quite arbitrarily manufactured for short-term propaganda purposes, but often real enough and all the more precious as it is threatened by globalizing commercial culture—is quite another matter, one to which “what are called ‘progressives’” perhaps pay too little heed in their thinking about a world of equality with genuine diversity. If this is the case, the democratic and ethnic conceptions of communal life—including the life in the nation-state where the menaces Habermas recalls are admittedly greater—should be understood as in perpetual danger of falling apart, as well as of the latter overpowering the former, so that whether in Korea or Germany, in a regional framework or in larger global associations, the primary aim ought to be finding the right combination of the two, a combination which may have to go well beyond what one critic has called Habermas’s “congenitally under-powered” theory of political democracy.<sup>15</sup>

I have said that Habermas’s preferred “detour through confederation” is probably the one course to avert disaster either now or in the future.

Precisely because the disaster may be deferred for some time through perpetuation of the division system—and it is a system in the sense of possessing both within and outside the peninsula powerful vested interests committed to its self-reproduction—the achievement of the detour is far from a certainty. But what should lie at the end of it? So far the predominant discourse of not only the Seoul and Pyongyang authorities but of many reunification-movement people in the South as well is focused upon a nation-state of the classic model—the kind that Koreans should have attained in 1945 but for foreign (mostly U.S.) intervention. My own view, however—and one increasingly shared by colleagues and compatriots—is that this makes little sense either in view of the different histories that the North and South have lived for over half a century, and for which our people, for better or worse, have paid with blood and sweat, or in the light of the different conjuncture of world history we find ourselves in, where the invention of new compound state structures has become the order of the day.

What Koreans should envisage—and without some such vision even the “detour” will surely fail—is a new federative structure suited to our particular historical experience. This naturally includes the experience of a population with at least ten centuries of political unity and, even now, an exceptionally high degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, yet already with some proto-national divergences due to the length and severity of the division. But the new federal design will also reflect the experience of the confederal “detour” itself, which, while dealing a probably irrecoverable blow to the proponents of perpetual division, will have provided legal grounds for a controlled population movement across the present border and a gradual, mutually negotiated arms reduction not commonly allowed for in the “republican or democratic conception of the nation.” The emergence of such an innovative state structure, with its collateral of a new kind of multinational ethnic community spread across the globe, will seriously challenge, though not by itself bring to an end, the current world-system of specious diversity and ever-increasing inequality. In my view, such a challenge would certainly be a more radical one than the U.S. defeat in Vietnam in the past, and no less of a challenge than a turn of the European Union toward a genuinely parliamentary-republican course in some possible future.

## 7. The Possibility and Significance of a Korean Ethnic Community of the Twenty-First Century

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF A "KOREAN ETHNIC COMMUNITY"

"The Korean race" in the title of this conference is a different concept from "the Korean nation" as members of the nation-state(s) in the Korean peninsula.<sup>1</sup> However, the two are often confused in Korea. Because of the exceptionally high degree of racial, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity of the population and the unusually long history of centralized political rule, Koreans are apt to identify the racially related ethnic group with the nation as a modern political unit. Also, the national history of Korea in the twentieth century, including the experience of Japanese colonial rule and forced dispersal of many Koreans away from their homeland during that period, and the division of the peninsula after 1945, hardly allowed Koreans to reflect dispassionately about the distinction between the notion of citizenship or nationality (in the political sense) and that of race or ethnos.

But the presence in this conference of many intellectuals of common Korean lineage but of different national or residential status vividly demonstrates that the particular historical experience I just referred to has given birth to a reality in which not a small portion of the Korean race or ethnos is living as citizens or permanent residents of non-Korean states. If one may speak of a community of Koreans that includes ethnic Koreans all over the world, it must already be a multinational community. It is also a multilingual community, since for many in the Korean diaspora the Korean language is not their mother tongue (with English, Russian, Chinese, or Japanese filling the place)—for some, not even an acquired foreign language. Indeed, even within the Korean peninsula, although

both the governments of the North and the South and the majority of the population regard the present condition as provisional, Koreans live under two virtually independent states, hence not as a single national community in the strict sense.

In speaking of a vision for the Korean race in the twenty-first century, therefore, we need to reflect on what kind of community its members (who include those other than residents of the Korean peninsula) may constitute, and what significance the existence of such a community may have. And these issues must be vital also to *Wŏn* Buddhism,<sup>2</sup> the religious order that founded Wŏnkwang University. *Wŏn* Buddhism, even while priding itself on being a religion that Korean history gave birth to in the Korean peninsula, has at the same time aspired from the beginning to become a world religion of "the era of the New Day" [*huch'ŏn sidae*]. In this regard, it has a particular affinity with Korean ethnic communities all over the world, and if this affinity should be reduced to racism or nationalism, it would certainly be incongruous to the Great Cosmopolitanism it espouses.

## 2. THE POSSIBILITY OF A KOREAN ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The sense of ethnic identity among some seventy million Koreans on the peninsula and roughly five million in the diaspora appears at present to be fairly strong, although its intensity varies by person and region. This strength may be ascribed first to the fact that most of the Korean nationals abroad left Korea only a couple of generations ago, and the recent economic success of South Korea and its heightened standing in the world also have contributed to solidarity. In addition, the general trend of globalization in contemporary society, by facilitating communication between far-distant compatriots, appears to have been, up to now, strengthening ethnic solidarity rather than the other way around. But will it continue to do so throughout the twenty-first century? And if so, will it be desirable for the sake of Koreans and humankind?

Let us first think of its possibility. There are so many variables and a century is so long a period that it will be rash to make any prediction. It seems evident, however, that the reunification of the peninsula would constitute a variable of special importance. For a worldwide multinational Korean ethnic community to survive in the long run, some strong center would need to hold that community together, and obviously Koreans on the Korean peninsula would have to fill that role. It is true that the Jewish people have long maintained their sense of community under the condi-

tion of not having a homeland state. Strictly speaking, however, theirs has been a largely religious community based on Judaism (even though having in effect the character of an ethnic community as well), with religion exercising a decisive influence in keeping up the cultural homogeneity of the Jews. But Koreans do not have a religion that will play such a role (and *Wŏn* Buddhism isn't a national religion in that sense, either). Furthermore, there is no need to follow the Jewish model when we have a homeland in which we have lived for a long time.

The problem, of course, is that not only does Korea remain divided into North and South, but the people themselves are seriously divided, cultural heterogeneity between the two Koreas is no longer negligible, and their mutual communication often more difficult than that with compatriots in far-off lands. Consequently, the Korean peninsula, far from generating a unifying and centripetal force in the worldwide Korean ethnic community, has often acted to create dissension in the various regional communities of the diaspora, often wounding members' self-esteem and even contributing to their withdrawal from the community. True, there are some who assume that even without unification either of the two Koreas could assume the pivotal role by becoming overwhelmingly better off than the other. Recently this very idea is frequently expressed by the government and some of the mass media in the South, and perhaps North Koreans once thought the same. But whether it is the North Korea of the past or the South Korea of the present, the kind of exemplary society to hold a worldwide community together has never been in existence, nor is such a model society likely to emerge on either side as long as the division system remains intact.

This point will become clear when we look more closely into the current situation, where South Korea's influence on the Korean diaspora has increased remarkably due to the end of the Cold War and South Korea's economic development and democratization. To cite the case of democracy alone, it is true there has been remarkable progress since the advent of Kim Young-sam's civilian regime, but reforms under the division system remain exceedingly vulnerable, as seen in such recent events as the crackdown on Hanch'ongnyŏn (The Federation of University Student Associations of Korea), the infiltration of North Korean agents from the East Sea, and the ensuing large-scale offensive by antidemocratic forces.<sup>3</sup> The government's inept handling of policies toward the North and North Korea's own unilateral measures have had something to do with bringing things to this pass. But we do realize afresh that there is a certain inevitable limit to South Korea's democratization unless it is correlated

with the overcoming of Korea's division. Regarding the South Korean economy, too, while we are uncertain how serious its present slowdown is nor how long it will last, its past high growth seems unlikely to be repeated without an opening toward greater North-South exchanges (and ultimate reunification).

An even more important question is what kind of individuals and collective life will come to predominate, quite apart from the prospects for economic growth. The recent large-scale homicides that happened on the ship *Pescamar*, even though the precise facts of the case have yet to be brought to light, should not be ascribed merely to the villainy of the Chinese-Korean shipmates, nor can the implications of the incident be confined to a ship named *Pescamar*.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of South Koreans toward members of the Korean diaspora—and the logic of capitalist economy—is turning their relationship into one between haves and have-nots, generating resentment of the former by the latter, thereby fostering the possibility of a tragic catastrophe for the multinational Korean ethnic community.<sup>5</sup> Nor is this phenomenon separable from the inhumane, often racist, practices of South Korean entrepreneurs against non-Korean workers within Korea or in countries, for example, in Southeast Asia. For racism and intolerant nationalism have always served as an ideological cover for the contradictions and exploitations within the nation.

We can hardly expect the capitalistic system of South Korea, fettered by division and struggling with the high billows of globalization, to effect any fundamental change on this tendency. Some people argue nevertheless that capitalist South Korea will make tremendous strides by annexing North Korea, and assert that we should prepare for the day. True, one cannot stress too much the importance of serious studies about diverse possibilities for the future of North Korea and the need for our thorough preparedness for any eventuality. However, the fact that the present Germany that absorbed former East Germany has become neither more democratic nor improved in its welfare system nor more open to foreigners than former West Germany indicates that South Korea, even if it could shoulder the staggering economic burden created by a reunification through absorption, would become further removed from a felicitous center of the multinational Korean ethnic community.

Of course, one need not rule out a temporary strengthening of the worldwide ethnic community under the leadership of a strong, virulently nationalistic unified Korea. But such a racist solidarity will inevitably create conflicts between the Korean minority and other nationalities in the host countries, and even more important, will tend to drive the most



forward-looking and creative members of the diaspora out of the Korean community altogether. For, unless the world of the twenty-first century is to become a field of scuffle among ethnic groups, there will be no reason that such a Korean ethnic community must continue to exist.

### 3. THE ROLE OF A MULTINATIONAL ETHNIC COMMUNITY

Thus, not only is the long-term existence of the Korean ethnic community dependent on the happy reunification of the Korean peninsula, but the latter process largely coincides with that of maintaining and developing the former. For a felicitous unification involves the overcoming of what I have called the division system, in other words, not reunification of whatever kind but one that would put an end, through the growth of popular initiatives, to a system that not only is divisive but essentially antidemocratic and nonautonomous, and establish instead a far more democratic and self-reliant society on the peninsula.

This does not mean that a kind of utopia will emerge in Korea. But a truly democratic overcoming of the division, attained neither by one side absorbing the other nor by the collusion between the vested interest groups of both sides and the neighboring powers, will produce a society not only greatly different from either of the present Koreas but one with several traits that will be remarkable in terms of the contemporary world as well. For example, this kind of reunification implies that domestic reform movements will have taken root on both sides during the process, and that those movements of North and South will finally have formed an alliance for overcoming the division system;<sup>6</sup> and the success of this process will demand a new model of compound state reflecting the different needs and experiences of Koreans North and South, and radically limiting state power *vis-à-vis* its citizens. In addition, if migration from many different areas into an economically and culturally advanced zone is inevitable in an age of globalization, and considering that in South Korea such a phenomenon has already begun as a consequence of its economic growth, the new compound state of the unified peninsula will also need to assume the framework of a multiethnic state.

Such a grand task can hardly be accomplished without significant input by overseas Koreans. Of course, international support from other than ethnic Koreans will also have to tell, but even for this the mediating role of the diaspora will count as a crucial factor. Judging either from the current situation of South Korea where the long-standing military dictatorship

was finally toppled or the new phase of the division era in which reunification by absorption has presented itself as an additional danger along with prolongation of the division, the support of overseas Koreans for the reunification movements has now to be different from the past. A simple support for the antidictatorship struggle or denunciation of antiunification forces is no longer effective, and we now need an intelligent and flexible response based on the recognition of how a single peninsula-wide system with self-reproductive powers came into existence, and how this division system, though taking drastically different forms in North and South but also displaying a good deal of symmetry between them, is specifically working.

It is fair to ask how overseas Koreans, who have a hard enough time even in pursuing their daily lives in the adopted countries, often still without citizenship there, can afford to undertake so complex a task. In fact, a reunification movement unrelated to their daily problems will have to exact too great a sacrifice from them, or give birth at times to irresponsible long-distance nationalism. The answer to the question may be found precisely in the fact that such a complex task of overcoming the division system coincides with their efforts to better their own lives in the countries of their residence. For the building of a democratic, autonomous and multiethnic compound state in the Korean peninsula would not only inspire national pride among Koreans everywhere in the world and provide them with a reliable source of support, but the establishment and growth of such a state would best serve the interests of ethnic Koreans in their respective countries and provide a basis for a multinational Korean ethnic community to persist and thrive.

But will multinational ethnic communities in general be vital to human civilization of the twenty-first century, just as a peninsula-wide multiethnic compound state would be beneficial to both Koreans and the majority of humankind in the next century? A huge "melting pot" might seem preferable in view of the bloodshed repeatedly caused by national and ethnic conflicts in today's world, and such indeed is not only the official ideology of the United States but the conviction of numerous globalists. But it seems unlikely that the melting pot ideology will manage to banish all forms of injustice, racial discrimination included, in America, much less throughout the world; and, furthermore, the increase in such inequalities and the persistence of discriminations in the United States and elsewhere probably constitutes the other side of the coin to the disappearance of legitimate differences, including diverse national cultures and their heritages. (This is nonetheless true even when cultural heritage is preserved as and

developed into commercial cultural goods.) For the human race to survive and enjoy a humane life in the coming century, not only a materially more equal society but one with numerous communities not exclusively swayed by economic self-interest will have to be in place.

If the multiethnic state be seen as one example of such a community, the multinational ethnic community would be another. According to the prevalent view of social science, the traditional *Gemeinschaft* bound by blood or region has been gradually replaced in the modern age by *Gesellschaft*, in which its members allegedly take part voluntarily according to rational reckoning. But the nation-state, one of the typical examples of modern society, is in reality closer to a *Gemeinschaft* than to a *Gesellschaft*. It is highly exceptional that one becomes the citizen of a specific nation by his or her own decision, and, at the same time, a citizen's actions too often happen to transcend his or her own conscious self-interest. However, the fact is that the nation-state as a community reconstructed in accordance with the particular condition of the modern age now has not merely lost its characteristic of *Gemeinschaft*, but the extent of its self-enclosed existence as a *Gesellschaft* also has been steadily diminishing.

Nevertheless, the assertion that *Gemeinschaft* has now come to an end, and a global *Gesellschaft* has taken its place, does little more than reflect the illusory belief that human beings can maintain their lives merely by fulfilling or adjusting their self-interest. At the same time, without the mediation of variegated smaller communities a huge global community could hardly be established, nor can we feel much attraction for such an undifferentiated mega-community.

That said, many emphatically support numerous small-sized communities but tend to reject, under the rubric of "postmodern" theories, larger and more powerful communities such as the nation or the state. Of course, the classic nation-state or ethnic communities that insist on racial homogeneity would hardly suit the world of the twenty-first century. But it will be a completely different story if we are talking about new forms of multinational compound states or multinational ethnic communities, which will represent a new kind of *Gemeinschaft* that has adapted itself to the reality of the twenty-first century where globalization will have advanced further, and absorbed as well those elements of *Gesellschaft* that the new reality asks for. And in the pursuit of such communities we do not need to turn our backs on communities of either a smaller or larger (i.e., regional or global) dimension. The peculiar reluctance to recognize the middle-range communities may stem from a mere lack of imagination, but adherence to only small-sized communities too weak to grapple with

the homogenizing logic of capital may prove to be another accessory to embellish that logic with a specious pluralism.

#### 4. CONCLUSION: THE SPECIAL ROLE OF A KOREAN ETHNIC COMMUNITY

Granted that a new type of ethnic community is necessary for a world of genuine equality, the question remains whether Koreans have a specific role to play in this general picture. At this point, I will enumerate some matters for consideration in lieu of a conclusion.

First, much depends on what kind of world-historical significance we may attribute to the overcoming of the division system, the immediate agenda of the Korean ethnic community. If it means no more than an end to the partition of a particular country, or removal of one unsettling element in Northeast Asia, or a partial lessening of the probability of war in the world, it can hardly be called a momentous contribution to the human history of the twenty-first century. On the other hand, if a much more democratic, autonomous, and open society than either of the present Koreas takes shape on the peninsula and thus constitutes one great step toward a new world order radically different from what *Wŏn* Buddhists call the "era of the Old Day" [*sŏnch'ŏn sidae*], the contribution of the multinational Korean ethnic community to this task will signify a priceless benefaction to humanity as well, even if Korea's reunification does not spell the immediate transformation of the larger world-system.

Second, there is the question of what impact on the creation of a new human civilization may be expected from the historical experience of a nation that, as a member of the East Asian civilization, has arduously maintained its national identity through millennia despite the proximity and overwhelming presence of China. Equally important a variable is how much Korea, as the only nation reduced (after all those years of resisting assimilation by Chinese civilization) to the colony of a neighboring Asian nation in the process of being forced into modern capitalist civilization, will manage to utilize its experience of having overcome Imperial Japan's policy of suppressing its cultural heritage and eradicating its national identity. If an East Asian nation with such a history manages to achieve a national life radically different from that of most or all existing nation-states, and at the same time play a role as the center of a worldwide multinational ethnic community, the future of East Asia at least will become so much the brighter. And the fact that even a reunified Korea will be significantly smaller than China or Japan will facilitate such a civilizational role.

Finally, the fact that five million or so of the Korean diaspora, reportedly ranked within the top five largest among the diasporas of the world, are concentrated in China, the United States, Japan and the former Soviet Union will also work to advantage. That is, their concentration in the major powers will tend to maximize their global influence, while their constituting a minority with limited leverage (unlike the Chinese in some Southeast Asian countries, for example) will keep their presence from becoming threatening to the host populations. Which means that once Koreans manage to acquire within East Asia the kind of special civilizing influence mentioned above, it will be easy for them to expand the same influence through the rest of the world.

Of course, all this depends on the success of overcoming the division system. But conversely, developing that kind of influence will, in its turn, significantly affect the reunification process. Therefore, one cannot be persuaded by the argument that every Korean should first of all concentrate on getting the Korean peninsula reunited and put off the construction of a felicitous multinational Korean ethnic community until after reunification. Indeed, the very sequential order is meaningless in as much as the reunification we envisage is not a simple end to the division but an overcoming of the division *system*. Moreover, the division system we would transform has the character of a subsystem of the capitalist world-system that represents (in *Wŏn* Buddhist parlance) the driving force in “the Great Opening of matter” [*mulchil kaebyŏk*] but not the agency of “the Great Opening of spirit” [*chŏngsin kaebyŏk*]—the world order of “the Old Day” to be “broken open” through the genuine awakening of the masses, including members of the Korean nation, and the formation of a new human community.<sup>7</sup>

## 8. A Rejoinder to Kim Yŏng-ho's Critique of the Discourse of the Division System

Readers of my article "Nations and Literatures in the Age of Globalization"<sup>1</sup> would notice that my idea of Korea's division system is closely linked to my arguments for a national literature. It provides a theoretical ground for distinguishing the notion of national literature from a merely *nationalistic* literature and, moreover, plays an important role in enabling us to understand the crisis of national literature as part of the threats posed by the current process of globalization to world literature itself. I am therefore exceedingly grateful to the two authors who paid attention to my notion of the division system in their contributions to the special feature on the reunification movement in the latest (November–December 1996) issue of *Chakka*.

First, a brief comment on Professor Ch'oe Wŏn-sik's "The Association of Writers for National Literature (AWNL) on the Direction of the Unification Movement."<sup>2</sup> He made use of the perspective of the discourse of the division system without any particularly critical remarks, but readers who have studied other writings of his would know that this is due only to lack of space rather than to his unreserved agreement with my position. Besides, it seems to me that the title and content of the article has too easily unified the many differences that have existed and still exist within the AWNL. On balance, however, I have little to add except my sympathy toward his spirited presentation, which, concurring with the overall framework of the doctrine of the division system, is expected to contribute to establishing this doctrine as the representative position of the AWNL.

Dr. Kim Yŏng-ho's article, "The Writer and the Problem of Unification,"<sup>3</sup> though not intended as a response to division system theory as such, did contain a critical examination of it under the assumption that "the AWNL's

position on unification is closely linked to Paik Nak-chung's 'theory of the division system'" (33). Since I started calling for a more systematic and comprehensive understanding of the reality of the division, I have felt that proper theoretical work on the theme should be carried out by specialists in social science; however, social scientists who have ever addressed my admittedly rudimentary proposal can still be counted on one hand. Kim's comments are an unexpected and all the more welcome bonus in this special feature.

Furthermore, against the usual criticism that the two divided countries of South and North are not interdependent enough to qualify as members of a system, Kim supports me by saying that "the South and the North are interdependent in many respects, so it poses no problem to qualify them as components of the division system." Encouraging, too, is his concluding remark that "division system theory, by starting with a conceptual definition of the divided structure, may be capable of providing a macroscopic explanation based on that concept regarding the maintenance, change, and eventual overcoming of the reality of division. The theory, once equipped with such a theoretical system from which several hypotheses can be drawn and empirically verified, will be able to make a substantial contribution to a better understanding of the complicated reality of division and also to finding the direction toward its overcoming" (37).

The first thought that occurs to me whenever I come across such a response is why the social scientists themselves don't undertake so complex a task rather than leaving it to a literary critic who is having a hard enough time merely fulfilling his literary undertakings. Nor have I given up the hope yet that a social scientist will someday fulfill my hope, whether that scholar be Dr. Kim himself, or Professor Son Ho-ch'ŏl, whom Kim quotes as another critical commentator, or some other person.

But if only to shorten the time until it happens, I feel it necessary to candidly point out his misunderstandings or discrepancies from what I had in mind in formulating the idea of the division system. For example, indicating that the concept of system is not sufficiently differentiated in my discourse, Kim argues that "the concept of system we use is made of structure and interacting units. Thus, Paik's division system devised for the understanding of the reality of division comprises the division structure and the two divided states of the South and the North"(34). Here he misses the fundamental shift of perspective the discourse of the division system has aimed at from the very beginning. In other words, while most of the arguments on division have so far approached the reality of division as a confrontation between the two states or governments of the North and

the South or their ideologies, the doctrine of the division system defines the two opposing terms of contradiction (“interacting units” in Dr. Kim’s terminology) in a radically different way: vested interest groups of either side that coexist in a peculiar combination of confrontation and symbiosis, on one hand, and the people of North and South, on the other, who are oppressed (though in different modes and intensities) by the peninsula-wide system that is fundamentally antidemocratic and non-autonomous (though, again, with different operational modes and to different degrees). But then it is no better than empty rhetoric or irresponsible blaming of both houses to say that both regimes are totally wrong and only the people are right. Only, the doctrine of the division system proposes to recognize and evaluate the regimes of North and South, and the frequently conflicting groups within each, from the perspective of the people and in terms of a larger framework of the vested interests of the division system.

But Kim consistently discusses only the confrontation and/or interdependence of the divided states, perhaps because, as a scholar of international relations in the lineage of Hans Morgenthau, he places the sovereignty of the nation at the center of his argument and almost absolutizes its importance. Therefore, against Ch’oe Wŏn-sik, who cites the European Union as an example of the existing nation-state *being in the process of dissolving* from the top, he contends that “as the EU is not a sovereign state . . . it cannot be taken as a new form of state which *has dissolved* the existing nation-state from the top” (24, my emphasis). This argument, though reasonable in itself, misses the mark insofar as the process or possibility Ch’oe envisions is concerned.

As is well known, scholars of international relations often compare a sovereign state to a billiard ball. Once a country is recognized as a sovereign state, they concern themselves largely with how the billiard ball hits another and in what direction and manner it moves after the collision. They seem to care little about whether that sovereign state is a roundly spherical ball or a flawed one, perhaps kneaded of mud or dough, or one porous and permeable; nor whether the ball was formed from one half of an original whole, which has since been remolded into a more or less round shape, yet rolls somewhat differently from ordinary ones and still retains a peculiar gravitational attraction or repulsion toward the other half. (It would clearly be an exaggeration and calumny if I said all scholars of international relations thought this way, but Kim’s article does give me such an impression.)<sup>4</sup>

Sovereignty as a concept to “explain the existence of the ultimate and absolute power and authority over the population of a nation-state with



a certain territory" (25) was invented, as Kim himself indicates, at a specific time and place, namely, in Europe in the sixteenth century. I have scanty knowledge of its historical background or its subsequent theoretical development, but my comments are directed elsewhere. First, now as much as then, a concept is no more than a concept and an idea; what is called "the ultimate and absolute power and authority" of a nation-state must also have been an idea—probably an ideology that was needed to maintain a particular social system of a particular period. Secondly, given the fact that the emergence of "this very modern concept [of sovereignty] that Jean Bodin developed" (*ibid.*) coincides with the emergence of what Wallerstein calls the capitalist world economy with the interstate system as its superstructure, I cannot accept that Kim manages to expose a problem in Wallerstein's world-systems analysis that "diminishes the explanatory power" of my notion of the division system when he argues that "Wallerstein ignores the fact that European countries had not only interacted among themselves before the capitalist world economy came into being in sixteenth-century Western Europe, but their interactions with non-European countries had already formed a structure of international relations" (37n29). Could Wallerstein actually have been ignorant of the fact that international relations and a structure of international relations existed before the sixteenth century? I have not read all of his works nor do I agree with everything I have read, but I could wish that my efforts to apply his world-systems analysis to the needs of the division system discourse might be considered with greater openness and exactitude.

I find further evidence of problems caused by an excessive preoccupation with the state when, after his criticism of Wallerstein, Kim goes on to conclude that "another great theoretical task before division system theory is to conceptualize its structure of division by properly placing the two divided states in the reality of international relations" (*ibid.*). Here again we find him positing the "two divided states" as the two principal opposing terms of the division system and, furthermore, grasping their relations with the outside world in terms of the reality of international relations in which one billiard ball hits another, instead of understanding the relations not merely as an external affair among the states but also an internal problem within the world economy, that is, something that takes place among various sub-units within the basic unit of the world-system.

Kim's concept of structure is also a problem. Though I appreciate his recognition that the discourse of the division system is a product of an effort to shed light on a deeper structure not easily discernible through superficial observation or mere empirical data, I tend to be skeptical of the

concept of structure that philosophically depends on “scientific realism” (35). In this sense, I think that social scientists, too, need to pay attention to the work of deconstruction or poststructuralism, which stresses that assuming a structure as a fixed entity is in itself a metaphysical malady; and I would stand by what I wrote a few years ago: “[S]omething corresponding to a concept is not located out there as a discrete entity, and this holds true not only for the division system but for all kinds of complex social reality. (Indeed, many, including deconstructionists, emphasize that even what we often take as ‘a commonplace thing’ is in fact a sort of ‘complex social reality,’ and that the referent of a concept cannot be easily posited).”<sup>5</sup> The reason I have not complied with social scientists’ demand for a stricter definition of “system” is not simply that I am not equal to the task (although admittedly I am not). I have even indicated that the term “division regime” might as well be substituted for “division system,” because I would rather not get involved in fruitless wrangling over the definition of “system”<sup>6</sup> when not even the solar system, a much more structurally fixed object than any social system,<sup>7</sup> is an immutable self-enclosed structure.

At any rate, I warmly welcome anybody’s pointing out any lack of theoretical rigor in my idea of the division system, but an even more ardent wish of mine is to see many more research results by expert scholars that endeavor to examine not only in detail, but also in a systematic and comprehensive manner, the reality of the divided peninsula. Also, I wish they would study and explore with greater conviction the possibility of alliance between the peoples of North and South for the struggle against the peninsula-wide division system, instead of dismissing it as the product of a literary person’s imagination. It would be important in such research work not to judge civilian movements in the North solely with the yardstick of the nongovernmental civic movements of the South. To take an example, the conjecture that much of the needs of ordinary people’s lives in the North, which hardly seem sustainable according to the official statistics (at least those known to us), is being supplied by the underground economy (which is none other than a civilian-led economy!)<sup>8</sup> suggests that not everything in North Korea goes like clockwork—or “without a single loose thread”—under the direction of the division regime. While it is too early to say whether this phenomenon provides a meaningful opening toward the overcoming of the division system, it is obvious that the division system is undergoing important changes both in the North and the South, which obviously demands an innovative and wise response on our part. For instance, concerning those who have gotten away from North Korea, a subject of much recent media attention, the time has come in

my opinion for the AWNL to make a decision as to whether they shall continue to be left to the government (particularly, the intelligence agencies), who still defines them as “righteous defectors.” To be honest, the AWNL has not even started a serious discussion of our proper response to this problem and to the larger issues of human rights and the right to existence of the people in the North. Kim expresses his hope that “the AWNL’s view of unification presented here will serve as an occasion to move our unification discourse a real step forward beyond mere political rhetoric” (38). I happen to believe that we may pride ourselves on having already contributed more than Kim acknowledges, but, given the huge task ahead, I think we should also humbly accept his concluding admonition.

## 9. The Historical Significance of the June Uprising for Democracy and the Meaning of Its Tenth Anniversary

### 1. THE JUNE UPRISING NOT FULLY COMMEMORATED

The nationwide uprising in June 1987, along with the April 19 Revolution, the Pusan-Masan Uprising, and the Kwangju Democratic Resistance,<sup>1</sup> is one of those popular movements against dictatorship that have marked milestones on the road toward South Korea's democratization. Moreover, the June Uprising for Democracy,<sup>2</sup> while carrying on those preceding movements, represents a new achievement and occupies a special place in that it has not suffered decisive reversals as did other democratization movements. It established the general trend toward democracy that will be hard to turn back except by some chaotic circumstance caused by a war or an abrupt reunification. Nevertheless, over most of the ensuing decade, the June Uprising does not seem to have been the subject of commemoration befitting its historical significance. This phenomenon is quite striking when compared with the April Revolution of 1960, or the Kwangju Democratic Resistance of 1980.

In part it was because commemorating the June Uprising seemed none too appropriate after so many disappointing outcomes, such as the failure to establish a civilian government in the 1987 presidential election. Furthermore, it suffers in dramatic impact by the fact that it was not accompanied by tragedies like the May 16 military coup (1961) or the bloody suppression of the Kwangju uprising. Radical movement forces, in their turn, with their tendency to slight "ameliorationist" achievements, refused to fully appreciate the intermittent and piecemeal progress toward civilian rule and democracy that has continued since June 1987.

Let me expatiate a little on the reasons why the June Uprising has not hitherto received the attention it merits. First of all, President Roh Tae-

woo, the immediate agent of the June 29 Declaration (which acceded to many of the demands of the demonstrators), and the ruling circles around him were well aware of the declaration's deceptive nature—implicit in the secrecy surrounding its production as well as in the political calculations embedded in its contents—and therefore after holding some halfhearted commemoration ceremonies in the early years of his rule, later on veered toward hoping for its oblivion. Second, the two Kims (Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung), who might be considered the most influential leaders during the uprising, were in an awkward position to organize extensive commemorations because their split resulted in presenting the military with a presidency by direct election.

The failure to fully commemorate the June Uprising was not confined to the political leaders. Leaders of the student movement, which constituted another group of major actors and the most radical vanguard during the uprising, regarded “the rejection of [Chun’s] defense of the Constitution” chiefly as a tactical precondition for national liberation and the “reunification of the fatherland.” Therefore, they organized a big march toward P’anmunchŏm on the first anniversary of the uprising, and thereafter played a major part in turning the month of June each year into an annual reunification campaign that has become increasingly estranged from the general population. At the same time, proponents of “democratic transformation” or “people’s revolution”—another pivotal group in the radical sector—in their turn underrated the June Uprising as only a prelude to revolution, assuming that Korea’s modern history had entered a new stage with the “Great Labor Struggle of July and August 1987” and overrating the revolutionary possibilities within South Korean society. Moderate (ameliorationist) civic movements, which came to find their own space for activities only after the June Uprising, were not capable of properly commemorating it either. Most of those involved in these new organizations played relatively minor roles in the uprising or the preceding antidictatorship struggles; moreover, their tendency to confine themselves to a citizens’ movement sharply distinguished from people’s movements prevented them from acquiring social power commensurate with the favorable response of the major newspapers.

For these various reasons the month of June in recent years has become the month of the outbreak of the Korean War (June 25, 1950), rather than that of the June Uprising or the June 29 Declaration—a season for ultra-conservative forces to swagger and strut at their will. The launching of the National Committee for the Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the June Uprising last year represents, I think, a sincere desire to

change such an overall tendency, rather than mere attention paid to the number ten.

## 2. THE JUNE UPRISING WITHIN THE DIVISION SYSTEM

But even before the National Committee embarked on its projects, people themselves, heroes of the June Uprising, rose in protest against the ruling party's ramming through the National Assembly toward the end of 1996 of the National Security Planning Agency Law and the new labor law;<sup>3</sup> thus the year 1997, the tenth anniversary of the uprising, dawned with the best commemorative event possible. Specifically, the January general strike led by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions and partially joined by the more conservative Federation of Korean Trade Unions struck a decisive blow against the powerful offensive by the joint forces of the government, the ultraconservative forces and *chaebŏl* [large conglomerate] groups. This fact points at once to what has changed since 1987, and to the continuous change brought about in Korean society on account of the June Uprising. Blue-collar workers, who ten years previously began to respond only at the uprising's final stage and could engage in serious struggle only after the June 29 Declaration, now played a central role in the nationwide protest: they even took the lead in mobilizing the "necktie corps," white-collar office workers. The achievement of the June Uprising also had its effect on a series of political developments: the Hanbo Steel scandal,<sup>4</sup> the controversy surrounding Kim Hyŏn-ch'ŏl (President Kim Young-sam's son), and other issues following in the wake of the government's retreat on the labor law dealt a heavy blow to the effectiveness of the regime and brought the whole political arena into confusion. South Korean society had by now advanced far enough to resist not only military dictatorship but the authoritarian rule of the civilian government as well.

However, most of the fruits of the January popular struggle, except the historic legalization of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, have once again turned into mere political bargaining chips; talks about pardons became increasingly vociferous as soon as the historic final sentences were pronounced on the military rebellion and insurrection of the two ex-presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo,<sup>5</sup> and the failure of Kim Young-sam's reform policies is often put at the door of the reform movement itself. Under these circumstances, the need is so much greater for a fuller realization of the potentialities inherent in the June Democratic Resistance. For that purpose, instead of simply blaming the politicians for their betrayal, or of deploring in vague terms the inadequacy of the peo-

ple's capacity, we should perform a more precise and systematic analysis of the historical significance of the June Uprising. This task naturally should be pursued in many directions, but for my part, I propose to review and evaluate the uprising not just in terms of South Korea's history but as an event within the division system straddling the entire Korean peninsula.

*Insufficient Understanding of the Division System and Some Attendant Illusions*

I have used the term "division system," but I can hardly claim it has gained academic currency as a concept. But since I myself have already attempted, however inadequately, to explain it in various places, I do not wish to repeat myself. Nevertheless, some further explication may ensue as I discuss what characteristics and significance might be attributed to the June Uprising in terms of the division system discourse. Needless to say, I do not mean by dragging in the notion of the division system to take advantage of the commemorative occasion to market my private hypothesis, but only to offer a more substantial exploration into the historical meaning (in its literal sense) of the June Uprising—that is, its place in the history of the nation and of the world.

First of all, even for a precise appraisal of the meaning of the uprising, it is necessary to bear in mind that, however epochal the June Uprising may be in South Korea's history, its epochal character must be limited inasmuch as the event was confined to one half of the peninsula. Advocacy of the uprising, unless grounded on a firm grasp of such a limitation, obviously cannot produce adequate practical responses, and will sooner or later be put on the defensive when challenged by arguments denying its significance outright. No small part of the confusion and frustration currently experienced by democratic forces stems from the fact that only a minor portion of the population shares an exact understanding of the June Uprising (and the democratization process as a whole) and puts that understanding into practice in their individual walks of life—in other words, from the fact that the reform movement has not yet established itself as part of a reform *culture*.

For example, the split of the two Kims in 1987, it is true, was largely due to their personal political ambitions. Yet, from the standpoint that the division system poses inherent constraints even on achieving liberal democracy, let alone a proletarian revolution—in other words, from the perspective that the reality of the division constitutes a system of such a kind that unless accompanied by a process of pulling down this system itself, no social change or revolution confined to either half of the

peninsula would be capable of eradicating its antidemocratic nature—it was a pure illusion (based on a wrong diagnosis of the reality of the division and shared by the two Kims and many of their followers) to assume that at least a civilian government was now guaranteed by the June 29 Declaration and that the only remaining question was which one of the two Kims would head it.

Various examples of illusions spawned by an inadequate understanding of the division system can be found outside the political arena as well. The “National Liberation” movement, for instance, despite its fervor for overcoming the division, took a one-sided stance and put all the blame on foreign powers’ intervention and the South’s anticommunist ideology. The “People’s Democratic Revolution” group, conversely, attempted a “scientific” analysis of the nature of South Korean society and advocated a revolutionary transformation prior to reunification; but they no less exaggerated the possibility under the division system of changing the South alone than those who, advocating liberal democracy, proclaimed “democracy first, unification later.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it was inevitably not the radical groups but the so-called ameliorationist forces—legal political parties and newly formed civic organizations, and so on—that exploited with more success the greatly expanded social space following the June Uprising. Yet these reformist forces, owing to their insufficient understanding of the division system, were no different in exaggerating the possibility of changing South Korean society; they not only failed to prevail against the ultraconservative forces, but in some respects even ended up going over to their camp. As a matter of fact, the dichotomy of “revolution versus reform” has its validity only under particular circumstances, and in South Korean society after the June Uprising—that is, at a stage when a road to ameliorations was opened up with the breakdown of President Chun’s despotic regime, and gave us hope that accumulated “ameliorations” in their turn might lead to a transformative change represented by the overcoming of the division system—that dichotomy can no longer be justified. (I will return to this point later.) This is equally true for those insisting upon partial improvements without any vision of fundamental change, as well as for those continuing to cry out for a revolution.

### *Regionalism as a Division Ideology*

Regionalism brewed internal conflicts and ruptures in many oppositional organizations as well as in the two Kim camps in 1987, and afterward established itself as one of the most serious problems in South Korean



politics. This phenomenon, too, we need to comprehend in terms of the notion of the division system. If there exists a division system under which those with vested interests in both Koreas have certain common interests in sustaining the division, the ultra-rightist anticommunism of the South cannot be the only form of division ideology. The North Korean slogan of "reunification at any cost" deserves to be called a Northern version of division ideology, insofar as it is indispensable in sustaining the division regime in the North while at the same time actually serving to reinforce anticommunist forces in the South. If the division ideology can thus freely metamorphose itself into an ultra-right or an ultra-left shape, we ought to expect it capable of producing other varieties depending on the situation. Considering that regional conflicts began to be truly rampant after the June Uprising, at the time when the claws of military dictatorship were somewhat dulled and ultra-rightist anticommunism as a political tool became less efficient due to the uprising, is it not reasonable to suppose that another ideology for reproducing the division system came into operation through regionalism? Looking back on the ten years following the uprising, it is an undeniable fact that regional conflicts actually have been turning oppositional sentiments once peculiar to the Pusan-Kyöngnam and Chölla regions into blind support for their respective local political leaders, even justifying alliance with ultraconservative forces if it may serve to promote their presidential ambitions. Moreover, regionalism has been sowing divisions across the nation among reformist and/or radical forces, and has been as powerful as any outright ultra-rightist ideology in paralyzing those forces in the given areas.

Thanks to this timely rescue by regionalism, the governing circles' age-old slogan of "the absolute priority of national security and the economy" has of late revived with all its pomp and circumstance, parading almost as a national consensus. Though not quite a national consensus, it amounts indeed to a consensus between the major opposing parties. This phenomenon has recently become more visible. Even the leading opposition party, let alone the second one (headed by Kim Jong-pil), responded by proposing a "national security rally" and calling for the election of an "economy president"; with economic difficulties deepening and the threat of the common collapse of the established political parties looming after the Hanbo Steel scandal, a meeting for the recovery of the economy among the leaders of the governing and opposition parties was held on the initiative of Kim Dae-jung. This indicates that vested interests in both Koreas share common interests as the vested interests in the division system, and that the division system, damaged by the defeat of the military regime in the South, is now

attempting to recover its self-sustaining power through regionally based, and all more-or-less conservative, parties' joint conquest of the country.

However, the "total crisis" (currently a popular term in South Korea) to which that attempt has given rise, together with the critical situations in the North that I will discuss later, suggests that the self-sustaining power of the division system has its limit. Words about economic crisis and the whole country being out of joint are on everybody's lips these days; and it is one of the basic and often repeated propositions of the doctrine of the division system that this system, though advantageous for the early stage of industrialization, is unpropitious for a leap into the next stage. Moreover, in the political sphere, I have already indicated that democratization in South Korea, which has kept advancing these ten years even under the division system, has already reached a level that will not tolerate the authoritarian rule of Kim Young-sam's civilian government; likewise, the three Kims' political authority, which is based on a coalition of the bankrupt current regime with those conservative opposition parties dependent upon regional division, cannot guarantee stability, either. The Hanbo bribery scandal demonstrates that none of these groups has the moral authority to govern a people with our level of consciousness. Evidently, the "grand conservative coalition," barely made possible by embracing even the ultra-rightist forces, a species whose removal has become necessary due to the end of the East-West Cold War, cannot create a stable conservative culture, though it might stifle the reform process.<sup>7</sup>

*Actual Grounds for the Logic of National Security and  
the Ideology of Economic Growth*

However, if either national security or economic growth, under the aegis of an agreement between the three Kims, can wield for now a power tantamount to a "national principle," there must be some actual grounds for them to be established as a dominant ideology. To begin with the issue of national security, we should take into account, in addition to the tragic experience of the Korean War and the dread of an even greater national disaster in the event of another war, the fact that the territorial demarcation line within the divided peninsula is not an internationally recognized national border—all the less so since it is only a ceasefire line—and how this points to an inherently insecure state of affairs. These circumstances seem sufficient to justify the call for a high-level deterrent force ensuring mutual extinction in the case of a resumed war. A considerably shifted balance of power in favor of the South due to the collapse of the USSR and economic difficulties of the North does not alter the basic situation. For

war doesn't necessarily break out when the opposing parties have much the same power; as a rule, it is more likely when one side is declining in power—particularly if the declining side is far stronger in military power than in other fields.

When it comes to economic development, it is obviously a more outspokenly shared ideology of the ruling circles of both Koreas, even though there may be differences in their respective theories and practices in pursuing the goal. This goal might be incompatible with the maintenance of the division system in the long run, but in the short term the collapse of the division system or its serious disruption must be a grave threat. It is therefore no wonder that the economy together with the prevention of war serves as a powerful justification for maintaining the division system. Moreover, "development" is the dominant ideology of the capitalist world-system of which the division system constitutes a subsystem.

Under such a complex and flexible system—with these basically shared ideologies of the two Koreas, and the division structure creating, and at the same time being sustained by, those ideologies, a structure in which the two halves are in confrontation but also reinforce each other—it can easily be surmised that the process of democratization is bound to run a complicated and rugged course. Given this limiting condition, the steady advance of South Korea's democracy since the April Revolution, indeed from before 1960, deserves applause from all across the world, particularly as it has not tolerated a critical reversal after the June Uprising and has ultimately produced the judicial determination that even a successful military coup is still an insurrection and a rebellion.

Yet an epochal victory limited to one half of the division system does not guarantee reunification or smooth democratization. Conversely, a reunification movement unaccompanied by steady internal reforms aiming at the radical transformation of antidemocratic and non-autonomous institutions or practices in each of the two Koreas is likely to contribute only to the reproducing of the division system, or at best to end up paving the way for a "division system without division."<sup>8</sup>

### 3. TOWARD A MEANINGFUL TENTH ANNIVERSARY

The year 1997, as indicated above, made an auspicious start for the tenth anniversary of the June Uprising, with a general strike and a nationwide rally protesting the ramming through of the revised labor law and demanding its reamendment. Yet, in terms of the large project of making the anniversary truly meaningful, it was indeed but a beginning:

the successful accomplishment of such a project would require intelligent responses based on a sound conception of the world-system and the division system. Without doubt this also calls for multifaceted investigations, but here again I will content myself with suggesting some directions based on the notion of the division system.

*The Need for an Alternative Logic for National Security and Economic Growth*

The general direction of the alternative path has already been suggested in the preceding diagnosis. If, for example, national security logic, a major ideology of the division system, is not a mere imposture by the ruling circles, those who aim at democratization and the overcoming of the division system have an urgent need to put forth their own idea of national security. I deplored the return of the June 25 anniversary of the Korean War as the major commemorative event for the month of June, but no Korean can afford to forget the fact that June *is* the month of the war's outbreak. Only, one may well wonder why those people whose careers were made in the course of the war, becoming generals or accumulating fortunes (even though they may have suffered hardships of their own), should claim a virtual monopoly on "the 25 of June," when it was the common people across the entire peninsula who most suffered the ravages of war. Needless to say, it is mainly because those few quickly seized all the advantageous positions in the division system that came to be established with the ceasefire. Yet it must also be partly due to the fact that those who aim at dismantling the division system and building a better world have not yet, even after the uprising, developed a new logic combining the month of the Korean War with that of the June Uprising. This task is especially incumbent upon any group avowedly representing progressive scholarship,<sup>9</sup> and requires a way of thinking that takes into account both the instability and flexibility peculiar to the division system. That is, such a new way of thinking should propose not only political and military designs for preventing war on the Korean peninsula but a real vision for the post-reunification national defense as well; and this should constitute a real alternative to the logic of the reactionary forces who are ever ready to flaunt the "special situation of the division." In other words, the alternative logic ought to provide a road map for reunification, according to which we should start from peaceful coexistence and avoidance of an abrupt reunification by absorption, then going on to build a new national community that will have successfully overcome the division system, while creating a corresponding state structure.

Regarding the economy, too, those in pursuit of an alternative system seem to have paid too little attention to the issue, even though it is the basis for all social formations worth the name of a system as well as an excuse for maintaining the division system. As with the issue of national security, they often behaved as if the problem of making a living were none of their concern. Such an attitude might well do for piecemeal criticisms of the existing system, but it cannot produce authentic alternative forces nor build a reform culture rooted in people's daily lives. Any movement seeking to replace the division system with a better one should have a clear conception of the kind of capability and characteristics of the South Korean economy required for optimal reunification; furthermore, on the assumption that even the post-reunification Korean economy basically will not be free from the logic of the capitalist world market, one should possess an idea as to how much to resist or adapt to that logic. And these two issues are closely related. No practicable alternative would be possible with our eyes closed to the "age of unlimited competition" that has already arrived, yet no long-term alternative can emerge of itself as long as we embrace unlimited competition as the only choice available to us in this world.

*The North Korean Food Crisis and the Movement  
for Overcoming the Division System*

The recent situation on the Korean peninsula highlighted by the North Korean food crisis, however, raises an urgent question that overshadows such general considerations. First of all, if an ability to feed its population is a sine qua non of any system, there is a pressing need to reconsider how far the North Korean system—itsself a part of the division system—has proceeded toward losing its self-sustaining power. Besides, it is undeniable that a regime crisis becoming serious on either half of the peninsula implies an increased possibility of the collapse of the division system through war. Viewed in this light, it appears evident again that the ruling circles' agenda-setting, focused on "national security and economy," is not totally lacking in justification. A movement for overcoming the division system, which, unlike forces trying to maintain the system or to absorb the other side without any self-renewal on their part, aims at a better society than the existing one on either side, should be able to bring forward a consistent and farsighted alternative vision regarding the recent situation as well.

Though somewhat belatedly, a consensus is building in the South that starving compatriots should be promptly helped. The most familiar argument is that in case of famine or a comparable emergency, humani-

tarianism and compatriot love should come first and that sundry political considerations can have no place. This argument is not only utterly sound in itself, but such a “nonpolitical” argument can have a political effect when some of the ultra-rightist forces are still objecting even to minimum humanitarian moves by citing the fear that food support might be diverted for use as military rations. The truth is that even if foodstuffs sent by South Korean NGOs are to be diverted to supply the military, it would hardly lead to any notable strengthening of North Korea’s military power or to a momentous reinforcement of the position of its ruling circles. (If the argument is that South Korean food aid, even without being converted into military rations, is sure to enhance North Korea’s combat power to whatever degree, one could at least appreciate the precision of the thesis.) The refusal to send food aid, conversely, is likely to increase the temptation of another war, and the North Korean population’s animosity toward the inhumanity of the Southern capitalist society will certainly grow stronger. All this will benefit vested interests in the South, at least in the short term.

As for the long-term threat to the existent Pyongyang regime, it is apt to increase precisely when South Korean NGOs play a considerable role in solving the North Korean food crisis. For that would open the road to a peninsula-wide popular solidarity indispensable for overcoming the division system. As a matter of fact, one of the major criticisms raised against the doctrine of the division system, which posits “those with vested interests in the division system versus the peoples of the two Koreas” as the basic opposing terms, has been the alleged absence or impossibility of popular solidarity across the peninsula necessary for a people-centered reunification. I shall not address this “impossibility” because the burden of proof is on those who assert it; its “absence,” however, does to some extent square with realities up to now. But of course, even this is true only in a relative sense. For, although most of the nongovernmental exchanges between the two Koreas cannot be said to amount to people’s solidarity as such, there is no reason to define them as contacts limited to privileged classes, all the less so when their ripple effect is taken into account. But what is of critical importance at this point is that conditions might change at a stroke if a substantial portion of the foodstuffs that will deliver many of the North Korean population from starvation should be supplied by a large-scale, spontaneous mobilization of the South Korean people.

It remains unclear whether even a large-scale mobilization would lead to substantial popular solidarity across the Korean peninsula. In any case, such solidarity will certainly require a rationale for mobilization that

goes beyond simple humanitarianism and compatriotism. I have already pointed out that a nonpolitical argument can be very effective in countering the perverse and politicized reasoning by ultra-right forces and has no small political significance of its own. Yet temporary emergency aid would not break the numerous fetters of the division system, and the structural problems of North Korean agriculture are likely to remain beyond even the supply of aid. If this proves true, criticisms of “sentimental unification discourse” or “naive humanitarianism” will gain new force. But even before that happens, those specifically aiming at overcoming the division system among various domestic and foreign actors joining in humanitarian aid programs need a special logic that will enable them to make firmer and more efficient use of the present situation than those aiming at the solidification of the division system or at “a division system without division.” For example, in times like the present when the popular labor organizations, including the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, are beginning to take an active interest for the first time in the North Korean issue, the future course of South Korea’s popular movements can be greatly influenced through the recognition that aiding the people of the North is not the same as helping the North Korean regime, but can even be a means of protecting the very agents of judgment on the North Korean regime as a component of the division system; and that since a confrontation between two systems or camps (capitalism and socialism) does not constitute the essential feature of the division of the Korean peninsula, the failure of the North Korean regime does not necessarily entail a one-sided annexation on the initiative of the South Korean regime or “the capitalist camp,” but can lead to a reunification that gives full scope to the self-reliance and creativity of the peoples of the two Koreas.

#### *North Korean Defectors and the Human Rights Issue*

Likewise, the issue of North Korean defectors, which has hitherto contributed almost exclusively to strengthening the reactionary forces in South Korea, might turn into an innovative chance for movements for overcoming the division system. It is a fact that South Korea’s national-democratic movement, while crying out for human rights and advocating the restoration of the Korean national community, has up to the recent food crisis often neglected the problem of the Northern population’s—our very compatriots’—right to life, and it has been especially indifferent to the human rights question of those who have left behind their lives in the North. Of course, this had been the case largely because the human rights or right-to-life issue of North Koreans has been politically exploited by



South Korean ruling circles, while relevant and reliable data have been hard to come by. But the national-democratic movement's response to that issue fell far short of an all-out response to the antidemocratic and heteronomous nature of the division system itself, and the old excuses will not do anymore under the new circumstances where the June Uprising and particularly the launching of a civilian government in 1993 have made South Korea a much more open society. True, we must continue our efforts to reform the legal and institutional apparatuses that guarantee the security authorities' monopoly over the control of North Korean defectors as well as over information on the North. But we need also to overcome the dichotomy of seeing the Northern population either as brethren yearning to nestle in the bosom of the capitalist South or as proud citizens of the DPRK, which, after all, has attained a socialist mode of production, and to recognize them as a portion of the people of the Korean peninsula that are being oppressed along with us under the division system. Thus we have to view defectors as human beings and fellow countrymen with their own agonies, desires, and potentialities, and look for ways to find among them comrades in the movements for overcoming the division system.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Discussing the June Uprising in terms of the doctrine of the division system has tended to bring into relief only those issues immediately related to the North-South division. Of course, it cannot be emphasized too much that the problems of democratization and domestic reform within the South, immediate goals of the uprising and features of its subsequent achievements as well, need to be understood in direct relation to the division. Anyway, in place of a conclusion, I would like to bring up some points neglected till now.

First, the division system is above all a subclass or a subsystem of the capitalist world-system; therefore, problems characterizing the capitalist world economy such as environmental destruction, class conflict, sexism, and racial discrimination are basically and persistently making their presence felt on the Korean peninsula as well. They naturally are played out in varying forms, through the mediation of the division system and then according to the different social structures of North and South. But, even to overcome the division system alone, not only the division problem in the narrow sense but those more general problems need to be coherently grasped from the perspective of division system discourse. This is not to attribute every ill to the division. But inasmuch as we have explained such



problems as national security, economy, or regional conflicts from a specific viewpoint, we must be able to sort out other problems from the same perspective if we are to demonstrate the validity of that viewpoint and thus help build ties among various social forces on the basis of varied but mutually consistent action plans. Furthermore, the possibility of a global solidarity will open up only when we clearly understand from what basic nature of the world-system such problems arise, and through what kind of mediation by the division system they materialize themselves in specific forms in each of the two Korean societies. Second (to make the same point in a different way), when not merely the division but the division *system* is to be overcome, it implies creating a qualitatively different society—a task worth the name of a systemic transformation—by conjoining proper responses (specific to divided societies) to these major contradictions, rather than pursuing reunification by itself in disregard of those contradictions. That is, only when a reunification movement succeeds in combining from a consistent viewpoint problems of ecology or gender (which haven't received adequate discussion here) with other tasks, can it become the kind of project for reunification on popular initiatives demanded by the notion of the division system.

Since this complex task encompasses what is called "transformation" (or "revolution") as well as "reform" (or "amelioration"), going beyond the dichotomy of "reform versus revolution" is essential to making the most of the meaning of the June Uprising. In order to do this, however, it is not enough just to point out that the dichotomy is too mechanical; it requires an insight into how various urgent tasks of reform or transformation are related with each other, and how and in what order they are to be tackled. This dichotomy originally represents a kind of rhetorical expression with its own strategic usefulness in an extreme situation where any partial improvements possible are practically meaningless, or where reckless spreading of revolutionary violence is to be feared. In Korea, during the national liberation movement under the Japanese colonial rule or in the course of the struggles against military dictatorship in the South, there was reason enough to brand as "ameliorationist" those forces willing to rest content with the partial concessions doled out by the established regime.

Even after the June Uprising, one may still criticize in the same way those who try to content themselves with partial improvements to the division system while leaving that system basically intact. Yet the division system will not be pulled down unless we go beyond such easy name-calling and undertake a shrewd combination of the tasks of reform and transfor-

mation. On the one hand, as long as the division system remains stable as a system, it will not allow anything but extremely limited changes, either in the North or the South, so that a full realization of liberal democracy or people's democracy confined to the South, or that of socialism in the North, is a fundamental impossibility. At the same time, it is a system vulnerable enough to be seriously shaken by the accumulation of ameliorationist achievements such as an uninterrupted advance in the democratization of the South or a genuine reform and opening up of the North. The process of democratization in the South over the last ten years is at once a proof of that fundamental impossibility and of how results somewhat more substantial than "extremely limited changes" could be attained when accompanied by something like the "Northern Policy" under President Roh Tae-woo, which was a response to the reunification movement at home and post-Cold War circumstances in the outside world. Now, on the tenth anniversary of the uprising, the entire division system has entered a new phase due to the critical situation in each of the two Koreas, and South Korea's popular movement, reinvigorated after a long silence, is facing a new opportunity.

Past experiences tell us that reform measures without a middle- and long-term vision for transformation cannot enjoy cumulative effects and face the risk of reversal in the long run. It is widely recognized that Kim Young-sam's reforms merely drifted and finally almost disappeared chiefly on account of his inconsistent—more specifically his unpredictable and self-damaging hard-line—policy toward North Korea. As for the near disarmament of South Korea's reform and revolutionary forces "ambushed" by regional conflict, this occurred because they failed to reach a firm recognition that regional conflict, far from being a sudden ambush in the literal sense, is only one of the means with which the division system operates, and thus were unable to make a resolute response in accordance with that recognition. This is what I had in mind when I said above that a "reform culture" had not yet taken root in our society. Any movements for transformation that disregard in principle reform measures that could be put into practice right away will naturally have difficulties establishing themselves in people's daily lives. Likewise, no reform movement lacking a long-term outlook for transformation will develop into a culture. A reform culture cannot be built by piecemeal reformers alone. When the outlook for long-term transformation is lost, it is first of all the people that disappear from sight, and in such circumstances reform movements relying on what they narrowly define as "citizens" (to the exclusion of "people") will sooner or later collapse, confessing their impotence before the "unsurmountable wall of reality."

Hence an outlook for transformation ought to target, over and beyond the division system, the encompassing higher system, namely, the world-system itself. Here, too, it is important to realize that the capitalist world economy does not permit more than piecemeal improvements until certain historical conditions are ripe, and therefore a revolution in a particular region might be, in terms of the world-system, nothing but a piece of amelioration or even a change for the worse. In other words, the cold reality is that even the transforming of the division system is bound to fall short of a world-historical change abolishing the logic of the world market itself. Yet in order for this partial improvement to succeed and turn out as an improvement rather than a change for the worse for humankind, a transformative vision based on the actualities of the world-system is sorely needed. For instance, regarding the often discussed danger of a sudden reunification by absorption, it is not enough just to think about its damages to the Korean people, such as social confusion and the decline of Korea's standing in the world economy, and so forth, but one must think through and ponder the probability that even if another advanced economy materializes in the Korean peninsula following a reunification by absorption, consecutive appearances of such advanced economies—especially when China joins that rank as well—will eventually bring ruin on mankind owing to the acceleration of global environmental destruction. When based on such realization, movements for overcoming the division system can secure another route to global solidarity, and have a firmer guarantee that reunification on the Korean peninsula may decisively contribute to finding an authentic alternative for humanity.

Such an insight into the complementary relationship between transformation and reform enables a higher evaluation of the intermittent and partial reforms in South Korea since the June Uprising. The uprising evidently has not led to reunification and neither was it a final victory of the South Korean democratic movement, but it marked both an epochal turning point on the road to democratization and a milestone (whether so perceived or not) in the course of overcoming the division system, and furthermore, it represented also a part of the long march toward the transformation of the world-system. Whether this process will lead us all the way to these goals in the future depends on the meaning we manage to give to the tenth anniversary of the June Uprising and to the subsequent history.

## 10. Song Chǒngsan's Proposals for State Building as a Doctrine for Reunification

It was in October 1945, just two months after Liberation from Japanese rule, when Song Kyu, (1900–1962, honorific dharma name Chǒngsan), the second Prime Dharma Master of *Wǒn* Buddhism, published a pamphlet entitled *Kǒn'gukron* [On state building]. It was rare enough for a religious leader to present his ideas on state founding, and even among political parties and politicians there seem to have been few proposals as elaborate as his.<sup>1</sup> But his proposals were more or less neglected in the actual history of modern Korea with its rush to establish separate regimes in 1948 and subsequent internecine bloodshed. But the very fact that indifference to his plans may in part have been responsible for the devastating national calamity of the Korean War may constitute sufficient reason to reexamine the significance that Song Chǒngsan's specific proposals for state founding had in the context of the political situation of the time. This paper, however, does not aim at such a historical examination;<sup>2</sup> rather, I want to talk about the possible contemporary relevance of Song's thoughts, mainly in relation to issues that arise in today's reunification movements.

### 1. REUNIFICATION AS A PROJECT OF STATE BUILDING

The primary task of the present reunification movements is, first, to secure a precise understanding of the need for reunification, and, second, to come up with an adequate design for a step-by-step unification.

Some may find it surprising that the "need for reunification" is cited at all. But as the age of division has drawn out, we encounter more frequently the doubt as to why we should demand reunification if both Koreas can enjoy prosperity in their respective areas—or even why one should care what happens in the North as long as I myself individually can be well

off here in the South. In addition, serious doubts are being raised about whether a single nation should necessarily have a single state. As a matter of fact, the argument that every nation should form a nation-state of its own not only lacks a firm theoretical ground, but it is likely to cause serious confusions and conflicts to many existing multiethnic states and multinational ethnic groups. Indeed, the Korean nation (ethnos) already constitutes a multinational ethnic community, and has little prospect of living within a single nation-state even when North and South Korea are reunited.

It is therefore important to give a scientific account for the need for reunification in terms of the concrete history and the actual situation of the Korean nation. The task will include a historical elucidation of how the division was forced against the will of the overwhelming majority of Koreans and how this state of division has, in turn, been maintained in an antidemocratic and far from self-reliant manner. It will require, too, an exposition of how the two states in the divided peninsula are after all two *division-states*, that is, peculiarly handicapped nation-states that participate in the world-system through the mediation of the division system. In the sense that Korea is still without a "normal" nation-state, the Korean nation is still in the process of state building. This point should strike us with particular force under the current "economic trusteeship" since the IMF bailout. Every serious discourse of state and nation building, Song Chǒngsan's included, should more or less retain its relevance.<sup>3</sup>

Among arguments doubting the need for reunification, one hears mentioned so-called reunification costs. All too often such a view is reprimanded for its anti-national stance for bringing in the calculation of costs into the historical mission of reunification; or it is countered with the argument that the costs, all told, cannot be higher than those of prolonging the division. Insofar as calculating the maintenance cost is after all an action of calculation, such a counterargument leaves itself open to the accusation of the same anti-national stance. Yet it would hardly be responsible to take no account of the costs beforehand over a project as momentous as reunification. In fact, what we really should take issue with regarding the appeal to reunification costs is the very notion that the state-building task of Koreans was completed with the foundation of the Republic of Korea (or at least with the economic success of its latest decades) and that what remains to be decided is simply whether, or how, this completely established nation-state will absorb the Northern region and its inhabitants (probably at the risk of exorbitant costs on us in the South). But there is a totally different conception of the costs. So long as we live under the division system, we are still going through the process of

state building or of founding a truly national state, so that we might incur an enormously costly national catastrophe if we mishandle this process. Likewise, the costs of maintaining the division system, extremely large as they are, obviously will not be greater than the costs of reunification by war. But to prefigure and prepare ourselves for a less costly alternative than either, that is, a genuine overcoming of the division system which in its turn will demand some inevitable sacrifices should form part of our endeavor to confirm the need for reunification.

Both governments, North and South, are apparently agreed on a gradual reunification. But in truth many people within governments and without still entertain other aims. As for the Southern side, at least up to the 1997 IMF bailout, the prevalent idea in ruling circles was reunification by absorption on their initiative, and if this was not possible, they would opt for perpetual division; indeed, after the financial crisis, the latter option seems to have gained strength. The Northern regime's attitude must be similar, presumably preferring the solidification of division in the current adverse political conditions, though still retaining a communist-led reunification as the ultimate target. However, a conception of the divided peninsula in terms of the division system, while not neglecting the North-South opposition, takes "opposition between the division system and the majority of people in both Koreas" to be a more fundamental contradiction, so that for a better life of the people the overcoming of the *system* of division is posited as the goal, together with a project of gradual reunification that will maximize popular initiatives.

Chŏngsan's notions, such as "three periods of state building" in the appendix to *On State Building*, and "the middle-path policy" underlying it, are in accord with this idea of a gradual reunification. The reason he set up "three five-year periods"<sup>4</sup> preparatory for state building is not that he thought we must get through the full fifteen years of training before establishing a government, but that he perceived state building to be a long process if we are to create a nation-state worthy of the name. Which is a perception applicable to the process of reunification as well. For example, Chŏngsan defines the three periods, each containing the categories of "politics" and "economy," as follows:

1. Period of Training: Different economic classes working separately [for the common purpose of nation building]
2. Period of Adjustment: Different class interests coordinated by the state
3. Period of Completion: Achievement of equal life (346–47)

This periodization will not apply verbatim to the process of reunification, but we may here read the basic directions and stages for overcoming of the division system: (1) the preliminary stage of mutual exchanges and a union of states, (2) the stage for creating a more concentrated state structure suitable to our reality, whether it be a federal state or a unitary nation-state, and (3) the stage for advancing, under this newly created state, toward a much more egalitarian society. In particular, Chöngsan contends that, starting with the middle-of-the road policies, "we will afterward be able easily to round out subsequent policies, whether of the left or right,<sup>5</sup> when we have made satisfactory progress in terms of the development of popular minds, the degree of achieved state building, and the evenness of material wealth," and he defines his stance as "a policy that refines itself through practical trials, and is progressive without irreconcilable extremes" (343-44). Such a flexible and experimentally open stance is a model to be emulated in a reunification project that emphasizes the people's awakening and their creative contributions.

## 2. ON STATE BUILDING AND THE THREE PRINCIPLES IN THE JOINT NORTH-SOUTH COMMUNIQUÉ OF JULY 1972

One of the ways to examine the contemporary relevance of *On State Building* is to compare it with the three principles for reunification proclaimed in the Joint North-South Communiqué of July 4, 1972. The details of the Communiqué became dead letters before they had a chance to be put into practice, but it remains a fact that the very act of issuing the communiqué had an epochal effect in heightening people's awareness of the reunification problem and greatly encouraging discussions of that problem in the South. Moreover, the three principles of autonomy, peace, and grand national unity have continued to serve as a major framework for all the following discourses on reunification, and were reconfirmed in the 1991 Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between North and South Korea.

Needless to say, the principle of peace perfectly accords with the position of *On State Building*. At a time when diverse political forces were already in sharp conflict and even the danger of an enormous internecine bloodshed was being felt,<sup>6</sup> Chöngsan's purpose in writing the pamphlet was first and foremost a peaceful state building.

His call for autonomy is equally clear. He says in "Securing Self-Reliance" (chapter 2, section 2):

One needs to be equally kind to all of the Allied Powers with an impartial, self-reliant spirit, but must refrain from this foolish and contemptible idea of promoting one's cause or influence and countering one's opponents by adhering to any one of the Allied Powers . . .

Therefore, we must give our priority to internal unity, and endeavor to restore the impartial and autonomous spirit of Korea. If we are swayed hither and thither or if, through partiality and prejudice, we take one side to oppose another, it will be as good as inviting the interventions of foreign forces, and amount to obstructing the task of state building. Furthermore, if any grudges among the Allies or any unfortunate events among us should take place owing to our acts, what a grave transgression of ours will it be? (324)

Of course, our relations with the Allied Powers as well as the mutual relations among them have greatly changed since that time. However, not only should we appreciate Chǒngsan's forewarning that lack of autonomy on the part of the Korean nation would bring about "unfortunate events" at home as well as international conflicts, but his emphasis on "securing self-reliance" and "observing the larger situation" and his call for a middle-of-the-road policy vis-à-vis neighboring great powers are all relevant to today's reunification project as well. For he is criticizing, on the one hand, the all-too-familiar attitude of trying to achieve reunification by relying on a particular foreign power or powers, but at the same time is warning against a parochial conception of autonomy and failure to read the larger situation, which lead to xenophobia or a blind insistence on an independent line more like foolish eccentricity than autonomy in the true sense.

The principle of "grand national unity" of the Joint North-South Communiqué can also be easily discerned in *On State Building*. For at a time when violent conflicts between left and right were on the brink of breaking out, Song Chǒngsan advocated the middle-of-the-road doctrine and policy and gave utmost priority to "internal unity." We come across passages in his pamphlet directly related to the tenor of the communiqué that a grand national unity as one people be sought first, transcending differences in ideas, ideologies, and institutions. "If we observe the current situation impartially," he says for instance, "it appears impossible, except for this middle-of-the-road policy, to converge on the common goal of state building through an alliance without fatal flaws and adjustment without unilateral sacrifices among all classes and walks of life" (343), and he goes on to appeal, "Only after we have founded our own state will ideology, equality, freedom and interests have a meaning and we become



masters of our own happiness. Where shall we look for ideology, equality, freedom, or interests, if we fail to found a state?"(346).

As a matter of fact, "grand national unity" has been the most controversial of the three principles of the Joint Communiqué. On the one hand, a grand unity transcending ideologies and institutions has been condemned as a subversive idea that would even tolerate a communist regime, while others have criticized it as an empty slogan devoid of any idea or conviction. In this regard, *On State Building* is much clearer than the communiqué.

We will find appropriate politics for Korea only when we accurately grasp its present reality. Such politics will be devised by first basing itself on the domestic situation of Korea and then selectively adopting various political ways of civilized countries. If we stubbornly favor just one party without fully grasping the political situations within and without, or if we blindly follow the policies of a certain country, we shall not inaugurate appropriate politics.

However, the principle of democracy must be adopted as a common standard. (328)

The "principle of democracy" is an important clause absent in the 1972 communiqué.

Truly, the absence of democracy among the proclaimed principles of the communiqué and lack of democratic procedures in its preparation and announcement, although unavoidable in the political conditions of the time, represent serious flaws of the Joint Communiqué as a charter of national reunification. The clandestine character of the process and the unofficial status of the signatories (i.e., in the capacity of secret emissaries of the respective top leaders rather than official representatives of each government) were partially remedied with the 1991 Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation, which was concluded through a series of prime minister-level talks. Even here, however, not a few deficiencies accompanied it, such as the omission of the ratification procedure by South Korea's National Assembly. As for the demand for a *democratic* reunification, it was included in the Korean National Community Unification Formula (1989) declared by the Southern government, and mentioned by various NGOs, but is yet to be reflected in any intergovernmental agreements.

Obviously, because North and South differ so strikingly in their interpretations of democracy even while both claim to uphold it, bringing in the issue of democracy would not be helpful to a successful negotiation. Moreover, since democracy even on the different respective interpreta-

tions has never been properly enacted on either side, it is doubtful whether authorities of either regime have the will to seek agreement on a meaningful principle of democracy. All the more reason that the issue of democracy should be raised persistently by civilian movements, so that a substantial consensus on democracy will finally be reached by the people of both Koreas.

There is no need to start by specifying the details of that consensus in advance. However, the principles enunciated by Chǒngsan in the section titles of the chapter on "Politics"—namely, "(1) Building a Democratic State Suitable to the Present Condition of Korea," "(2) Implementation of the Middle-of-the-Road Philosophy," "(3) Simplified and Transparent Administration" (including a certain degree of local autonomy), and "(4) Strict Constitutional Rule"—seem an appropriate point of departure, and the fifth and sixth sections of "Training and Education" and "Cultivation of Abilities" represent tasks that are still urgent after fifty years.<sup>7</sup>

These ideas of Chǒngsan's regarding state building may be said to include vigorous responses to the aforementioned allegations of "a subversive idea" or "an empty slogan."

### 3. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE "PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRACY"

Even should the principle of democracy be included, we still need to come up with concrete proposals for putting it into practice and, even more important, there is the question of defining the precise content of democracy and the theoretical grounds for it. In fact, democracy is something everyone today is eager to espouse, and has turned into a kind of cant word for latter-day Pharisees. In fact, even for those who in their way have reflected on the concept and earnestly attempted to implement it, democracy could be a very dangerous idea unless the right road for the awakening and training of *demos* is presupposed.

*On State Building* was written before the establishment of the division system, so we can hardly expect from the pamphlet concrete solutions for overcoming it. Nor does it directly confront the concept of democracy. We can, however, infer Chǒngsan's conception of "a democratic nation suitable for the present Korea" from his suggestions about the political system of the future nation. It is also noteworthy that, immediately after the 1945 Liberation, *On State Building* was proposing specific policies, including "emergency measures" not only in politics and education but also over broad issues such as defense, construction, and the economy. How per-

tainent these proposals were to the reality of that time would naturally demand a separate study, but if such practical spirit was based on and closely linked with firm philosophical principles, it would deserve all the more thoughtful consideration by today's readers.

Song Chǒngsan's philosophical principles would obviously be none other than the doctrine of *Wǒn* Buddhism. Understandably, he avoided any direct reference to religious creed in the pamphlet, so his profile as a religious leader reveals itself only in the statement that in building a state "we have to make Spirit the root of our endeavors."

The gist of my argument is that Spirit should be the root, politics and education the trunk, and military defense, construction, and economy the branches and leaves in state building, so that we can reap the fruits through the Way [*to*, Chinese *dao*] of evolution, and ultimately cultivate the nation's deep-rooted strength in the eternal world . . . (chapter 1, 321)

Particularly noteworthy, as I mentioned above, is the fact that he did not stop at the usual generalized exhortation of religious leaders, but went on to elaborate a consistent and relatively detailed discussion of the "trunk" and "branches and leaves."

In this regard, the emphasis on spirit in *On State Building* is different from spiritualism in the ordinary sense, or from the moralism of a Moral Rearmament Movement. This must be due to *Wǒn* Buddhism's particular understanding of "spirit." *The Principal Book of Wǒn Buddhism* says, "'Spirit' (*chǒngsin*) means that state in which the mind, being clear and round, calm and tranquil, is free from a tendency toward discrimination and a penchant toward attachment."<sup>8</sup> Spirit in this sense implies the state of "Wholeness of Both Spirit and Flesh," which is one of the principal mottos of *Wǒn* Buddhism, and the cultivation of such spirit directly leads to concrete praxis and "Choice in Action."<sup>9</sup>

Chǒngsan's stance of proposing specific practical measures based on spiritual cultivation may remind one of the Confucian "rule of virtue." As a matter of fact, Chǒngsan grew up in the tradition of Confucianism. We must not, however, overlook the fact that as a *Wǒn* Buddhist he placed the "rule of the Way" before the "rule of virtue."

There may be many Ways for governance and edification, but to cite the gist, the first is governance and edification through the Way [*to*], that is, to have everyone awoken to the principle of the Universe, which is also one's own nature, and let everyone receive edification in nonaction according to the great Way of Neither Birth Nor Death and of Retribution and Response of Cause and Effect. The second is gover-

nance and edification through “virtue” [*tǒk*], which is to have people’s minds be moved by the ruler who sets a virtuous example by taking the initiative to act according to the Way. The third is governance and edification through “politics” [*chǒng*], which is to lead the people by the majesty of the law and by the right discrimination of things. In the past any one of these three was sufficient for governance and edification, but from now on all three should be combined if one is to govern and edify satisfactorily.<sup>10</sup>

Here I am not simply pointing out that the Way referred to by Chǒngsan derives from Buddhism rather than Confucianism. While Confucian rule of virtue, though intended for the general weal of the people, is basically a ruler-oriented idea, the principle of democracy in *On State Building* demands a far more egalitarian kind of Way that will “have everyone awaken to the principle of the Universe, which is also one’s own nature.” At the same time, we must note that Chǒngsan proposed embracing the rule of politics as well, a doctrine of the Legal School that Confucians with their rule of virtue had traditionally disdained.

In this regard, we need to reconsider the scholarly tendency that too readily links Chǒngsan’s thoughts to the doctrine of “Eastern Way, Western Technique” at the time of opening the country in the late nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> True, one needs to study the extent to which that doctrine may have exerted influence in the formation of Chǒngsan’s ideas, but to interpret his thoughts as its up-to-date version will unjustly limit their significance. Ch’oe Su’un’s *Tonghak* [the Eastern Learning], with its attempt to combine Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, had in effect already “broken open” the traditional “Eastern Way.” If so, it would not be appropriate to resort to the dichotomy of the “Western material civilization versus Eastern spiritual civilization” in approaching the thoughts of Chǒngsan and his mentor Pak Chung-pin (1891–1943, the founder of *Wǒn* Buddhism), both of whom tried to comprehend even western Christianity and modern science, not to mention Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. THE ISSUES OF “SPIRIT” AND “SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION” IN REUNIFICATION MOVEMENTS

In these respects, Chǒngsan’s insistence that “Spirit” should serve as the root cannot be read as some godly words of a religious leader. Of course, if he means that everybody should have completed the cultivation of his or her own Spirit before reunification can be achieved, it would virtually

amount to advocating doing nothing at all, whether for reunification or state building. However, it stands to reason if, rather than an absolute prior task, it indicates the importance of a certain degree of spiritual cultivation in discriminating the root and branch of human affairs, although the question as to how persuasive are his detailed proposals concerning spiritual cultivation would of course remain.<sup>13</sup> For example, the ten obstacles to unity, discussed in the first section, "Unity of Mind and Heart," in the chapter on Spirit in *On State Building*, are worth particular consideration. Let me cite the whole passage, despite its length.

1. Lack of harmonizing spirit, each clinging only to one's own biases and rejecting views of the middle path;
2. Inability to give up oneself for others, through being obsessed with one's honor and selfhood;
3. Turning one's back on the just cause and right argument, seized with fiery ambitions for political power;
4. Thereby causing jealousies and contentions and dazing the masses with devious means;
5. Losing power of fair critical discrimination, due to inability to tell the root from the branch of human affairs and attraction to one-sided impulses;
6. Lacking the spirit of grand accord [*Taedong*], through attachment to regionalism and factionalism;
7. Lack of tolerance and generosity, exposing the petty mistakes of others and concentrating on one's private grudges and feuds;
8. Insufficiency, at bottom, of dedication to national independence, with personal ambitions and interests going first;
9. Consequent inability to understand and accept the sincere thoughts of patriotic persons;
10. Putting the blame on others for the failure of unity, without reflecting on oneself. (322-23)

All this may have been inevitable in the confused months immediately following the Liberation, but do we not find too many of these obstacles even today, not only between the North and the South but also within each side, fifty-odd years after both have allegedly completed state building? In the case of South Korea, for example, we were painfully reminded of "provincialism and factionalism" in the latest election, and the 1997

financial crisis brought to light numerous instances of “inability to tell the root from the branch of human affairs and attraction to one-sided impulses.” In addition, at the very moment that we notice these faults in others, we need to ask ourselves whether the phrase about “putting the blame on others for the failure of unity, without reflecting on oneself” should not be applied to ourselves first of all.

If Chǒngsan’s analysis of Korean people’s defects as of 1945 is still valid today, we must admit that the conditions for reunification—at least for a reunification that signifies an authentic overcoming of the division system—are still unripe. This is not to say that we should for that reason put off working for reunification, but that we need to refresh our awareness that the reunification work required of us today must start with people’s awakening and rely substantially on voluntary popular participation, which would in turn deepen their awareness, if a state building worth its name is to be achieved. Indeed, one could hardly deny that people who come to attain Chǒngsan’s “unity of mind and heart” should constitute a certain portion of the population across the Korean peninsula if we are to achieve through popular initiatives an overcoming of the division *system*, instead of reunification by force or by absorption engineered by the ruling groups on one side, and, even in case of reunification by mutual agreement, a deal brokered by foreign powers and reached through the collusion of ruling elites on the two sides, thus preserving the peaceful coexistence and common prosperity that the privileged strata have enjoyed under the division system.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, it would not be too much to say that the problem of finding the right combination of individual cultivation with needed collective action has emerged as a central question not only for reunification movements but for all serious social movements in today’s world. As indicated above, to contend that we should not set out to change the world until every individual has become a saint is nothing but a deceptive rhetoric to preserve the status quo. On the other hand, as new social movements, from environmental/ecological to feminist movements, that demand fundamental changes in everyday living, grow more important, it is becoming clearer that those movements that give absolute priority to institutional changes fail to bring about the intended social change, and fail even to accomplish their preferred goals. A social movement will hardly succeed unless it can educate others by becoming a process of *self-education* for its participants. This applies directly to the movement for overcoming the division system, for, while the notion of the division system posits the contradiction between the vested interests and the people across and surrounding the

Korean peninsula, it understands the people themselves as beings in need of self-renewal, divided as they have been by the system and their everyday lives badly distorted in consequence.

Given such importance of Spirit and individual self-cultivation, proposals for education in *On State Building* are also worthy of fresh attention. For instance, the "improvement of spiritual education" and the "field education in manual labor" have been pursued in the North mainly for the inculcation of a particular political line, while they have been virtually neglected in the South. But we may well doubt whether the reunification project of state building will succeed without these kinds of education, on the basis of a more adequate understanding of Spirit.

## 5. TOWARD AN EQUAL SOCIETY

Not only in environmental and feminist movements but also in more traditional social movements like the labor movement, the question whether the liberation of the working class could be brought about without taking individual cultivation into serious consideration, is gaining in relevance, especially after the demise of "actually existing socialism." In the process of reunification as in the course of state building in the post-Liberation period, how to come to terms with existing inequalities including class distinctions emerges as an urgent issue. Those benefiting from existing inequalities attempt to protect their invested interests within the division system by minimizing popular participation in the unification process; while some of the radical forces rashly insist that reunification would be worthless unless it swept away existing inequalities.

The middle-path policy that Chǒngsan summarizes in the conclusion of *On State Building* "aims at stabilizing every individual's life by equally protecting all classes" (343), hence excluding revolutionary changes like the immediate abolition of class.<sup>15</sup> This policy should be appreciated as derived from his coolheaded judgment that state building would be impossible without substantial support externally from all allies and some voluntary cooperation internally by the nation's bourgeoisie. Kang Man-kil cites as an example of Chǒngsan's limitations that, while stipulating in the section on the "Disposal of Japanese property" that "all Japanese property in Korea shall belong to the state" (338), he did not include the program prevalent among overseas independence activists that "all the properties of collaborators and traitors should be confiscated."<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Chǒngsan deliberately evaded any direct reference to this issue, but it is clear from proposals such as making "public-service organs increase and people's

lives grow more equal through property-owners' voluntary contributions" (343), or for "establishing public-service foundations in every district" (337), that he envisioned other ways than confiscation. These remarks certainly leave him open to criticism for wanting in national or class consciousness, but we cannot ignore that Chǒngsan's suggestions resulted from his "observation of the larger situation," namely, an accurate reading of both the international situation, including the presence of the United States and the domestic political terrain, and represented a prescription derived from his vision regarding "the Way of evolution." He probably would not have objected to punishing the more outrageous collaborators (including confiscation of their property). Besides, we could well imagine that, in the case of lesser collaborators, it would have been not only more productive to persuade them into voluntarily donating their properties for the establishment of public-service foundations (although the "voluntary" renunciation in many cases would have been at least partially induced by pressure of public opinion), but certainly more conducive to the restoration of national honor than the frustrations of the Special Commission for the Investigation of Anti-National Activities (1948–49)<sup>17</sup> in their efforts to enact more severely punitive measures.

Of more fundamental importance is Chǒngsan's view of the meaning of equality and its prerequisites.

As for communism,<sup>18</sup> it is a fundamental and sacred idea for humanity's life of public spirit, but those who misunderstand it simply hasten to disregard others' interests and indulge in taking what they want for nothing. How can this be the principle of "common ownership"?<sup>19</sup> The true worth of the principle of common ownership or communism is revealed when one grows to abandon all attachment to one's possessions by learning the Way of the universe, and fully realizes one's duty of not seeking food and clothing without due labor. (344)

As this passage shows, Chǒngsan did not agree with the policies of actually existing socialism, which insisted on forcing material equality on people even before they reached a certain level of self-cultivation.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it may be argued with considerable persuasiveness that the experiment of the really existing socialism failed precisely because it fell short of revealing the true worth of its egalitarianism.

To demand a high standard of self-cultivation in creating an equal society may sound particularly sweet to those in Korea and other unequal societies across the world who have vested interests to defend. But Chǒngsan stipulated that freedom, a familiar slogan of these people, should be restricted by certain public regulations and interventions. "Even



though," he says, "freedom in everyday life has to some extent be limited, we should promote the Way of evolution both among private individuals and in public matters by making clear that deserving persons will get their due" (343). Moreover, regarding liberalism itself he takes a position quite distinct not only from neo-conservatives but classical liberals as well, when he says, for instance:

As for liberalism, it is the most developed idea in terms of the principle of equality for humanity, but those who misunderstand it fall into a life of license by acting or stopping at one's wish without any regulation whatsoever. How can this be the principle of liberty? The principle of liberty is linked, first of all, to the extent that one's mind does not violate public morals and a well-regulated life, and contributes to civilization to the extent of not oppressing or violating others' legitimate opinions and rights. (344-45)

Such notions of liberty and equality might well be adopted as principles of the movement for overcoming the division system.

Chǒngsan's middle-path policies based on these principles may have been, as he actually said, "too conservative for left-wing thinkers,<sup>21</sup> and too restrictive for right-wing thinkers" (343), and, as a matter of fact, they were not accepted by either side. Indeed, *On State Building* remained for a long time an almost subversive pamphlet unfit for public discussion even in South Korea, which claimed to stand for liberal democracy. In retrospect, however, it is not difficult to infer that, if a unified nation-state had been built through a coalition of left and right, its policy would have been little different from what Chǒngsan named the middle path, and setting right the Spirit, including the unity of mind and heart stressed by Chǒngsan, would have been a prerequisite. While such a state would not have immediately realized an equal society, a free humanity, and a peaceful world, it would have represented a large step toward those goals.

That, instead of taking such a road, we rushed headlong into a disastrous war and have suffered the pain of a long division was a misfortune for both our nation and humanity. However, on the strength of all the sufferings and trials we have endured, we are again in a position to launch a project to build a state worthy of the name by overcoming the division system. The means must be a middle-path policy of our own adjusted to the present situation, and it is time that we hastened the training and preparations for its implementation.

## PART III



## 11. Korean-Style Reunification and Civic Participation

### *South Korea's Civil Society as the "Third Party" on the Korean Peninsula*

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today. I thank you for your sincere show of support in coming all this way, especially when the weather is so inviting outside. As you know, today's event is the last in the series of lectures celebrating the fifth anniversary of the internet newspaper *Pressian*, and it is jointly hosted by *Pressian* and the Southern Committee for Implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration.<sup>1</sup> I should note in advance, however, that I will not be speaking as the spokesperson for the Committee but voicing opinions that are strictly my own. Personal as these views are, they reflect my experiences and dilemmas over the nearly two years that I have served as the chair of the Committee.

*The new state of affairs introduced by North Korea's nuclear test must not impede the progress of Korean-style reunification*

Let me begin today's talk by stating my conclusion first. North Korea's explosion of nuclear devices on October 9 [2006] has clearly brought the "June 15 Era"<sup>2</sup> to a new phase, but this new phase will emphasize the role of the civilian sector all the more rather than halt the progress of what I have called "Korean-style reunification."<sup>3</sup>

Since North Korea's nuclear test, South Korea's conservative media outlets have been busy declaring the end of the "June 15 Era," [the era of increased cooperation and moves toward reconciliation between North and South Korea following the June 15 Inter-Korean Joint Declaration of 2000]. To a certain extent, such pessimism has been shared by even those working to implement the Joint Declaration. Notwithstanding their continued insistence on the primacy of North-South reconciliation, the very foundations of the June 15 Era have been shaken, or so this argument goes. The prognostications are grave, to be sure, but my view is that some degree of

shakiness should have been expected from the start. Since the June 15 Era is volatile by nature, any movement forward is bound to be jerky rather than smooth. The turbulent recent events may have shaken it up a little more than usual, but the June 15 Era is still moving forward.

At the other end of the spectrum from the doomsayers are some reunification activists who deny that North Korea's nuclear experiments have introduced any major change to the existing geopolitical coordinates regarding the Korean peninsula. Although these activists do not refute the fact that tensions, which had been mounting steadily since North Korea's declaration of its nuclear capacity in February 2005, reached a critical point after the actual execution of a nuclear test, they argue that with the six-party talks resuming, there is no need to make a big fuss about the nuclear issue and that the reunification movement should go on with its business as usual. While I agree with some aspects of their view, I do not believe that we can dismiss the very real impact North Korea's nuclear experiments have had on geopolitical dynamics. It is high time that we assess the new situation at hand accurately and reformulate our position accordingly.

If there is one sobering lesson that we can draw from the nuclear crisis, it is that the goal of Korean reunification, just like the reality of Korean division, is a serious business. Some may protest that neither was ever seen as anything but, and yet it is hard to deny that over the years we have developed a growing immunity of sorts to living in a divided land, becoming more and more lackadaisical in terms of confronting genuine difficulties that the task of reunification entails. For this reason, I see North Korea's nuclear experiments as a rude wake-up call. Paradoxically enough, the nuclear crisis may contribute to the growth of the role of South Korea's civilian movements. If a highly developed civil society is an accepted mark of an advanced nation, the successful execution of Korean-style reunification in which the civilian sector takes on crucial functions would be a path toward the construction of an advanced nation on the Korean peninsula.

### *Korean-style reunification is gradual and participatory*

A bit of clarification may be in order before I begin my talk in earnest: what do I mean by the expression "Korean-style reunification?"

It goes without saying that the reunification of the Korean peninsula will take shape in a way different from reunification elsewhere around the world. But by purposely using the term "Korean-style," I suggest that the reunification which takes place in Korea will have characteristics that are truly unique. Indeed, when compared to those of other countries around the world that have undergone unification, Korea's situation reveals fun-

damental differences. Let me elaborate. The most noticeable difference is with Vietnam. The latter, as is well known, achieved its reunification by force of arms. But in Korea, both North and South, the legacy of a devastating war in recent memory has left the people strongly indisposed to entertaining force as an option. The long-held popular consensus has been that reunification must be achieved peacefully. To be sure, it took quite a while before this consensus was endorsed by the two Korean governments; there was a time in South Korea's not-too-distant past when a citizen could be arrested simply for talking about peaceful unification. One had to speak instead of unification through the invasion of the North. Even in those dark times, however, another devastating war was never what the Korean people wanted, and now both North and South Korean governments as well as the international community have accepted peace as the basic principle that must guide the reunification process in Korea. Setting aside the pros and cons of the reunification that took place in Vietnam, it is clear that Korea will not reunify through military means.

Next, there is the German model of unification. The German model is distinctive in that it was a peaceful reunification autonomously carried out by the German people, although some compromises with foreign powers were necessary along the way. Peace and autonomy are the principles of the reunification that Koreans desire as well, but as we all know, German reunification was ultimately a reunification by "absorption": even though the initial impetus for reunification came from voluntary movements led by citizens within East Germany, the West German state's intervention brought about an artificial hastening of the process. In the end, the adoption of such measures as the single currency system caused East Germany to be absorbed unilaterally as additional component states [*Länder*] into the existing German Federal Republic (West Germany).

In Korea, any attempt to push through reunification by absorption risks the threat of war. It is absolutely clear that under no circumstances will North Korea entertain absorption as an option. Another point to consider is that the German model of reunification was not without significant side-effects. For South Korea, whose economic power is much weaker than that of the former West Germany, the burden resulting from absorbing North Korea may be well-nigh unbearable. Ever since the initiation of President Kim Dae-jung's "Sunshine Policy," the South Korean government's policy position—which is also the consensus between the authorities on both sides of the Military Demarcation Line—has been that Korea will not embark upon the German model of reunification.

Not as well known as the German case is Yemen's reunification. In the

big picture, Yemen's reunification can be considered to have been largely peaceful, since at the start North and South Yemen governments negotiated and came to terms as equals. At a glance, Yemen's case may thus appear to present a good model for Korea to follow. In reality, however, Yemen's was a case in which the two interested parties colluded to divide up power among themselves: presidency to one side and vice-presidency to the other, the prime ministership to one and the cabinet majority to the other, and so on. When this collusive pact came apart, tensions naturally escalated until capitalist North Yemen ultimately overwhelmed South Yemen militarily. In the process, thousands of lives were sacrificed. If the same scenario were to unfold in Korea, the lives lost will not number in the thousands but in tens or hundreds of thousands, and possibly even more. Further, given the current level of popular awareness and social development in Korea, it would simply be impossible for the authorities to come to an agreement in a closed room without consulting the population at large—in the manner, for example, that three Korean political parties (headed respectively by Roh Tae-woo, Kim Young-sam and Kim Jong-pil) were merged in 1990.<sup>4</sup>

If neither the German nor Vietnamese nor Yemeni model can illumine Korea's path toward national unity, how then shall we define "Korean-style reunification"? What would it look like in concrete terms?

If you ask me what distinguishes Korean-style reunification from the Vietnamese, German, and Yemeni models, I would point to the agreement to achieve gradual reunification reached at the inter-Korean summit talks in 2000. The very core of this agreement is encapsulated in the second article of the June 15 Joint Declaration: "Acknowledging that there are common elements in the South's proposal for a confederation and the North's proposal for a federation of lower stage as the formulae for achieving reunification, the South and the North agreed to promote reunification in that direction." The agreement is an ambiguous one, to be sure, but one certain fact is that it stipulates an intermediate stage within a gradual process of reunification. Whether it goes by the name of "low-level federation" or "confederation (or union of states)," an intermediate stage was not characteristic of unification in Vietnam, Germany or Yemen.

In Yemen's case, the negotiations between North and South that brought about the unification led directly to the formation of a unitary state. This unification, however, preserved separate military forces, creating a situation which was bound to, and did, erupt in violence. One cannot help but wonder whether North and South Yemen might not have undergone a much less painful process of unification had they come together as

a confederation first, which is a step prescribed for Korean unification in the June 15 Declaration. At any rate, the vague terms and open-endedness of the June 15 agreement were able for the first time to lend vitality to humanitarian endeavors, economic cooperation, and social and cultural exchanges between North and South, allowing a quantum leap in the history of inter-Korean relations.

This "multistage" aspect of the Korean model represents the formal feature, so to speak, of Korean-style reunification. But then what are its substantive features? My answer would be the possibility of "civic participation" or "popular initiatives" in the unification process. Of course, how much of this possibility is realized will depend on the actions of the population of the Korean peninsula and Koreans throughout the world, a point to which I shall return.

*Four theses concerning North Korea's nuclear experiments*

I come now to my views on North Korea's nuclear test. Within South Korea, open criticism and outright denunciation of Pyongyang's actions have dominated public opinion following the experiments. While we need not nurture blind faith in public opinion, we must not dismiss it too lightly either, especially when striving to bring about a reunification in which citizens participate fully and common people exercise their initiatives. Those who take issue with the current tide of public opinions argue, "It is now an established fact that North Korea conducted nuclear experiments, and the six-party talks have resumed, so what is the point of arguing about them and complicating North-South relations even further?" Another strand of argument is, "Even though it is North Korea that embarked on the nuclear experiments, the greater blame lies with the United States and we should interrogate U.S. responsibility rather than criticize North Korea unilaterally." The assumption that underlies the second argument is that North Korea's nuclear experiments must be seen as an unfortunate turn of events. Logically speaking, one can go on to interrogate U.S. responsibility in the matter only after making that assumption first. If the tests were a good thing in and of themselves, there would obviously be no need to talk about U.S. culpability in the first place.

Related to this, we can note that after much internal debate, representatives from South Korea's Democratic Labor Party recently agreed to express "strong regret" over nuclear testing during their visit to North Korea. We are not here today to come up with an official response for a planned visit to North Korea; today's gathering is a forum for reflection and honest discussion among ourselves on the situation. Our task



therefore is not to determine the nature and extent of our regret, but to clarify why and from what perspective North Korea's nuclear tests are to be regretted, if indeed they are regrettable.

As a point of departure for such a discussion, I would like to introduce what I have elsewhere presented as "Four Theses concerning North Korea's Nuclear Tests." They were first formulated as an addendum to the original talk I prepared for an international symposium held in Japan at the end of last month (October 2006). The original version, which I submitted in advance at the organizers' request, was written prior to North Korea's nuclear test. Right after I submitted the paper, North Korea announced its intention to test nuclear devices and went ahead with the test on October 9. So on the day of the symposium, October 28, I presented my stance on North Korean nuclear experiments by drafting four theses that had not been part of my prepared text. The revised paper will be published in the upcoming winter issue of *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* [Historical review], but it will be another week or so before the issue is available in stores. Permit me, then, to quote the "Four Theses":

1. Given both the United States' continued adherence to the policy of antagonism toward North Korea and repeated threat of preemptive strike, there is some justification, from a military perspective, to North Korea's claim that nuclear armament is a means of securing "deterrence capability." This means that criticizing North Korea unilaterally without taking the question of U.S. responsibility into account would be unjust, to say the least. Moreover, the tendency in some segments of Japanese society to shift the responsibility for North Korean actions onto resident Koreans in Japan and use the current crisis as an occasion for persecuting even innocent youths should evoke painstaking self-reflection on the part of every conscientious Japanese citizen.<sup>5</sup>

2. North Korea's rationale for acquiring nuclear capabilities differs from that of other nuclear powers. North Korea claims that the possession of nuclear weapons would, in addition to immediate deterrent capability, fortify its hand in diplomatic negotiations with the purpose of ultimately making the Korean peninsula completely nuclear-free. Whether the nuclear card proves to be as valuable a chip as Pyongyang anticipates remains to be seen; even if negotiations do begin again, the appropriateness of North Korea's acquisition of the nuclear card at this particular point will also remain a point of contention for years to come. The results are uncertain not only because diplomacy involves a counterpart with different goals and intentions, but also because we need a comprehensive

political evaluation of even those problems of North Korea's that may be exacerbated by the nuclear tests, insofar as the ultimate goal of diplomacy for North Korea is the resolution of numerous problems afflicting North Korean society on multiple levels. (This point still holds true even now, when, with North Korea's announcement that it will reenter the six-party talks, resumption of negotiations appears quite likely.)

3. From the perspective of South Korean civil-movement activists—myself included—who have been working to bring about a participatory reunification, North Korea's nuclear test represents a serious setback. For those who prize the grassroots approach to reunification, increasing skepticism regarding the feasibility and legitimacy of the June 15 Joint Declaration among large numbers of South Korean citizens in the aftermath of North Korea's nuclear testing can only disappoint, even if such popular skepticism turns out to be a temporary phenomenon. Moreover, civil movements dedicated to causes that are broader in address—for example, activists for peace whose principle of action is resistance to war and nuclear weapons as such, or environmentalists who oppose even the construction of nuclear power plants in South Korea—are now finding themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. It is simply impossible for these activists to continue any cooperative ventures with the North without clarifying where they stand precisely on the nuclear issue. In point of fact, several organizations that had joined the movement to implement the June 15 Joint Declaration have officially voiced their strong criticism of North Korea.

4. Despite these newfound challenges, my assessment is that participatory reunification on the Korean peninsula is still making headway. One of the main reasons behind my optimism is that we simply have no other alternative, and this is a point that I will elaborate further in my talk. But there is another cause for hope: the shock of nuclear crisis has led to a large-scale recomposition of the discursive terrain within South Korea. At the moment, anti-June 15 sentiment is very strong, to be sure. But in time, it will become clear that such a position is a nonposition that cannot solve anything. What I find to be a particularly salubrious consequence of the nuclear crisis is that the old-style "diehard reunification" position and hardcore anti-Americanism have lost much of their power to compel and persuade the public. At the same time, the espousal of the development, reform, and advancement of South Korean society in isolation from the peninsular context—a position that ignores the reality of Korea's division and the existence of North Korea altogether—has revealed its hollow nature. In short, another window of opportunity has opened for participatory reunification to make further progress.<sup>6</sup>

*Interrogating American responsibility in the nuclear crisis*

My claim in the first thesis that there is “some justification” to North Korea’s rationale for a military deterrence does not mean that I endorse its nuclear tests wholesale. Nevertheless, we should remind ourselves that one of the several promises the United States made in the U.S.–North Korean Geneva Agreed Framework<sup>7</sup> was what political scientists call “negative security assurance,” or the promise that the United States will not attempt a nuclear attack on the nuclear-less North Korea. With his statement about the “Axis of Evil,” however, George W. Bush essentially rescinded the negative security assurance, and introduced the so-called Bush Doctrine: the United States reserves the right to invade any place, anytime, if deemed necessary. The first to break the Agreed Framework was thus the United States, not North Korea. In this light, North Korea’s contention that it can guarantee national security and regime survival only by acquiring nuclear capabilities is far from absurd.

At the same time, we should note that 100 percent assurance of security is an impossibility from a military point of view. The best that anyone can do is to seek maximum security within certain limits and be willing to live with some degree of risk. While the question of whether the United States would have invaded North Korea if the latter had not acquired nuclear arms remains an open question today, we should be careful not to overlook America’s responsibility in ignoring Pyongyang’s repeated asseverations that it would give up nuclear ambitions in exchange for security assurance by the United States.

*Playing a different “North Korean card”*

On the subject of U.S. responsibility, a glaring absence in all the statements issued by the North Korean authorities concerns the question of whether an actual invasion of North Korea represents the sole policy objective for the United States when it threatens attacking North Korea. Bush himself may very well opt for invasion if the cost of doing it were not prohibitive, but it would be a serious underestimation of American foreign policy to argue that the United States actually set up a policy objective of invading North Korea, which was then frustrated by Pyongyang’s acquisition of missiles and nuclear capabilities. In its management of foreign affairs, a great power like the United States is bound to target several fronts and multiple aims at once.

My view is that the United States applies pressure not simply to have a direct effect on North Korea, but also because escalating tensions on

the Korean peninsula serves several of its other strategic goals, including advantages that accrue to the U.S. military and Japan's right-wing politics. Above all, these tensions have the effect of checking the movement within South Korean society toward reassessing the terms of the U.S.-Korea alliance and demanding Korea's healthier and less dependent relationship with the United States

In the past when North and South Korea were locked in mutual hostility, "the North Korean card" played by the United States and other neighboring nations was a way of forcing Seoul's compliance to their agenda by threatening to draw closer to North Korea. Recently, however, the nature of the North Korean card has changed for the United States. The new strategy is designed to keep South Korea in line by applying pressure on North Korea. For instance, South Korea goes along with American demands to send ROK troops to Iraq, hoping that the United States will adopt a more constructive attitude toward easing tensions on the Korean peninsula; South Korea signs on to the American policy of "strategic flexibility" in the hope that the United States might go easy on South's rapprochement with the North. When viewed in this light, the U.S. policy regarding the Korean peninsula, far from being a dismal failure, can be seen to have served American interests quite well.

It is important for those of us involved in the reunification movement in South Korea to be very cognizant of this fact, lest we end up accepting the terms of debate dictated by the military doctrines of both the United States and North Korea. If we accept these terms and frame our debate merely as a matter of assigning blame either to the United States or North Korea, any mention of American wrongdoings will run the risk of being perceived by the South Korean public as the chatter of "pro-North Korean forces" that blindly espouse Pyongyang's cause. At any rate, the proposition that the responsibility for nuclear experiments does not lie solely with North Korea implies that sanctions against North Korea can be justified only as a measure designed to induce further negotiations and dialogue toward the ultimate aim of full denuclearization of the peninsula. We cannot consent to sanctions that single out North Korea as the sole culprit in the nuclear crisis.

Since the United States has publicly ruled out an outright invasion or punitive bombings, we will leave these out of our discussion. A different U.S. plan is called PSI (Proliferation Security Initiatives). PSI is another example of numerous English acronyms that assist in mystifying rather than clarifying the real nature of the named object. In plain terms, PSI means that any ship going to or from North Korea, regardless of the coun-

try in which it is legally registered, should be subject to search and possible seizure in open waters. The United States insists on South Korea's full cooperation with PSI, that is to say, the United States would like the South Korean Navy and Coast Guard to search North Korean ships in waters surrounding the Korean peninsula. The UN resolution contains no such provision and South Korea must not go along with this proposal. First, PSI is much too dangerous even if a search does not lead to an immediate conflict or collision on the spot. There were two sea battles, in 1999 and 2002, off the western coast, and there is no guarantee against a third or fourth clash should PSI be strictly enforced. This is because the so-called NLL (Northern Limit Line) is not a part of the officially agreed Armistice Line,<sup>8</sup> but the facts of the case are too complicated for us to go into at this point.

The rationale behind PSI is that it would prevent North Korea from transporting nuclear material to other countries, but if this were the only objective, a ship need not be stopped and searched in the immediate vicinity of the Korean peninsula. A ship that sails in the vicinity of the peninsula must be destined to Russia, Japan, China, or South Korea. To which of these countries might North Korea be transporting nuclear material? Why would North Korea do such a thing? If it were indeed transporting nuclear material anywhere, it would be to a country other than these four, which means that the United States can apprehend that ship in distant waters. The South Korean government has decided not to go along with this part of PSI, and it is a very good decision indeed. The United States cannot be much pleased about our refusal, but no issue has been made of it outright, at least not yet.

Third, stopping inter-Korean cooperative projects currently under way, such as Kaesŏng Industrial Complex and Kŭmgang Mountain Tours, would be equal to inflicting self-injury in order to appease Cold War forces within South Korea and a particular country I need not name. Fourth, some reduction of humanitarian aid to North Korea may be unavoidable for the time being, but stopping humanitarian aid should never be made a means of "sanctioning" North Korea. It is all too possible that due to the worsening of public opinion following the nuclear test, NGOs would have difficulty raising money for North Korean aid, but to cite the test as the specific reason for stopping the aid would be at once to give up on ethical principles and to espouse impractical goals. The South Korean government should abide by a strict interpretation of Resolution 1718<sup>9</sup> that the UN Security Council passed unanimously after significantly mitigating the terms of the original draft jointly submitted by the United States and Japan.

*Are nuclear tests the best option for negotiating with the United States and addressing North Korea's domestic problems?*

Let's move on to my second thesis. I have argued that there is an aspect that distinguishes North Korea's nuclear experiments from those of other nations. While other countries have certainly conducted nuclear tests in the name of national defense or in order to enhance their position in the world, what is unique about North Korea is that it seeks "nuclear capabilities as a means of ultimately achieving denuclearization." To be sure, some would argue that this claim should not be taken at face value. Whether they are right remains to be seen, but we can note at least that North Korea's leverage in negotiations did increase. In October, Pyongyang agreed to return to six-party talks as Bush hinted at the possibility of his joining the two Korean leaders to declare the end of the Korean War.

Was the change of U.S. attitude due more to North Korea's nuclear test or to the decisive victory of the Democratic party in the off-year elections? The question would require further analysis. For instance, the Democratic party in the United States demanded a dialogue with North Korea even before the nuclear test, and it is questionable whether the United States would have refused negotiations until the very end even if North Korea had not conducted the test. But the more important question is how far the negotiations would progress once the six-party talks resumes. The answer remains unknown. While Bush and the White House did make some conciliatory comments, the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005, stipulates the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action."<sup>10</sup> This means that denuclearization would take place in a concretely matching fashion, though we do not yet know how sincerely the United States will put this avowal into practice.

The same goes for North Korea. While we need not doubt the truth of its claim that it acquired nuclear arms for leverage in negotiation, we face a whole new situation now that North Korea has acquired them. Pyongyang could very well argue: "Our aim is no longer the elimination but the reduction of nuclear armaments. With our aim thus reframed, we will reduce our weapons only if and by the degree that the United States does." According to the daily *Chosŏn sinbo*, the organ of the pro-North Korean Residents' League in Japan, "The realignment of international relations in Northeast Asia has resulted in the '4 + 2' composition. In other words, the new incontrovertible fact is that among the interested parties in Northeast Asia, four countries out of six (North Korea, Russia, China, and the United States) are now nuclear powers." Professor Yi Chŏng-ch'öl, for

one, predicted at the Segyo Forum symposium held on November 17 that "North Korea will henceforth insist on the 4+2 framework in conducting six-party talks."

If North Korea does insist that it will reduce nuclear armaments based on the premise of continued possession rather than complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the six-party talks will not easily lead to a settlement. In this case, we must conclude that nuclearization was not terribly effective in promoting compromises. Nor is it the case that North Korean nuclear capabilities are so great that large-scale concessions could be demanded of the United States. When the story about North Korea's possession of nuclear arms first broke, even the "moderate" Colin Powell, then the U.S. secretary of state, was reported as saying, "If the North Koreans have two or three bombs, they have two or three bombs." The implication was that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is not such a big deal from America's point of view. Moreover, if we move beyond the question of military security in evaluating the matter and adopt the view that the state's function is to accomplish economic recovery and improvement in the quality of daily life for its people, the question of whether nuclearization was the best choice for North Korea becomes a complicated one indeed. In the event that Pyongyang's use of the nuclear card assists the resolution of U.S.-DPRK relations, which would then lead to a dramatic improvement in the lives of North Korean people, the North Korean government would have accomplished its initial objective in setting out on the path of nuclear armament. Should such a resolution be a long time in coming, however, we cannot dismiss from the equation the additional suffering that the North Korean people would experience in the meanwhile.

### *The impact of nuclear tests on civic participation in South Korea*

The two theses I have discussed thus far concern mainly the question of state strategy. The remaining two will address the perspective of ordinary citizens and common people. I cannot emphasize this perspective enough; we must prioritize it if we are to advance participatory reunification in which ordinary citizens play an active role. At the same time, this perspective must not overlook the earlier discussed aspect of state strategy, lest it fall into an abstract and dogmatic privileging of "the people."

Since participatory reunification can be accomplished only by maximizing the role of ordinary citizens in bringing the June 15 Joint Declaration to fruition, any event that reduces popular support for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation while strengthening the voices of Cold War forces that



demand the revocation of the declaration altogether must be considered a great misfortune indeed. The gravity of the situation is underestimated by those who simply pin the problem of public hostility or cynicism on the right-wing media's hysterical coverage. In a sense, this blame game is a kind of reflex carried over from pre-June 15 days. Even though the June 15 Joint Declaration outlined the contours of Korean-style reunification and opened up the possibility of participatory unification, the mindset from the days when a bitter struggle had to be waged for the principle of autonomous and peaceful reunification as well as the expansion of the space of civilian unification movements lingers on in some circles.

North Korea's nuclear test is not a one-off, an unfortunate incident whose repercussions will be short-lived, since it implicates nothing short of the very principle that enables the continuation of civic and *minjung* [people's] movements. For example, the slogan of "For Peace, Against War" is espoused by North Korea as well, but the peace movement globally has included the banning of nuclear weapons as a primary goal. Therefore, leaving out the "antinuclear" stance from an antiwar movement and handing it over to the "Anti-Kim [Jong-il], Anti-Nuclear Movement"<sup>11</sup> would be tantamount to the self-negation of the peace movement and a shortcut to the defeat of reunification movements as well. A similar dilemma faces environmentalists, who have opposed even the construction of nuclear energy plants, and can hardly support continued cooperation with North Korea when this entails tolerating the development of nuclear arms and nuclear explosions in their own land.

Furthermore, a state of Korean division in which the development and maintenance of nuclear weapons becomes a major factor would further concentrate power in the hands of a small minority of policymakers and experts and seriously limit the range of ordinary citizens' participation. Considering this possibility, we may actually take some comfort in the fact that the division system in Korea has been "shaking" for some time and has entered the stage of disintegration, so that it would be impossible to stabilize even after North Korea's acquisition of nuclear capabilities. The worst possible scenario would be the failure of the six-party talks, followed by additional nuclear tests in North Korea and the concomitant intensification of international sanctions, and so on in a vicious circle. This will make the path of Korean reunification much more turbulent and dangerous, but even this will not stabilize the division system. If, in contrast, the six-party talks proceed smoothly, allowing the implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement, the process of overcoming the



division system and advancing Korean-style unification could be speeded up significantly. While this would certainly be the most desired outcome, we should not be complacent about its easy achievement.

It is also possible that negotiations would drag on without reaching a resolution one way or another. Until now, the United States and North Korea have each insisted that time is on its side. But if the tedious stalemate continues, it is my view that both nations' ability to control the situation will weaken considerably. So will America's power over the East Asian region as a whole. Time will be neither on North Korea's nor America's side then. For both governments we may predict the loss of control and influence over local peoples and the East Asian region at large. The result will be the same even if the combination of North Korea's insistence on nuclear arms reduction and a U.S. policy on "nonproliferation of nuclear materials" brings about the establishment of the "4+2" negotiation framework. Personally, I do not think that a four-party talk of nuclear nations is likely. It would exclude Japan from the negotiation table, and the United States simply cannot brook such a situation given its relations with Japan. The moment the United States supports such talks, Japan would opt to go nuclear as well, and the United States clearly would not want a nuclear Japan on its hands even though it may desire to see Japanese politics grow more conservative. China, for its part, does not want to break up the six-party structure. In short, the negotiations would likely end up in a deadlock, since the United States cannot provide the level of support and compensation that North Korea wants without making North Korea's denuclearization its precondition. In my opinion, the deadlock would threaten to destabilize the division system even further to such a degree that the reconsolidation of that system would simply become impossible.

*South Korean citizens as the "seventh interested party" in the resolution of the Korean peninsula question*

Let us move on to the fourth thesis. Short of another war, the progress of Korean-style reunification cannot be stopped; the question is what the entire process would cost, not whether it is going to take place. By "costs" here, I do not mean only monetary expenditure including military expenses. The costs include the "Arduous March"<sup>12</sup> that the North Korean people may be undergoing once again, and the intensification of pathological and regressive social phenomena in South Korea. The "opportunity cost" that comes with the postponement of a regional cooperative structure in East Asia and a peninsula-wide economic zone must be included in the calculations as well.

In reducing these costs, each member of the six-party talks has a role of its own to play, but I would like to emphasize the role of another entity that I would call the “seventh interested party”: the South Korean citizenry. The present Roh Mu-hyun administration, in declaring the three principles that guide its approach to the peninsular conflict, has specified South Korea’s “active role” [*chudojök yökhal*]. Though well intended, the notion is not without problems, for the Korean phrase implies a “leading” role and suggests that South Korea would take the lead [*chudo*] over the United States regarding, say, the nuclear crisis—a pure impossibility from a practical standpoint. No wonder South Korean conservatives made it the basis of another attack. “You said you would take the leading role, and what’s come of it?” they ask. “Isn’t your policy of engagement responsible for North Korea’s nuclearization?”

One other problem associated with the present administration’s approach concerns its lack of sensitivity to the need to enhance civil participation in order for South Korea to perform an active role. The “seventh interested party” implies that there could be an eighth and ninth as well. However, it is probably too early to talk of the European Union as an equal party at the level of governments, nor of North Korean society at the civilian level, for we do not yet find a civil society in North Korea that has a separate identity from the state to the degree that South Korean civil society and corporations do. This means that at present, the only possible entity that could play an important role as a major “interested party” in addition to the states that currently comprise the “six parties” would be civil society in South Korea. But is South Korean civil society mature and active enough to enter the picture as the “seventh party?”

In order for South Korean civil society to become a meaningful interested party, there needs to be a great number of ordinary citizens—in addition to existing unification activists—who can participate in the unique process of Korean-style reunification. They need to do so while going on with their daily lives and without becoming self-important or overly solemn about their participation. Moreover, the economic sector, which is commonly excluded from “civil society,” must become an integral part of the picture as well, as in those cases when corporations take up the kind of initiative that the Hyundai Group did under the leadership of former CEO Chŏng Chu-yŏng.<sup>13</sup> The central question will be how much of a common vision these broadly inclusive entities could share regarding participatory reunification and whether they are successful in developing innovative enterprises which would contribute to the realization of this vision.

I am not suggesting that we act in perfect unison. Such a suggestion would be naive, and it is not necessary. Korean-style reunification is not something that can or need be perfectly coordinated. What the phrase does mean is that everyone goes forward on one's own but shares the larger vision. Such a civil society, I feel, would have the right to call itself the "seventh party." For this, we need to give up the illusion that either a stereotyped reunification movement or a routine carrying on with existing exchange and cooperation programs can bring about the end of Korean division. We must dispose, too, of another fantasy that South Korea by itself, while doing nothing about the current state of division, can enjoy peace and prosperity and become "an advanced society," which would entail fuller democratization as well. In this regard, we may consider North Korea's nuclearization a stroke of good luck amid misfortune insofar as it has shaken things up and revealed the hollow nature of a variety of fantastic notions.

*Change through contact: The "monster of division" in our own hearts must be exorcised as well*

Now we need to reinterpret another familiar thesis, "Change through Contact," in more concrete and positive terms. As a slogan that West Germany adopted in its *Ostpolitik* (or policy toward East Germany), it was originally a call for peaceful coexistence rather than reunification. Eventually, change in East Germany did come through contact, and so did reunification as well. But as discussed earlier, the problem with this process was that reunification was effected through a sudden and unilateral absorption of one system by the other. Change through contact can be a genuine change only when both sides change; but in the German case, East Germany underwent a drastic transformation while West Germany did not change much at all. In fact, the democratic features of unified Germany show certain regressions relative to the former West Germany. That is why we call it unification by absorption. Of course, North Korea has no reason whatsoever to agree to such a model.

In South Korea today, there are quite a number of people who use the phrase "change through contact" and think that only North Korea should change. Given the pervasiveness of this view, isn't it only natural that Pyongyang's stance is what it is, namely that it would change as little as possible while focusing on maximizing economic benefits that it can derive from the contact? If South Korean civil society seeks to become the "seventh interested party" in resolving the Korean peninsula question, it must be ready to accept and endure a wholesale change of South Korean society,

including reexamination of those age-old sentiments, attitudes, and habits that have been twisted into shape by the division system.

It is sometimes said that the division system is a monster. But we should not forget the fact that if the division system is a monster, we who have lived within that system for so many years must each harbor a monster of our own in our hearts. Figuring out how to vanquish the monster outside and overcome the monster within at the same time would require a greater insight and more rigorous practice than we command at present. In fact, we have a very long way to go in this direction. For this reason, it may not be the worst thing in the world that North-South relations are not being resolved in the speediest possible fashion. Of course, we do not wish to take too much time, but gaining a bit of time to study the situation thoroughly, make preparations for all contingencies, and work as one of the major interested parties in the process of reunification would not be the worst thing in the world. I would say that time is on our side as long as we work hard toward the goal.

*Let us also demand U.S. denuclearization*

Finally, I would like to address several pressing agendas facing the participatory reunification movement.

First is the nuclear issue. Nuclear arms should be opposed as a matter of principle, and I believe that we must insist to the end on the dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons. However, such opposition must not devolve into selective reinforcement of the principle; in other words, the possession of nuclear arms should be opposed whether the country in question is the newly nuclearizing North Korea or the already nuclear United States. At the same time, we must be coolheaded in recognizing that neither the South Korean state nor its civil society would actually have the ability to hinder or reverse North Korea's nuclearization. When the South Korean government declares, as a fundamental principle, that "it will not accept a nuclear North Korea," we all know that the declaration is simply an avowal of its opposition to North Korea's nuclear weapons and an insistence on their dismantlement as a principle, rather than a threat of military action to enforce that principle. We must not invite a situation in which the failure to stop North Korea's nuclear armament—which even the United States has failed to do—is advertised as the failure of South Korea's engagement policy. Oppose nuclearization to the end we must, but the actual resolution should better be left to North Korea and the United States, on the principle of "Let those who made the knot do the untying." For our part, we should focus on what we can do well. Rather than fixating on the nuclear issue alone, we should

uphold the principle of denuclearization and continue civil movements on that basis, expanding them on a global scale. I commented earlier that I agreed in a limited sense that we should not take North Korea's nuclearization issue too seriously. While we cannot look lightly upon new variables introduced by North Korea's nuclear test, acting as though Pyongyang will give up on nuclear arms if we abort existing aid programs and economic cooperation projects would be both foolish and supercilious to the extreme. We must continue to work at the site of Korean-style reunification, which is bound to move forward whether a settlement between North Korea and the United States is quick or slow in coming.

*Creativity is needed to develop cooperative projects that capture the national imagination*

Of all the ongoing work, economic cooperation is of the highest importance. In addition to continuing the projects that are already under way, we must develop new innovative cooperative projects that can appeal to people's imagination and benefit both North and South Korea. How captivated Korean people were by Kŭmgang Mountain Tours and the Kaesŏng Industrial Complex! Now is the time to go a step further.

Kaesŏng Industrial Complex is composed mostly of small and medium-sized businesses, and North Korea, I understand, is less than satisfied with the scale of its operation. In the case of Kŭmgang Mountain Tours, too, the Hyundai conglomerate was in charge of the project during Chŏng Chu-yŏng's lifetime, but now it is the domain of a smaller company called Hyundai Asan, part of a much diminished group from which Hyundai Motors and Hyundai Heavy Industries have separated themselves. We need new projects that invite the joint participation of big corporations.

The extreme right in South Korea frequently criticizes the government for "free handouts to North Korea." While the criticism involves malicious distortions, it does also point to the lack of sufficient clarity in distinguishing purely humanitarian aid from projects of economic cooperation benefiting the South Korean economy in direct ways. A variety of social and cultural exchanges are also crucial if we are to advance the cause of Korean-style reunification. A difference of viewpoint exists regarding sociocultural exchanges as well. While South Korea views them as taking place in a separate realm and places great emphasis on them, North Korea considers these exchanges to be a particular variety of political work. We cannot expect smooth sailing in this area, even without the complications brought about by the nuclear crisis. Where there isn't an immediate economic or political advantage to be gained from sociocultural exchange,

North Korea tends to adopt a passive or negative attitude. Despite these difficulties, it is urgent to continue to expand such exchanges. Particular emphasis should be placed on the larger purpose of these exchanges as a pragmatic basis for building an inter-Korean confederation or "federation of lower stage." If we pursue sociocultural exchanges with North Korea with this larger goal in view, South Korean civilian movements as the "seventh interested party" will have an edge over the other six parties.

Humanitarian aid to North Korea should naturally be continued and expanded, but I believe we need to exercise wisdom in order to combine it with human rights discourses in appropriate ways. Recently, South Korea cast a vote in favor of the UN resolution on North Korean human rights, and the reason given was the heightened stature of South Korea as the nation from which the new UN Secretary-General hails and the lower public opinion of North Korea following the nuclear test. Both arguments, however, fall wide of the mark in terms of capturing the essence of the situation. If the goal of improving the human rights situation in North Korea is to be pursued with any degree of sincerity, the aborted humanitarian aid project should be resumed immediately and we should demand of the United States and the international community that they take extraordinary measures to safeguard the human security of North Korean people.

There are many other current initiatives that I have not touched upon today, but I will leave these to be discussed at some other time. Before concluding my talk, let me just add that my use of the term "seventh interested party" alludes to the six-party talks. In terms of inter-Korean relations, South Korean civil society would be the "third interested party." As the "seventh interested party," South Korean citizens can contribute to the resolution of regional conflicts that involve the Korean peninsula; as the "third interested party," we can contribute to the resolution of North-South relations. The resulting event would truly be unprecedented in the history of the world. In addition, the East Asian peace regime that would have to be established as a corollary would open up new avenues for resolving the problems facing East Asia as well as the entire human race.

Admittedly, inter-Korean relations have become much more troubled following North Korea's nuclear experiments, but I would like to emphasize once again that Korean-style reunification is still in progress. It must continue because there simply is no alternative other than war, and war, as we have seen, is not an option. The distinguishing feature of Korean-style reunification, one that would confer upon it world-historical significance, is the possibility for active participation by ordinary citizens and common people.

I would like to end this talk with a personal plea for your continued support and encouragement as the South Korean Committee for the Implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration, which I have the honor to represent, continues to search for ways to make a greater contribution to the process of Korean-style reunification. Thank you.

## DISCUSSION

*On the positive aspects of North Korea's nuclear experiments  
(Pak Kyōng-sun)<sup>14</sup>*

North Korea's nuclear tests clearly represent a sea-change in the process of implementing the June 15 Declaration. Many, including Professor Paik, have emphasized the negative aspects of that change, but I would argue that we need to look at the positive aspects as well. Indeed, positives may very well rival negatives in importance, and each must be given serious consideration. In order to do so, we need to understand the structural characteristics of the division system on the Korean peninsula.

First, let us analyze the nature of political and military confrontation taking place on the Korean peninsula right now. The objective of U.S. policy toward North Korea is the expansion of American control and influence over the entire Korean peninsula, which gives it an aggressive and offensive character. In direct opposition, North Korea's policy concerning the United States seeks to deter American control and influence in order to preserve its own political independence, military autonomy, and national integrity. Therefore North Korea's policy has a defensive and self-protective character. It is only by clarifying this basic structure that we can understand without confusion the nature of North Korea-U.S. relations. All specific instances of those relations, including North Korea's nuclear experiments, are manifestations of this basic structure. In sum, American actions against North Korea are aggressive and offensive, while North Korea's actions are of a defensive and self-protective character. We need to keep this fact always in mind. Even North Korea's nuclear tests, as aggressive as they may seem, are fundamentally defensive and self-protective in nature.

In response to Professor Paik's talk, I would like to voice two opinions. Professor Paik argued that South Korea should adhere strictly to UN Resolution 1718 and support its terms. Whether the support should come as a matter of governmental policy or from civil movements remains less than perfectly clear, and my view is that Resolution 1718 should not be endorsed by civil and *minjung* movements in South Korea. Professor Paik



made the comment that even if the immediate responsibility for nuclear experiments rests with North Korea, it is the United States policy of antagonizing and pressurizing North Korea that provided the original impetus. Therefore, it is unjust to criticize North Korea unilaterally without considering the role of the United States in the matter. Resolution 1718, however, is designed to apply sanctions against North Korea unilaterally and contains no acknowledgment of American responsibility.

In fact, the UN resolution entirely overlooks the question of American culpability and assigns all blame to North Korea, demanding that the latter unilaterally give up its nuclear ambitions or face economic sanctions. Even by Professor Paik's own standards the resolution must be judged one-sided. To assign unilateral responsibility to North Korea, regardless of the shape or form, is immoral and unjust. For this reason, I do not believe that it is right for South Korean civil movements to accept the UN resolution.

We need a thorough discussion on what the perspective of a participatory reunification movement would entail. Professor Paik remarked that a reunification movement that in the name of civilian participation ignores the level of state strategy would be ideological and dogmatic. While I believe that this is an accurate observation, I received the distinct impression that he placed too great an emphasis on the aspect of civil participation after presenting it in somewhat oppositional terms to that of state strategy addressing political and military structures. Of course, the June 15 Joint Declaration opened up the possibility of active civilian participation in the reunification process. It is common knowledge that we cannot talk about the animation of a participatory reunification movement without discussing the June 15 Joint Declaration. The declaration, however, should be seen not as a direct product of civil participation but as the outcome of a complex process involving multiple variables, including America's political retreat in its confrontations with North Korea as represented by the "Perry process,"<sup>15</sup> structural factors such as the expansion of autonomous space on the Korean peninsula that helped create the political environment for the Joint Declaration, and finally and more directly, political negotiations and agreement between the North and South Korean governments culminating in inter-Korean summit talks. Thus, we can see that the invigoration of participatory reunification movement was brought about in large part by changes and developments taking place at the level of political and military structure such as politico-military confrontations between North Korea and the United States and political negotiations between North and South Korea. It is not necessary to posit an opposition between changes in the political structure at the level of national strategy and the participatory



reunification movement. Rather, the two levels are locked in a relation of mutual reinforcement and support. For that reason, the expression that civilians should “take the initiative” in the process of Korean-style reunification is not appropriate in my opinion.

It is true that the nuclear test has caused some temporary difficulties for the participatory reunification movement. But it is also true that the United States softened its obstinate attitude and returned to the six-party talks, ultimately deciding to adopt the forward-looking policy of resolving the issue of financial sanctions. Regardless of who is to blame for the nuclear crisis, the incontrovertible fact is that North Korea’s nuclear experiments have had the effect of weakening America’s position while strengthening North Korea’s. Partial retreat and significant concessions on the part of the United States have, in turn, improved the possibility of peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue. The recent statement by Bush regarding a possible declaration of the end of the Korean War reveals the undeniably positive influence North Korea’s nuclear tests have had on the six-party talks and on the task of eventually establishing peace on the Korean peninsula. North Korea’s nuclear experiments, when illuminated by the goal of achieving peace on the Korean peninsula through civil participation, may be said to have contributed to advancing the cause of reunification.

*On the need to raise ethical questions regarding nuclear weapons  
(Yi T’ae-hun)<sup>16</sup>*

The consequences of North Korea’s nuclear experiments on South Korea’s democratizing civil society may be extraordinarily serious. All the more so because the nuclear issue has a direct bearing on the terms of the ongoing debate on North Korea’s record on human rights. The gravity of the situation is heightened by the criticism fast gathering strength that a double standard is being applied when North Korean action is judged. That is to say, the position that seeks to explain North Korean actions exclusively in terms of a reaction to America’s hegemonic policy is rapidly losing its ground.

In the controversy over nuclear weapons, one cannot fail to raise the question of ethics. Nuclear weapons, unlike their conventional counterparts, are weapons of mass destruction, weapons that indiscriminately target civilians. A serious ethical problem inheres in the development of nuclear weapons for whatever purpose. I do not deny that there is an aspect of self-defense to North Korea’s nuclear tests, but I must still insist that it is the duty and the guiding principle of the peace movement to raise ethical questions regarding weapons of mass destruction. In other words,

we have to ask whether it is legitimate to develop nuclear weapons even in self-defense. Of course, international law has waived judgment on the question of whether the possession of nuclear weapons is justified in a situation where national survival is on the line, but the pervasive consensus within the peace movement worldwide is that nuclear weapons are illegitimate and inhumane. Raising ethical questions may not automatically lead to satisfying answers, but the debate they occasion is absolutely vital. It is highly regrettable that South Korean civil society shows such a weak level of awareness regarding these issues. The unethicity of nuclear weapons is beyond words; it is a means of taking hostage, if not irrevocably destroying, all that sustains human life—culture, spirit, and the environment.

To be sure, countries that already possess nuclear weapons are much more criminal. We need to create a discursive space where we can apply the same premises and standards to North Korea's testing and possession of nuclear weapons, lest we fall prey to harboring a double standard. Regarding North Korea's human rights issue as well, there needs to be an awareness that human rights are human rights no matter how trivial the issue may seem in a given situation. Unless the freedom to engage in such critical discussions is accepted within the movements for democracy and peace, they may face the unfortunate situation where the ethical foundations of the movements will themselves come under attack. Granting that human rights problems are found in almost all nations, and also that there is a limit to what one can legitimately do in self-defense, we must let the twin issues of North Korea's nuclear tests and human rights enter more openly into the framework of discussion.

Professor Paik has emphasized the role of the "third interested party" in reference to the South Korean citizenry, but I think that the meaning of the discourse of "participation" in the reunification movement remains insufficiently fleshed out. Policies and statements made by both the North and South Korean governments following the June 15 Declaration have exercised much influence not only on South Korea's civic organizations but on international society as well. Since the June 15 Declaration, South Korean civic organizations, not simply the two Korean states, have begun to engage in both the more limited "peninsular politics" and the larger "international politics." Civic movements aimed at implementing the June 15 Declaration within the framework of the declaration have performed in that sense an auxiliary function to the agreements reached between the governments. However, North Korea's nuclear experiments and the human rights question have clearly revealed the existence of an area that cannot be resolved within the framework of inter-Korean recon-

ciliation and cooperation. In other words, there are now emergent agendas surrounding the Korean peninsula that remain outside the purview of civil society's auxiliary role within the June 15 framework. And yet, a sector that can grasp the dynamics of these agendas and share a vision that goes beyond the declaration has yet to come into being. Given this situation, I believe that we need to consider the role of South Korean civil society that aspires toward greater democracy as the basis of the "third force" which does more than simply "participate."

Earlier Professor Paik described "the June 15 Era" as something that is inherently shaky but moves forward nonetheless. I think it is now time for us to specify the process of transition. By "transition" I mean a process by which South Korean civil society would develop into a new dynamic composition as the "third vision/force," capable of shaking up the existing framework of discussion on reunification led by the two Korean states. In any change of the identity of the state, we need the formation of social forces challenging the existing state identity. If South Korea succeeds in creating a new state identity capable of addressing the limits and problems of existing North and South Korean state identities—a new identity that is less military, less security-oriented, and more influential in the international arena, an identity, in other words, that embodies the discourse of the "peace state"—this would indeed take the "June 15 regime in crisis" in the direction of progress.

*Creating joint inter-Korean organizations at the civilian level*  
(Paik Nak-chung)

Let me address the concerns raised by Mr. Pak first. I brought up the topic of the UN resolution not in the context of civil movements but in the process of discussing South Korean government's response. From the perspective of civil movements, the resolution is certainly hypocritical and based on an egregious double standard. For example, a resolution sanctioning Israel would never be adopted by the Security Council because of the U.S. veto, and it is far from equitable that North Korea alone is placed on the chopping block. But from the South Korean government's standpoint, given the principle of nonacceptance of a nuclear North Korea, which it has always maintained, it would be better to adhere to a strict interpretation of the mitigated resolution that was passed in the UN—China and Russia had played critical roles in this mitigation—rather than take aggressive measures for the elimination of North Korea's nuclear threat, which hardly falls within the purview of the South Korean government in the first place.

Mr. Pak also mentioned that we would have to consider more carefully

the positive aspects of the grave changes brought about by North Korea's nuclear experiments. Since I myself talked about the two sides of the picture, perhaps the difference between us is really one of degree rather than substance. Mr. Pak argues that events that have unfolded since the nuclear tests are conferring ever greater credibility to North Korea's rationale for acquiring nuclear capability for the sake of securing a better negotiating position, a point reinforced by the reopening of the six-party talks which has improved the conditions for participatory reunification movement as well. The point is well taken, but I would like to add that any conclusive judgment on the issue should be reserved for a later date. If U.S.–North Korea relations arrive at a rapid resolution, circumstances may lead us to think that North Korea did well to conduct nuclear experiments, but much more remains to be seen on this score.

Next, I would like to address the questions Mr. Yi T'ae-hun has raised. He emphasized the need to discuss the question of ethics regarding the two issues of nuclear weapons and human rights. He is quite right, of course. But I do not think it is necessary to demand the same response from everyone across the board. It is true in principle that in order to construct a decent reunified society on the Korean peninsula, everyone should be concerned about the ethics of nuclear armament and human rights, but at the present point in time, division of labor may be necessary in discussing these issues. What, for example, should governmental agencies do? If the South Korean Minister of Unification were to come forth and start talking in public about North Korea's human rights issue, he might as well give up being the contact person in inter-Korean negotiations. The same goes for civil society as well. People who engage directly in exchanges with North Korea could very well share the views and interests of activists for peace and arms reduction, but they cannot adopt the same manner of addressing the issue. At any rate, I do agree that there needs to be a more vigorous discussion on various aspects of the overall phenomenon.

Mr. Yi pointed out that it is insufficient to insist on "participation" only, but what I mean by the "third interested party" is an entity that is equal in standing to the North and South Korean governments. In that regard, the third party that I envision undertakes a role almost equivalent to that of a state. This is an entirely different level of engagement from "participation" limited to an auxiliary role. I argued that the areas in which the "seventh interested party" would enjoy superiority over the other two involve social and cultural exchanges; yet another area would be in forging solidarity with international civilian organizations.

In terms of execution, the central question would be when and how the

era of the June 15 Declaration would give way to another era. My view is that the June 15 Era will come to an end when an inter-Korean political structure corresponding to a confederation or “federation of lower stage” specified in the second article of the June 15 Joint Declaration comes into being. Since the declaration does not specify what will come after that, a new agreement would have to be worked out. To my mind, it was a very wise decision not to have determined the nature of any subsequent structures in advance.

The notion of a “peace state” in the current discourse combines two ideas that occupy two different levels of engagement. One is the very practical task of reforming the North and South Korean states into security entities with a greater orientation toward peace, two nation-states coexisting peacefully on the Korean peninsula. The other operates at a higher level of abstraction and envisions an entirely new form of state, an entity whose main goal would be the establishment of peace and human rights rather than security. We can certainly embrace the latter as a long-term goal, but we need to go through an intermediate stage such as a confederation or union of states on the Korean peninsula.

We seem to find too little real discussion regarding the construction of such a confederation. This is true of both North and South Korea. The South Korean government is interested mainly in peaceful coexistence and deepening the exchanges with the North, and it has made no concrete preparations for an inter-Korean confederation. North Korea, for its part, seems almost exclusively taken up by the task of securing regime survival. On this issue, then, South Korean civil society should lead the way by conducting research, proposing specific agendas, and building “confederation-like” organizations at the civilian level. Some efforts, albeit feeble, have already been launched in this direction. In October 2006, writers from North and South Korea gathered together at Kūmgang Mountain to launch the June 15 Association of Korean Writers. The form that this organization took may be seen as an example of confederation or low-level federation. I should also note that it is also highly significant that this organization came into being after North Korea went ahead with its nuclear test. The All-Korean Committee for Implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration also represents a kind of inter-Korean confederative structure, even though there is a great deal of room for improvement. The commission for the compilation of a comprehensive dictionary of Korean language as used by North, South, and overseas Koreans represents yet another such entity. It does not yet have a common secretariat, but I understand an agreement has been reached to build one in Kaesŏng.

Intensifying these efforts within civil society is surely a way of shaking up the status quo while preparing for a new structure to come. Once the inter-Korean confederation is established, a veritable deluge of changes is sure to come, changes that would affect the content of civil participation as well. In this regard, the "June 15 Era" will give way to the next on the day the second article of the June 15 Declaration becomes a reality.

*The United States is the main culprit for the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula (Pak Kyöng-sun)*

Even though we cannot overlook the question of ethics in regard to nuclear weapons, we must be on guard against the dangers that follow when the ethical consideration turns dogmatic and absolutist. North Korea's nuclear experiments have certainly heightened the sense of despair regarding the reality of a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula and the danger of nuclear weapons. However, we need to realize that the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula did not originate from North Korea's nuclear tests. It began several decades ago when the United States first stationed nuclear weapons in Korea. Thus, the genesis of the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula lies with the United States, not North Korea. For several decades, North Korea has been harassed by American threats of a nuclear attack. Its recent nuclear experiments have had the effect of bringing into plain view the real deal behind the Korean nuclear crisis, which was hidden for so many years. How ideal it would have been if North Korea, suffering under actual threats of a nuclear attack by the United States, had managed to find a way to eliminate this threat without developing nuclear weapons of its own! However, the United States bitterly opposed all dialogue and negotiation with North Korea, maintaining instead a consistent policy of applying pressure on North Korea. Thus, dialogue and negotiations could not provide a means of eliminating the nuclear threat from the Korean peninsula. In light of this reality, we cannot ignore the self-defensive aspect of North Korea's nuclear tests, especially if they help deter American ambitions to launch a nuclear attack on North Korea and contribute positively to the realization of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. If the fundamental objective in raising ethical questions regarding nuclear weapons is to eliminate the nuclear threat and preserve peace, and if North Korea's experiments are contributing positively toward that end, a blanket criticism of North Korea's actions would be unjust and misguided.

What is the shape of the "peace" that the peace movement calls out for? We need to concretize the concept and give it more of a practical orientation. The Korean peninsula crisis has arisen, without a doubt, from the

coexistence of aggressive nuclear weapons in American possession and defensive nuclear weapons in North Korean possession. Whose nuclear weapons should be the first to go? Should North Korea give up its capacity first or should the United States be the first to stop applying its nuclear threat? This question deserves a serious discussion carried out in concrete terms. In addition, we need to demand simultaneous action by both the United States and North Korea. Any criticism of North Korea's nuclear experiments should be accompanied by a tenfold critique of American nuclear threats. Given the differential in their political and military power, directing the same degree of criticism at both the United States and North Korea does not have an equal impact on each. We need to clearly understand that in a world where a nuclear United States remains immune from all criticism and sanctions, criticism of North Korea's nuclear tests accompanied by a strong demand that it immediately give up its weapons would be tantamount to accepting and legitimating the sanctions against North Korea formulated by the United States.

Second, I believe that the question of "initiative" that Professor Paik touched upon in reference to participatory reunification movement requires a very careful approach. Mr. Yi made a point that corresponds to my concern precisely. Placing the state-led movement in a relationship of opposition to one led by civil society, and arguing that the ultimate aim is the replacement of existing North and South Korean governments by a new state identity reveals clear limitations of his stance. To overcome the division is not to bring about a single system. Rather, it is to work toward reconciliation, cooperation, coexistence and co-prosperity. That is the basic task. The question of reunification at the institutional level comes second; we must first address the task of inter-Korean reconciliation. No matter how unsightly the North Korean system is from our perspective, should it not remain the autonomous domain of North Korean citizens? We must realize that contrary to our intentions, demands for a new state entity could be mistaken as a call for regime change in North Korea, which would then have a negative impact on the cause of inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation. Taking part in the reunification movement is not tantamount to issuing a call for the transformation of North Korea.

*Taking a universalist approach to North Korea's nuclear and human rights issues (Yi T'ae-hun)*

I contend that South Korean civil society's double standard, or the pervasive attitude that can be misunderstood as a double standard, affects the development of a mature civil society in a very negative way. While I



accept the claim that equal application of the same standard to the strong and the weak gives an unfair advantage to the strong, I cannot agree to exempt the weak from criticism altogether. It is true that a greater emphasis should be placed on the strong party's responsibility, but this does not automatically legitimate the actions of the weak. Moreover, the tendency of civilian organizations to interpret North Korea's nuclear experiments and American threats solely in terms of military or diplomatic strategies runs into serious problems. The nuclear issue is more than just a security issue. There are social, cultural, and even spiritual dimensions to the problem. We might consider, for example, the issue of patriarchy and sexism in how the states manage the crisis. These dimensions are foreclosed from consideration or hidden from view precisely because the nuclear crisis is understood in terms only of security. What I am trying to say is that interpreting the nuclear issue from within the existing framework may contribute to the reproduction of the status quo and the values that sustain the existing state systems. Our response to the North Korea–U.S. conflict should be able to incorporate a variety of different voices that come from beyond the security model of interpretation.

*Kim Nak-chung*<sup>17</sup>

Professor Paik, in his conclusion, suggested that the North Korean nuclear issue should be settled between the United States and North Korea. Of late, it is frequently said that the June 15 Joint Declaration went bankrupt. This may be an exaggeration, but evidently we have come to an impasse in having the June 15 Joint Declaration come true. Why did this happen? That's because the United States keeps us from carrying out Article 1 of the Joint Declaration, which in turn makes it impossible to realize Article 2 of the declaration. No countries were successful in building confederations of any kind while they continued to expand military expenditures. However, South Korea continued to expand its military budget according to the Military Operation Plan 5027.<sup>18</sup> How can it be possible to expect a confederation between North and South Korea in this situation?

*Paik Nak-chung*

Not only Mr. Kim Nak-chung but also Mr. Min from the floor raised the same question, how we can be successful in building a confederation if the United States continues its interventions in intra-Korean matters. First of all, I would like to emphasize that there is enough space for us to try our best even with an unsympathetic U.S. foreign policy. Secondly, we have to avoid fatalistic attitudes concerning the role of the United States. George



W. Bush may indeed be eager for a “regime change” in North Korea, through military options if possible, but even under his administration we were able to produce the September 19 Joint Statement in 2005, and the six-party talks are going to resume pretty soon. I don’t think it will be easy to reach an agreement in the talks, although a great advance will have been made if we see a substantial agreement. However, my point is that the roles of civic and popular forces will become greater as time goes on.

The June 15 Joint Declaration does not mention anything about the issue of how to guarantee peace on the Korean peninsula, which is quite natural since the issue needs to be dealt with between the United States and North Korea. If the declaration had come up with an agreement on this issue, the two leaders would have been regarded as overstepping their bounds. It was not until the September 19 Joint Statement that the peace guarantee was first mentioned. Although its subsequent process is somewhat disappointing, we cannot overlook that an important flaw of the June 15 Joint Declaration of 2000 was supplemented with the September 19 Joint Statement. Of course, even if we try our best to realize Article 2 of the Joint Declaration it can never be done in a day or two. However, it is far from my viewpoint that only the full realization of Article 1 can lead to the implementation of Article 2. We have to prepare the implementation of Article 2 in carrying out the September 19 Joint Statement, under the spirit of Article 1. I truly believe it will become true in near future.

#### ADDENDUM: THE “THIRD INTERESTED PARTY” AFTER THE FEBRUARY 13 AGREEMENT

Paik Nak-chung (April, 2007)

At the time the foregoing lecture was delivered, the implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement by the six parties of the Beijing talks was at an impasse, but much has changed since then. In 2007, the resumption of the six-party talks produced the February 13 Agreement.<sup>19</sup> While the agreement is of a limited scope and addresses only the first-stage problems of the September 19 Statement, it still represents an unprecedented outcome of one-on-one talks between North Korea and the United States. One important advantage of the agreement is the ability to ascertain along the way how much of the “action for action” agreement is being honored, and to determine what has gone wrong in the event that the agreed timeline is not kept.

As of now, it does not seem likely that North Korea would be able to

meet the first phase goal of “shutdown” by the original deadline of April 14. But the main cause is the delay in the United States’ fulfillment of the promise to lift the sanctions involving the Macanese bank BDA (Banco Delta Asia), and since this difficulty is of a technical nature, unlike the problems of the past, the February 13 Agreement itself is not generally considered to be in serious jeopardy. The prevalent view is that the six-party talks will soon resume, and when they do, a blueprint for the second phase of “disablement” will be drafted.

Rather than offer a commentary on such current international trends, I would like to take the opportunity to further elaborate my pet notion regarding the civil-participatory character of Korean-style reunification.

The more smoothly the six-party talks proceed in resolving tensions on the Korean peninsula, the less significant will the role of South Korean civil society as the “seventh interested party” tend to become. An expeditious agreement reached between the states concerned regarding military and security issues like nuclearization would naturally diminish the involvement of civil society. In direct contrast, the current situation is bound to emphasize South Korean civil society’s role as the “third interested party” all the more. In the event, moreover, that a four-party forum (as provided for in the September 19 Joint Statement) is convened to implement a peace regime in Korea, South Korean civil society would become the “fifth interested party,” and the question of the impact it may exercise as such would depend greatly on how it handles its role as the third party in inter-Korean relations.

As the nuclear crisis begins to show signs of resolution, old habits of inert thinking appear to be resurfacing in South Korean society. On the one hand, the rhetoric that narrowly focuses on state-level strategy seems to be gaining strength again, whether accompanied by a positive assessment of North Korea’s nuclear tests or not. On the other hand, the emphasis on the need to advance and reform South Korean society independently of the North—a position that brackets the reality of division—seems to have returned with a vengeance after taking a short breather. In this climate, the discourse of participatory reunification can raise two important questions. First is whether the increased exchanges between the two Koreas, which are likely to result from the resolution of the nuclear issue and the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and the United States, could proceed smoothly without being accompanied by a political solution such as the establishment of a confederation or low-level federation. Second, assuming the indispensability of such a political

solution that arguably represents “the first stage of reunification,” can a confederation or low-level federation be created in Korea without the broad participation of civil society?

Clearly, the resolution of the nuclear crisis and subsequent normalization of relations with the United States will lead to a military security guarantee for the DPRK, and will provide it with an opportunity to embark on economic resuscitation. This alone, however, does not augur stability on the Korean peninsula. Even if the United States withdraws its threat of aggression and ends the economic blockade against North Korea, there is always a possibility that pressure on North Korea will continue to be applied by the United States, the international community, and South Korea’s government and/or civil society over such issues as human rights. Indeed, the very implementation of an engagement policy by South Korea and heightened economic cooperation and sociocultural exchanges may themselves constitute the greatest threat to the North Korean regime.

Regarding the latter possibility, the South Korean government as well as many who support the policy of engagement have adopted the outlook that with the easing of tensions and an increase in external aid, North Korea may be able to proceed toward reform and opening in the manner of China or Vietnam. Is it not the case, however, that such a view underestimates the existence of the division system? The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (formerly North Vietnam) switched to the policy of reform and opening only after winning the war against the United States and achieving reunification. In the case of China, one may say that China is still divided across the Strait of Taiwan, but the situation there is less of a “division system” per se than an asymmetric partition that involves the possibility of Taiwan’s secession and of military collision across the strait. In any case, no one would worry that reunification might take place by Taiwan’s absorbing China.

Of course, we need not exclude the possibility of North Korea following Chinese and Vietnamese precedents to a considerable degree; North Korea must find a path to reform and open its society in whatever shape or manner. However, in the era of a “disintegrating” division system, the guarantee by the six-party talks or any other international organ that would grow out of the talks would be grossly insufficient in enabling North Korea to embark upon such an immense reform experiment with the level of stability and self-confidence commanded by China or Vietnam. For this reason, a common political structure that would furnish the mechanism for mutual assistance and cooperation between North and South Korea and manage the process of reintegrating the Korean peninsula is needed

on top of international guarantees and aid. Without some such political mechanism, the only available option would be for North Korea to seek stability by becoming completely subordinate to China, but it is difficult to imagine that North Korea would go that route unless the American policy of antagonism greatly intensifies.

Even though the second article of the June 15 Joint Declaration stipulates a confederation or low-level federation as a path to reunification, neither South Korea nor North Korea has shown much interest in exploring this option to date. For North Korea, which confronts the urgent task of regime survival, there may be a great deal of expediency in fanning the ideal of "We Koreans by Ourselves" while deferring discussion on possible dangers associated with the process of gradual integration. For its part, South Korea may be dreaming the sweet dream of achieving reunification by absorbing North Korea after first inducing it to embark on reform and opening through a given period of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. Since power, by nature, is averse to diminution, any transfer of power to a new pan-Korean political entity, even in extremely limited fashion, will take active prodding and much ingenuity. Unless the stimulus for this transfer comes from the civilian sector, no solution will likely offer itself.

This is where the absolutely vital role of South Korean civil society as the "third interested party" comes in. The ideal scenario would be to have North Korean civil society, too, take up an autonomous role as the "fourth interested party," but what is most important at present is to enforce the principle that the process of bringing North and South Korea together should not be left only to the two interested parties, that is to say, the two state governments. Far from being a single, monolithic entity, the third party is a complicated matrix consisting of corporations, political parties, social organizations, religious organizations, and individual citizens. It also goes without saying that the views within the third party regarding the issue of reunification would be so various as to comprise a veritable cacophony of voices. All the same, the civilian sector as a whole has achieved a degree of visibility and leverage in Korea that a nonparticipatory model of reunification—not only a military takeover as in Vietnam or a unilateral absorption as in Germany, but also unification through the collusion of the governments as in Yemen—must be ruled out.

Even so, the establishment of a confederation is rarely posited as a deliberate objective even within the civilian reunification movement. On the one end, people are absorbed in merely repeating the principle of "We Koreans by Ourselves," while at the other end, some fall prey to the same kind of vague optimism that the South Korean government seems to suf-

fer from, contenting themselves with existing cooperative and exchange projects. But if we draw closer to the resolution of the nuclear crisis, and if inter-Korean exchanges also increase greatly, such hackneyed responses will not be able to keep pace of the rapid changes that are likely to occur.

Naturally, the cacophony of different voices will remain. A confederation [*kukka yŏnhap*, which may also be rendered as “union of states” or “commonwealth”] does not represent a panacea for Korea’s ills. At the very least, however, the proposal of a confederation gives us a more realistic and feasible option than either a blind insistence on an “autonomous reunification by the Korean people,” or exchange and cooperation without an ultimate vision of reunification (whose hidden design is often reunification by absorption). The confederation approach puts to rest the public’s fears regarding a sudden reunification by allowing the continued existence of two sovereign states; at the same time it guards against the hollow and perhaps even dangerous notion of achieving economic integration while leaving the existing division system intact.

The agenda of confederation is also of decisive importance in going beyond the fruitless debate between peaceful coexistence and reunification. For, while a Korean confederation would signify the peaceful coexistence of two sovereign nation-states in the terms one might find in international relations textbooks, Korea’s unique historical context would place such an entity in the first stage of reunification, an irrevocable first step toward the ultimate reintegration of North and South. In a similar fashion, the confederation approach can mitigate the existing opposition to providing economic aid to North Korea voiced by vested interest groups on either side. While the Cold War forces in the South oppose the aid as a “free handout,” many in the North look askance at the aid as a ruse designed ultimately to absorb North Korea. These objections can best be met by placing an entire range of economic cooperation projects—from purely humanitarian aid to enterprises bringing short-term benefit to South Koreans and long-term projects aimed at the economic integration of the peninsula—within the context of building North-South confederation.

Above all, it is important to understand that an establishment of a confederation is a process propelled forward by civilian participation. For this reason the oft-heard expression “institutional reunification” is not entirely appropriate in describing this particular project of confederation. The construction of a union of states on the Korean peninsula is far from a process of choosing one among the various institutional models of reunification on the table. The essence of Korean-style reunification is that the two Korean states have no other viable option than a gradual, multistage

reunification. The authorities had no choice but to accept this option even though they knew that the process may very well lead to expanding the breadth of participation by the citizenry. The authorities are now being driven along this path, but they have no way of knowing ahead of time the specific content of the process and the kinds of institutions that will materialize as a result.

To repeat, Korean-style reunification designates a path that those in power would like none too well, and yet even the two governments recognize that there is no other option. Reunification by military force has been rejected by almost everybody, reunification by unilateral absorption is being opposed by a significant number of South Koreans and quite fiercely by at least one of the two governments, and the role of the "third interested party" has become too large to permit a reunification by collusion between the authorities alone. The alternative of trusting Korean fate to a foreign power such as the United States or China is not any more feasible, let alone desirable. Now that the possible solution of a confederation (or low-level federation) has been proposed, multidirectional preparations within the civilian sector in addition to exchange and cooperation at the government level will be necessary, and the solution will be effected only by pressure from below when the necessary preparations have been made. And on the day when this unprecedented political innovation is achieved, the birth of a new "third interested party" composed of ordinary citizens of both North and South Korea may also become possible.

## 12. Another Moment of Trial in Implementing the June 15 Joint Declaration

I would like to thank the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center for preparing this event to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and for giving me an opportunity to speak.<sup>1</sup> Especially the head of the center, former President Kim Dae-jung, not only is a signatory of the June 15 Declaration but has raised a voice of reason inside and outside Korea whenever the spirit of the Joint Declaration was under challenge, thus helping to turn crises into opportunities. I would like to use this occasion to extend my respect and special gratitude to President Kim.

With the eighth anniversary of the June 15 Joint Declaration just around the corner, inter-Korean relations are facing another moment of trial. The Lee Myung-bak administration in its initial days has shown signs of deprecating inter-Korean summit agreements, the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Summit Declaration,<sup>2</sup> and even of denying their historical legitimacy. In response, North Korea has been vehemently denouncing the new administration, refusing all government-level dialogue and contact. If the two Koreas lock themselves up in the outdated ideological framework and revert to the era of wasteful confrontations, the historical opportunity that has been laboriously created over many years will instead give way to a yoke, imposing a heavy burden on the future of the Korean peninsula and East Asia as well.

The renewed tension between the two Koreas is especially regrettable since we have more or less come to a point where the various exchanges and contacts since June 2000 can finally reach fruition. The six-party talks, which have been slowly making progress through many years, and diplomatic efforts to improve U.S.-DPRK relations seem now to be on a fast track. Although we cannot jump to a conclusion, there is a high probability that the “second phase of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue”—

the disablement of North Korean nuclear facilities in exchange for specific compensations—will be completed in the near future. In such a case, we shall soon be confronted with the task of terminating Korea's unstable armistice regime that has continued for the last half-century. At this critical juncture, we have to remind ourselves of the significance of the 2000 inter-Korean summit and the June 15 Joint Declaration and resolve ourselves to make creative efforts to implement it.

The mere fact that the leaders of the two Koreas met for the first time since Korea's division was enough to make the June Summit a historical event. But by producing the Joint Declaration, it laid the foundation for a peace settlement, co-prosperity, and the reunification of the peninsula. Recently there has been a tendency both inside and outside the government in South Korea to disparage the June 15 Declaration by emphasizing the importance of the 1991 "Basic Agreement" (the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation) between the two Koreas. North Korea, on the other hand, tends to highlight solely the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Declaration, ignoring the Basic Agreement, which was not signed by their supreme leader. However, the inter-Korean agreements that have been produced from the July 4 (1972) Joint Communiqué to the Basic Agreement of 1991, the 1992 Joint Declaration for Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,<sup>3</sup> the June 15 South-North Joint Declaration of 2000, and the October 4 Declaration of 2007 are all precious, none of them contradicting the others. Belittling one agreement by stressing another not only impairs mutual trust but also is without rational foundation.

Yet we have to recognize the unique significance of the June 15 Joint Declaration among all the inter-Korean agreements. First, the weight of the fact that heads of both Koreas have directly signed the declaration is by no means light. The North Korean attitude of sanctifying the signature of their leader may be uncongenial to many South Koreans, but if that attitude makes it all the harder for them to depart from the declaration, the result could only be the more beneficial to all.

I have ample reasons to say it will be beneficial to all. The June 15 Joint Declaration has greatly eased the military tension and weakened hostile sentiments between North and South Koreans, while strengthening peace not only on the Korean peninsula but in the entire Northeast Asian region. All kinds of exchanges and cooperation, promised since the days of the Basic Agreement, have finally gained momentum, so that people on both sides are reaping actual benefits.

However, I wish particularly to stress one other unique significance of



the Joint Declaration, namely, that in it the two Koreas reached, for the first time since the division, an agreement on the manner in which they should be reunified.

In Article 2 of the declaration, the two leaders announced that “there are common elements in the South’s proposal for a confederation and the North’s proposal for a federation of lower stage as the formula for achieving reunification, [and] the South and the North agreed to promote reunification in that direction.” By means of this proposition, the two Koreas’ respective formulae for unification, which had remained irreconcilable, finally achieved an exquisite compromise. Its expression is ambiguous enough, and because the word “federation” was included, the declaration had to undergo political attacks in the South from conservative circles as having given in to the North’s line. However, with the addition of the phrase “lower stage,” and the North Korean acknowledgment that their proposal had common elements with the South’s idea of a confederation, their original call of the pre-June 15 era for a federal system had effectively been shelved. The Northern side had come to agree that, whatever the name or the specific contents, the first stage of reunification would have to be some kind of a loose union between the two Korean states.

That is indeed so. No matter how ambiguous the wording of Article 2, there is no ambiguity at all about the fact that the two Koreas have agreed to go through an intermediate stage of a fairly loose union. An official agreement at the highest level had been reached that the Korean peninsula will pursue its unique way of a gradual, multistage unification process corresponding to Korea’s different reality from that of Vietnam, Yemen, or Germany.

As someone working in the nongovernmental field, I attribute a special significance to this point not just because the agreement provided the only realistic way to peaceful reunification but because, the moment it becomes certain that the unification process will be peaceful, gradual, and stage-by-stage, we are given a guarantee and an encouragement for widespread participation by ordinary citizens. Moreover, as the recent candlelight rallies have demonstrated once again,<sup>4</sup> citizens of this country have the passion, initiative, and creativity to make full use of any space for participation that is offered. Although such a large-scale creative civic participation has not been directed so far toward the goal of reunification—and the outmoded ideas and ways of unification activists must bear some responsibility for this—“Korean-style reunification” will, after all, prove to be a creative and festive process of popular participation with few

precedents in world history. I myself have sometimes referred to it as a “participatory reunification.”

People who cling to life as established under the division system still hope to perpetuate the status quo through a proper management of the North-South division. They also dream of North Korea’s collapse one fine day and unification via absorption by the South, which will magnify their vested interests. True, the reunification process does need to be wisely managed and a sudden unification avoided, but for quite a while now, whether at the level of the whole world, the Korean peninsula, or South Korean society, “maintaining the status quo” has become a thankless task. That is why a way for breaking through the status quo, yet in a gradual and relatively orderly manner, was agreed upon and announced in the June 15 Joint Declaration.

There are a surprisingly large number of people who do not realize or remember that such a way already was specified eight years ago. In part this is because, up to now, focusing on the necessary preparatory task of peaceful coexistence, exchange, and cooperation has been more urgent than anything else. However, now that the Joint Declaration itself faces challenges, we need to recall that not only is it an agreement that has contributed to easing tension, but also a document having provided the basic framework for Korean-style unification, ensuring the possibility of a reunification with civic participation.

When it comes to the October 4 Declaration announced at the second inter-Korean summit of October 2007, the recent atmosphere has been even more inhospitable. In part this owes to the fact that overly ambitious agreements were reached too near the end of President Roh Mu-hyun’s term. However, we can appreciate the enormous significance of the October 4 Declaration by simply imagining how much more seriously the spirit of June 15 would have been weakened had there not even been a belated summit meeting. Moreover, several plans included in the declaration for the peace and common prosperity of the Korean peninsula will benefit the population of both Koreas, even though the difficulty in implementation may vary from case to case.

For example, the agreement on the “Special Peace and Cooperation Zone in the Western Waters,” of which President Roh expressed particular pride, has now been nearly set aside. As a matter of fact, its implementation would by no means be easy even if the Lee administration chose to go on with the plan. But the real significance of this agreement does not depend on its immediate implementation. It has its meaning in making a detour around,

and effectively breaking through, the impasse surrounding the dispute over the so-called Northern Limit Line, a situation that was hampering even such inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation as could immediately be realized, and thus creating possibilities for more far-reaching cooperative projects in the future. Here we see a repetition of the sagacious model of the June 15 Declaration, which opened the way to substantive cooperation on the strength of an ambiguous agreement in its Article 2.

Fortunately the new administration, too, has recently shown signs of willingness to change the direction regarding inter-Korean relations. The fact that the minister of unification is with us tonight to deliver a congratulatory message must also be part of such willingness. Whether we look at the general situation of the Korean peninsula, or at President Lee's promise to the people that he would value pragmatism, or at the level of civic consciousness that will not put up with the leader's disregard for the people, the change in the new administration's course of action seems to be an all but inevitable conclusion. I hope and expect that the government will move on to inter-Korean relations of mutual benefit and common prosperity by a firmer resolve to respect the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Declaration.<sup>5</sup>

Besides tonight's event, there is the annual joint celebration on June 15 with North, South, and overseas Koreans participating. Originally it was agreed at the prime ministers' meeting of the two Koreas last November that the eighth anniversary celebrations should be held in Seoul, with official delegations from the two governments joining together. Regrettably, in a situation where various agreements in and subsequent to the October 4 Declaration are being neglected, this promise also has not been kept. Thus, the June 15 All-Korean Committee decided to hold a scaled-down gathering of civilians alone, at Mount Kŭmgang in the North instead of in Seoul.

However, our pride in maintaining inter-Korean contact through civilian initiatives despite current difficulties is as high as ever. Nor is our conviction at all shaken that "participatory reunification," on the strength of various civilian efforts including tonight's commemoration and the joint event at Mount Kŭmgang on the fifteenth and sixteenth of this month, will eventually lead the way in bringing fundamental change to the Korean peninsula. As the recent candlelight demonstrations have shown, this process will be not only an arduous struggle against the yoke of the division system but a joyful festivity of the exploration and discovery of a new life for every individual.

Thank you.

## 13. Reflections on Korea in 2010

### *Trials and Prospects for Recovering Common Sense in 2011*

It seems that Korean society experienced more trials than usual in 2010. Perhaps it feels that way because the final weeks since the November 23 shelling of Yŏnpyŏng Island on the West Sea of the Korean peninsula have been filled with events that evoke grief, anger, and anxiety.

As for the Yŏnpyŏng incident itself, whatever its cause or justification, the fact that North Korea deliberately opened fire on South Korean territory is enough to bring shock and anger. To make matters worse, the incompetence and sloppiness of the South Korean government in its initial response caused uneasiness among the citizens, and its belated displays of toughness and escalation, proclaiming readiness for a full-scale war, has added to the South Korean people's sense of insecurity and even stirred their anger.

Taking advantage of the security crisis, members of the ruling Grand National Party (GNP) on December 8 unilaterally—and employing physical force—rammed through the National Assembly the annual budget and other disputed bills. Such action trampled the system of checks and balances and the rule of the law, a fresh reminder of the crisis of democracy in Korea. The main reason behind this “snatching” action apparently was to push on with the Four Great Rivers Project and to pass the related pernicious legislation known as the “Water-Friendly Region Law.”<sup>1</sup> We may now foresee an accelerating destruction not only of the nation's environment but of democracy and rule of law as well. In the meantime, although the government boasts about a speedy economic recovery, that recovery has not succeeded in improving the livelihood of ordinary people or creating new jobs, even if we set aside for the moment the view of some experts that we still don't know how “real” the recovery is. Indeed, even those with decent jobs feel overburdened with the cost of childcare and privately

paid informal education, and have gone on a “strike against childbearing” to produce one of the lowest birthrates in the world.

As for inter-Korean relations, President Lee Myung-bak himself virtually admitted the failure of his North Korean policy, “Denuclearization, Opening, 3000,”<sup>2</sup> when in his address to the nation on November 29 he ruled out the possibility of North Korea’s giving up its nuclear program voluntarily. Is the only thing now left either war or living in a state of continued threat while waiting for regime collapse in Pyongyang?

*The Chōnan Incident as a Turning Point and Its Functional Relation to the Yōnpyōng Island Attack*

It is clear that the antagonism that has built up between the two Koreas lies in the background of the attack on Yōnpyōng Island. Though with ups and downs, tension had persisted since the beginning of the Lee Myung-bak administration, but what turned this into outright hostility was the incident involving the naval ship *Chōnan* last March.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in order to have an accurate picture of today’s situation, we need to return to that turning point and calmly review what has transpired since. For an appropriate response is possible only on the basis of an accurate understanding of the situation.

After the attack on Yōnpyōng Island, popular sentiment attributing the sinking of the *Chōnan* to North Korea has gained strength in South Korea. It has also become easier to accuse anyone casting doubt on the JIG (Joint Military-Civilian Investigation Group) report of being “pro-North Korea” and a “Red.” However, the truth concerning the sinking of the *Chōnan* is something to be determined neither by popular sentiment nor political logic. It belongs to the realm of facts and can only be discerned through reason and logic.

Unfortunately, there is as yet no agreed conclusion regarding the *Chōnan* that has stood the test of reason and science. The JIG’s conclusions have not passed the examination of independent scientists, while outside experts with limited access to the relevant data have not been able to offer a convincing alternative explanation. Accordingly, there is no single correct answer on the functional relationship between the attack on Yōnpyōng Island and the *Chōnan* sinking. One can only attempt inferences starting from multiple hypotheses.

Let us consider just two such, for brevity’s sake. *Hypothesis A*: Despite all the faults and inconsistencies of the JIG report, the *Chōnan* was indeed sunk by North Korean attack. *Hypothesis B*: Even though the full truth is unknown, there at least was no attack by North Korea on the *Chōnan*.

What does Hypothesis A imply about the shelling on Yŏnpyŏng Island? First, if the North Korean military, which had attacked and sunk the *Chŏnan*, then attacked Yŏnpyŏng Island, this truly is an intolerable provocation. Moreover, the same North Koreans who expressed such elation after killing two marines and burning down some civilian dwellings through their shelling vehemently denied responsibility for what must have been a far greater military feat, sinking a naval corvette and killing forty-six naval personnel in a move that still defies the calculation of military experts. Such behavior would throw doubt on the very mental stability, let alone peaceable intentions, of the perpetrating group.

Again, if Hypothesis A is correct, the response of the South Korean military proves not only incompetent but close to criminal. The country had lost a naval ship and scores of innocent lives through the attack on the *Chŏnan*, and the whole world, not to mention the entire nation, had been thrown into turmoil. But what are we to say of a military that (according to the testimony of the chief of the National Intelligence Service to the Intelligence Committee of the National Assembly) had detected in August signs of preparation for an attack but remained totally unprepared, presuming this was just another bluff by the North? Not just the resignation of the defense minister (which did happen), but a massive reorganization of the top echelon of the military would be in order.

If, on the other hand, Hypothesis B is correct, the response by the South Korean military becomes somewhat more understandable. As at least key figures in the government and the top military leadership must have known that the *Chŏnan* had not been attacked by the North, the intelligence gathered in August regarding a possible attack on the island could have sounded like yet another habitual threatening by the North. Of course, this does not excuse the grave error in judgment, nor absolve responsibility for the incompetence in responding to the actual attack. However, the utter disgrace of the entire South Korean military under Hypothesis A would at least be alleviated.

Concerning the North Korean regime, too, Hypothesis B enforces a considerably different view. The attack on South Korean soil remains a clear violation of the Armistice Agreement as well as the North-South Basic Agreement of 1991, and an indisputable provocation. But it becomes more probable that the attack was a meticulously calculated operation on Pyongyang's part. At the time of the *Chŏnan* sinking there was talk of a possible inter-Korean summit meeting. However, in one stroke the incident changed the entire inter-Korean relation to one of antagonism; North Korea faced the danger of being branded as a criminal on the international

stage, and a series of unprecedented high-intensity military exercises by South Korean and American forces ensued. In this context North Korea may have decided on a deliberate gambit of its own. Nor would the outcome be considered a total loss. Of course, it is a serious loss to alienate the South Korean people, but such a long-term consideration was never a top priority in Pyongyang's calculations. More important to them and a possible cause for celebration would be their success in clearly impressing on the international community the disputed status of the West Sea area, while strengthening their own internal unity. This would also create new opportunities for negotiations with the United States, aided by the restraint North Korea showed regarding new live-fire drills by South Korea as well, as was reportedly agreed to with the United States negotiator, former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, during his visit to Pyongyang.

*Toward 2011 as a Year to Begin Recovering Common Sense and Humane Culture*

Which of the two inferences seems more reasonable will be decided by each person, depending on his or her convictions and good sense. One should not forget, however, that these are no more than inferences deriving respectively from two mutually exclusive hypotheses, and which premise (or variant thereof) is correct belongs wholly to the realm of empirical facts.

Not that we can entrust all matters to natural science. For instance, science alone will not tell us what to do once the truth has been ascertained, and dealing with a situation where scientific truth is being disregarded will also call for humane culture and competence beyond natural science. However, recognizing and respecting the authority of science in matters where science should have its say, while also doing what needs to be done beyond the boundaries of science, is precisely what constitutes humane culture and the necessary qualifications for democratic citizenship.

At any rate, whether the *Chǒnan* was sunk by a torpedo attack, ran aground, hit a mine, or suffered a mine explosion after a grounding accident, is wholly a question that must be answered scientifically by recourse to forensics. There can be no right or left, no liberal or conservative, on the matter. Yet the fact that this question has been immersed in political and ideological battles has been one of the most painful frustrations of 2010. It also demonstrated the shallowness of our general culture, not only among those in the government, the legislature, and the media, but among intellectuals as well.

Fortunately, South Korea in 2010 was not totally dominated by this lack of culture and common sense. A number of courageous individuals came forward attempting to expose the truth, at considerable personal risk, while numerous Internet users and anonymous scientists responded and supported those efforts. More important, in the nationwide local elections of June 2, the people successfully resisted the so-called “North wind”<sup>4</sup> deliberately instigated by the government, sending a stern message of warning to President Lee Myung-bak.

The most difficult challenge, however, probably will come when the truth about the sinking of the *Chōnan* has been brought to light. Whichever of the two hypotheses turns out to be correct, the situation is dire. While the proposition that war must be prevented will still hold true even if Hypothesis A is correct, it will be an unnerving task to manage an utterly dangerous situation in which a North Korean regime not only criminal but impervious to rational calculations possesses nuclear weapons as well. Conversely, if in accordance with Hypothesis B there was no North Korean attack on the *Chōnan*, but our government has deliberately distorted and even fabricated the evidence, this too is a highly unnerving and dangerous state of affairs. We cannot exclude the possibility that in order to cover it up the government may resort to other extreme measures. And it would hardly be desirable to see a legitimately elected government falling into a state of paralysis. Only the combination of sound common sense on the part of ordinary citizens and the rational capabilities of various individuals in their respective fields, transcending the antiquated framework of liberal versus conservative, will overcome this crisis and realize a new leap toward the future.

Korean society since its democratization in 1987 has enjoyed a space open to a change of political regime through the electoral process. Thus, any talk of a “new leap” that fails to take account of the two major elections in 2012, for the National Assembly in April and the presidency in December, will prove unrealistic. However, no great results in 2012 can be expected, either, unless recovery of common sense and humane culture, together with a wholesale refurbishing of the nation’s governance, can begin in 2011. Above all, we need to display wisdom in applying to the new political environment the lesson of the 2010 local elections regarding the value of coalition politics. Also, this process naturally must reflect the new forces, not necessarily related to electioneering, that have been maturing during the past year in various sectors of our society. The endeavors continuing in the religious and civic sectors against the Four Rivers Project have so far failed to alter government policies, but in certain



ways they are changing the very fabric of our society. The struggles of the most disadvantaged workers for livelihood and jobs scored valuable victories at Kiryung Electronics and KTX.<sup>5</sup> And these should not be judged by their scale alone.

Looking back, 2010 was a year of considerable achievements as well as frustrations and trials. Personally I am full of hope that, starting from those achievements and trials, we may go on in the coming year to make advances comparable to any year in our recent history.

# Translators' Postscript

This volume of Paik Nak-chung's essays on the division of Korea in English translation has been many years in the making, and on behalf of all the translators I would like to express my happiness at seeing our long labor brought to fruition. As yet, the notion of the "division system" may be little known outside of Korea. Even in Korea, it is hardly an established academic discourse, but Paik's "refreshing and unique perspective," as Bruce Cumings notes in his foreword to the English edition, is gaining increasing currency and critical acceptance. With this volume, readers in the English-speaking world will be able to see for themselves why Paik's incisive analysis of divided Korea remains an indispensable key to understanding contemporary Korea.

A rare privilege for us as translators has been to have the close collaboration of Professor Paik himself in translating these essays: his unrivalled knowledge of the subject has improved the translation far beyond what we could have done with our own powers alone. The final product represents something more than just a translation of the original Korean-language book published in 1998, which contained essays written from 1994 to 1998. The third chapter of the original Korean edition was omitted on account of the likely inaccessibility of the contexts of their polemic to foreign readers. The main points of the debate covered in this chapter are conveyed instead in the author's preface to the English edition. The addition of part III, consisting of three essays written in 2006, 2008 and 2010, respectively, brings the volume more up to date.

For the convenience of the readers of this English edition, we have also added a chronology of major events in modern Korean history, focusing on the relations between North and South Korea, in addition to providing the texts of major declarations and statements mentioned in the book.

My co-translators, Sol June-kyu, Song Seung-cheol, and Ryu Youngju, join me in thanking all the colleagues whom we cannot name individually but whose help was invaluable at every stage of this translation project. In making available an important source material for Korean studies in the English language, their collaboration will, I feel convinced, contribute to a fuller understanding of issues vital not only to Koreans both North and South but also to the peoples in the East Asian region and beyond. I am also obliged to express my gratitude to the Korea Literature Translation Institute for its unwavering support.

*Kim Myung-Hwan*

*March 2011*

## APPENDIX A

# Chronology of Inter-Korean Relations

- 1945 Korea is liberated from Japanese colonial rule in August but is partitioned along the thirty-eighth parallel by the United States and USSR. The conflicts between left and right escalate in both Koreas, as the survival of pro-Japanese collaborators supported by the occupational U.S. forces exacerbates popular grievances in the South.
- 1948 Separate regimes are established in the North and South. Rhee Syngman is inaugurated as the first president of South Korea on August 15; Kim Il-sung, as the first leader of communist North Korea on September 9.
- 1950 The growing tension between North and South Korea leads to the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25. The devastating war lasts three years, claiming the lives of millions and turning even more into refugees.
- 1953 Ceasefire and the signing of a truce agreement on July 27. The Military Demarcation Line becomes the new inter-Korean border, which remains to this day.
- 1960 The April 19 Student Revolution in South Korea topples Rhee's authoritarian rule.
- 1961 A military coup d'état on May 16, led by General Park Chung Hee, installs him as the ruler of South Korea. Park's regime lasts for eighteen years until his assassination in October 1979.
- 1965 South Korea and Japan agree upon the normalization of diplomatic relations in June.
- 1965 President Park decides to send combat troops to Vietnam in July. South Korean combat troops represent the largest foreign military force in Vietnam after the United States.

- 1968 Military tensions on the Korean peninsula heighten as North Korean guerrillas infiltrate Seoul and the east coast simultaneously; the *USS Pueblo* is captured and detained by the North Korean navy.
- 1969 Park and his ruling party change the constitution on September 14 to secure for Park a third term in office.
- 1972 The July 4 Joint Declaration between North and South Korea proclaims the three principles for reunification: national autonomy, peace, and grand national unity. (See appendix B.) The détente between the two Koreas, however, does not last. On the contrary, leaders of both sides tighten their own respective regimes under the pretext of national security. Park Chung Hee's October 17 palace coup, under the name of Yushin [Reformation], opens the way to a lifelong dictatorship for Park, but resistance against his rule also grows.
- 1973 Kim Dae-jung, Park's main political rival in exile, is kidnapped by Korean CIA agents in Tokyo, where Kim has been organizing anti-Yushin movements. Kim is brought back to Seoul and kept under house arrest until Park's assassination in 1979.
- 1975 The reunification of Vietnam heightens national security issues in South Korea and Park takes advantage of the situation to tighten his Yushin regime.
- 1979 Popular uprisings against the Yushin regime take place in Pusan and Masan in October. Park is assassinated by the chief of the Korean CIA on October 26. On December 12, Chun Doo-hwan and his new military group seize control of the military by a de facto coup, arresting the army chief of staff with the false accusation of being involved in Park's assassination.
- 1980 In May, Chun Doo-hwan seizes political power by extending martial law throughout the nation and massacring civilian protesters in Kwangju. Chun's draconian rule arouses strong oppositional movements throughout the 1980s. Radical Korean dissidents turn anti-American after the United States approves the dispatch of troops to Kwangju and recognizes Chun's presidency.
- 1987 The June Uprising ends twenty-six years of successive military dictatorships in South Korea, but Roh Tae-woo, an ex-general and the ruling party candidate, wins the presidential election in December, owing to the split between the two major opposition leaders, Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam. President Roh is, however, compelled to promote not only (limited) democratization but also reconciliation with the North.
- 1990 South Korea and the Soviet Union normalize diplomatic relations in September 30.

- 1991 Both Koreas become members of the United Nations on September 18.
- 1991 The Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation (“The Basic Agreement”) is signed on December 13 by both Korean governments, to take effect on February 19, 1992. (See appendix B.)
- 1992 The Joint Declaration for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is signed on January 20. (See appendix B.)
- 1992 South Korea and the People’s Republic of China normalize diplomatic ties on August 24.
- 1994 The first North Korean nuclear crisis. The Clinton administration plans airstrikes of North Korean nuclear sites, but former U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s visit to Pyongyang leads to negotiation between the United States and North Korea. The Geneva Agreed Framework is signed between the United States and North Korea on October 21. (See appendix B.)
- 1994 The sudden death of Kim Il-sung on July 8 leads to the cancellation of the summit meeting between the North Korean leader and Kim Young-sam, then president of South Korea. Kim Jong-il succeeds his father as the North’s new leader.
- 1995 A severe multiyear famine begins in North Korea, necessitating the “Arduous March” for its people. Endeavors by South Korean civil groups to help starving North Koreans create an unprecedented momentum toward the reconciliation between North and South Korea.
- 1997 In November, the Kim Young-sam administration decides to ask the IMF for a bailout.
- 1997 In December, Kim Dae-jung’s victory in the presidential election marks the first peaceful turnover of political power in South Korea’s history.
- 1998 North Korea launches a medium-range ballistic missile. *Kwangmyŏngsŏng-1*, allegedly a satellite according to the North Korean authorities, reaches the Pacific Ocean after flying over Japanese territory, alarming both Washington and Tokyo.
- 2000 The first summit meeting between Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il leads to the June 15 Joint Declaration. (See appendix B.)
- 2000 Cho Myŏngrok, the first vice-chairman of the National Defense Commission, visits the United States, and U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright visits Pyongyang in return. These visits are regarded as signs of a substantial advance toward normalization between North Korea and the United States, but George W. Bush’s victory in the November U.S. presidential election renders it impossible for the Clinton administration to take further actions.

- 2001 The “Bush doctrine,” including the notions of preventive wars and unilateralism, aggravates political and military tensions between North Korea and the United States.
- 2002 On September 17, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Kim Jong-il announce the “Pyongyang Declaration,” which reflects efforts for an early normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea. Normalization efforts have stalled owing primarily to the North Korean abduction of Japanese civilians.
- 2002 In December, Roh Mu-hyon, the ruling party’s presidential candidate, wins the South Korean presidential election and inherits Kim Dae-jung’s “Sunshine Policy” toward North Korea.
- 2005 The second North Korean nuclear crisis, caused in part by the hardline policies of the George W. Bush administration in the United States, is resolved by the September 19 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. (See appendix B.) The agreements, however, are not implemented smoothly due to various obstacles.
- 2006 North Korea conducts its first underground nuclear test on October 9. The Bush administration makes a policy change and tries to open talks with North Korea.
- 2007 The February 13 Agreement of the Six-Party Talks is signed. (See appendix B.)
- 2007 The second inter-Korean summit leads to the October 4 Declaration by Roh Mu-hyun and Kim Jong-il. (See appendix B.)
- 2009 The second North Korean underground nuclear test on May 25 is preceded by another long-range missile test in April.
- 2009 Former U.S. President Bill Clinton visits Pyongyang in August to obtain the release of two female American reporters and meets with Kim Jong-il.
- 2009 U.S. President Barack Obama’s special envoy Stephen W. Bosworth visits Pyongyang in December to persuade North Korea to return to the six-party talks.
- 2010 The South Korean navy corvette *Chōnan* split into two and sank on March 26, 2010, near Paeknyōng Island near the NLL (Northern Limit Line) in the West Sea, killing forty-six seamen. The Joint Military-Civilian Investigation Group announced in its interim report on May 20 and also in its final report on September 13 that an infiltrating North Korean submarine had sunk the *Chōnan* by a torpedo attack. Pyongyang strongly denied this charge, and South Korean experts, scientists and civil activists have raised doubts about the reports. Just after the release of the interim report the ruling party suffered a decisive defeat in the nationwide local elections on June 2, and different polls showed that the majority

of the South Koreans did not support hard-line policies against the North, casting doubts about the truth of the *Chōnan* incident.

2010 On November 23, North Korean artillery shelled Yōnpyōng Island, located close to the disputed NLL, killing two marines and two civilian construction laborers working in the military compounds. North Korea announced that this surprise attack was in retaliation for South Korea's unlawful live-fire drills in their own waters, but it was the first artillery attack since the Korean War against the South Korean territory where civilian villages were located as well as military facilities.



## APPENDIX B

# Texts of Major Declarations and Statements Mentioned in This Book\*

### THE SOUTH-NORTH KOREA JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF JULY 4, 1972

Recently, talks were held in Pyongyang and Seoul to discuss the problems of improving South-North relations and of unifying the divided country.

Lee Hu-rak, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in Seoul, visited Pyongyang from May 2–5, 1972, and held talks with Kim Young-joo of the Organization and Guidance Department of Pyongyang; Vice Premier Park Sung-chul, acting on behalf of Director Kim Young-joo visited Seoul from May 29–June 1, 1972, and held further talks with Director Lee Hu-rak.

With the common desire of achieving the peaceful unification of the nation as early as possible, the two sides engaged in a frank and open-hearted exchange of views during these talks, and made great progress towards promoting mutual understanding.

In an effort to remove the misunderstandings and mistrust, and mitigate the heightened tensions that have arisen between the South and the North as a consequence of their long period of division and moreover, to expedite unification, the two sides reached full agreement on the following points.

1. The two sides agreed on the following principles as a basis of achieving unification:

First, unification shall be achieved independently, without depending on foreign powers and without foreign interference.

\*[The source of the Geneva Agreed Framework (1994) and the Joint Communiqué of 2000 is the U.S. State Department; and both the September 19 Joint Statement (2005) and the February 13 Agreement of the Six-Party Talks (2007) were provided by the Foreign Ministry of China, which chairs the six-party talks. All the other English translations of the texts in this appendix are the official ones from the homepage of the Ministry of Unification of Republic of Korea (South Korea).—*Trans.*]

Second, unification shall be achieved through peaceful means, without resorting to the use of force against each other.

Third, a great national unity as one people shall be sought first, transcending differences in ideas, ideologies, and systems.

2. In order to ease tensions and foster an atmosphere of mutual trust between the South and the North, the two sides have agreed not to slander or defame each other, not to undertake military provocations whether on a large or small scale, and to take positive measures to prevent inadvertent military incidents.

3. In order to restore severed national ties, promote mutual understanding and to expedite independent peaceful unification, the two sides have agreed to carry out numerous exchanges in various fields.

4. The two sides have agreed to actively cooperate in seeking the early success of the South-North Red Cross talks, which are currently in progress with the fervent support of the entire people of Korea.

5. In order to prevent the outbreak of unexpected military incidents, and to deal directly, promptly, and accurately with problems arising between the South and the North, the two sides have agreed to install a direct telephone line between Seoul and Pyongyang.

6. In order to implement the above items, to solve various problems existing between the South and the North, and to settle the unification problem on the basis of the agreed principles for unification, the two sides have agreed to establish and operate a South-North Coordinating Committee co-chaired by Director Lee Hu-rak and Director Kim Young-joo.

7. Firmly convinced that the above items of agreement correspond with the common aspirations of the entire Korean people, all of whom are anxious for an early unification, the two sides hereby solemnly pledge before the entire Korean people to faithfully carry out these agreed items.

*July 4, 1972*

*Upholding the instructions of their respective superiors*

*Lee Hu-rak      Kim Young-joo*

AGREEMENT ON RECONCILIATION, NONAGGRESSION,  
AND EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION OF 1991  
(THE "BASIC AGREEMENT")

South and North Korea,

In keeping with the longing of the entire Korean race for the peaceful unification of our divided fatherland;

Reaffirming the three basic principles of unification set forth in the South-North Joint Communiqué of July 4, 1972;

Determined to end the state of political and military confrontation and achieve national reconciliation;

Also determined to avoid armed aggression and hostilities, and to ensure the lessening of tension and the establishment of peace;

Expressing the desire to realize multi-faceted exchanges and cooperation to promote interests and prosperity common to the Korean people;

Recognizing that their relationship, not being a relationship as between states, is a special one constituted temporarily in the process of unification;

Pledging themselves to exert joint efforts to achieve peaceful unification;

Hereby agreed as follows;

#### CHAPTER 1: SOUTH-NORTH RECONCILIATION

1. South and North Korea shall recognize and respect the system of each other.

2. South and North Korea shall not interfere in the internal affairs of each other.

3. South and North Korea shall not slander or defame each other.

4. South and North Korea shall refrain from any acts of sabotage or insurrection against each other

5. South and North Korea shall together endeavor to transform the present state of armistice into a firm state of peace between the two sides and shall abide by the present Military Armistice Agreement until such a state of peace is realized.

6. South and North Korea shall cease to compete with or confront each other, and instead shall cooperate and endeavor to promote the racial dignity and interests of Korea in the international arena.

7. South and North Korea shall establish and operate a South-North Liaison Office at Panmunjom within three months of the entry into force of this Agreement to ensure close liaison and consultations between the two sides.

8. South and North Korea shall establish a South-North Political Committee within the framework of the South-North High-Level Negotiations within one month of the entry into force of this Agreement to consider concrete measures to ensure the implementation and observance of the agreement on South-North reconciliation.

#### CHAPTER 2: AGREEMENT OF NON-AGGRESSION BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA

9. South and North Korea shall not use force against each other and shall not undertake armed aggression against each other.

10. South and North Korea shall resolve peacefully, through dialogue and negotiation, any differences of views and disputes arising between them.

11. The South-North Demarcation Line and the areas for non-aggression shall be identical with the Military Demarcation Line provided in the Military Armistice Agreement of July 27, 1953, and the areas that each side has exercised jurisdiction over until the present time.

12. In order to implement and guarantee non-aggression, the South and the North shall establish South-North Joint Military Commission within three months of the entry into force of this Agreement. In the said Commission, the two sides shall discuss problems and carry out steps to build up military confidence and realize arms reduction, in particular, the mutual notification and control of large-scale movements of military units and major military exercises, the peaceful utilization of the Demilitarized Zone, exchanges of military personnel and information, phased reductions in armaments including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and attack capabilities, and verifications thereof.

13. South and North Korea shall install and operate a telephone line between the military authorities of each side to prevent the outbreak and escalation of accidental armed clashes.

14. South and North Korea shall establish South-North Military Sub Committee within the framework of the South-North High-Level Negotiations within one month of the entry into force of this Agreement to discuss concrete measures for the implementation and observance of the agreement on non-aggression and to remove the state of military confrontation.

#### CHAPTER 3: EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA

15. In order to promote the integrated and balanced development of the national economy and the welfare of the entire people, the South and the North shall engage in economic exchanges and cooperation, including the joint development of resources, the trade of goods as intra-Korean commerce and joint ventures.

16. South and North Korea shall carry out exchanges and promote cooperation in various fields such as science and technology, education, literature and the arts, health, sports, the environment, journalism and media including newspapers, radio, television broadcasts, and other publications.

17. South and North Korea shall implement freedom of intra-Korean travel and contact among the members of the Korean people.

18. South and North Korea shall permit free correspondence, movement

between the two sides, meetings, and visits between dispersed family members and other relatives, promote their voluntary reunion, and take measures to resolve other humanitarian issues.

19. South and North Korea shall reconnect the railway and the previously severed roads, and shall open sea and air routes.

20. South and North Korea shall establish and link facilities for exchanges by post and telecommunications, and shall guarantee the confidentiality of intra-Korean mail and telecommunications.

21. South and North Korea shall cooperate in the international arena in the economic, cultural and other fields, and shall advance abroad together.

22. In order to implement the agreement on exchanges and cooperation in the economic, cultural, and other fields, South and North Korea shall establish joint commissions for each sector, including Joint South-North Economic Exchanges and Cooperation Commission, within three months of the entry into force of this Agreement.

23. A Sub Committee on South-North Exchanges and Cooperation shall be established within the framework of the South-North High-Level Negotiations within one month of the entry into force of this Agreement, to discuss concrete measures for the implementation and observance of the agreement on South-North exchanges and cooperation.

#### CHAPTER 4: AMENDMENTS AND EFFECTUATION

25. This Agreement may be amended or supplemented by agreement between the two sides.

26. This Agreement shall enter into force from the date the South and the North exchange the appropriate instruments following the completion of the respective procedures necessary for its implementation.

*Signed on December 13, 1991\**

*Chung Won-shik, Chief Delegate of the South delegation  
to the South-North High-Level Talks  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea*

*Yon Hyong-muk, Head of the North delegation  
to the South-North High-Level Talks  
Premier of the Administration, Council of  
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

\*Entered into force on February 19, 1992.

JOINT DECLARATION FOR THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF  
THE KOREAN PENINSULA OF 1992

South and North Korea,

In order to eliminate the danger of nuclear war through the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to create conditions and an environment favorable to peace and the peaceful unification of Korea, and thus to contribute to the peace and security of Asia and the world,

Declare as follows;

1. South and North Korea shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons.
2. South and North Korea shall use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes.
3. South and North Korea shall not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities.
4. In order to verify the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, South and North Korea shall conduct inspections of particular subjects chosen by the other side and agreed upon between the two sides, in accordance with the procedures and methods to be determined by the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission.
5. In order to implement this joint declaration, South and North Korea shall establish and operate a South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission within one month of the entry into force of this joint declaration;
6. This joint declaration shall enter into force from the date the South and the North exchange the appropriate instruments following the completion of their respective procedures for bringing it into effect.

*January 20, 1992*

*Chung Won-shik, Chief Delegate of the South delegation  
to the South-North High-Level Talks  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea*

*Yon Hyong-muk, Head of the North delegation  
to the South-North High-Level Talks  
Premier of the Administration, Council of  
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

THE GENEVA AGREED FRAMEWORK BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA OF 1994

Geneva, October 21, 1994

Delegations of the governments of the United States of America (U.S.) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) held talks in Geneva from September 23 to October 21, 1994, to negotiate an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

Both sides reaffirmed the importance of attaining the objectives contained in the August 12, 1994 Agreed Statement between the U.S. and the DPRK and upholding the principles of the June 11, 1993 Joint Statement of the U.S. and the DPRK to achieve peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The U.S. and the DPRK decided to take the following actions for the resolution of the nuclear issue:

I. Both sides will cooperate to replace the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light-water reactor (LWR) power plants.

1) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S. will undertake to make arrangements for the provision to the DPRK of a LWR project with a total generating capacity of approximately 2,000 MW(e) by a target date of 2003.

—The U.S. will organize under its leadership an international consortium to finance and supply the LWR project to be provided to the DPRK. The U.S., representing the international consortium, will serve as the principal point of contact with the DPRK for the LWR project.

—The U.S., representing the consortium, will make best efforts to secure the conclusion of a supply contract with the DPRK within six months of the date of this Document for the provision of the LWR project. Contract talks will begin as soon as possible after the date of this Document.

—As necessary, the U.S. and the DPRK will conclude a bilateral agreement for cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S., representing the consortium, will make arrangements to offset the energy foregone due to the freeze of the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities, pending completion of the first LWR unit.

—Alternative energy will be provided in the form of heavy oil for heating and electricity production.

—Deliveries of heavy oil will begin within three months of the date

of this Document and will reach a rate of 500,000 tons annually, in accordance with an agreed schedule of deliveries.

3) Upon receipt of U.S. assurances for the provision of LWR's and for arrangements for interim energy alternatives, the DPRK will freeze its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities and will eventually dismantle these reactors and related facilities.

—The freeze on the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be fully implemented within one month of the date of this Document. During this one-month period, and throughout the freeze, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be allowed to monitor this freeze, and the DPRK will provide full cooperation to the IAEA for this purpose.

—Dismantlement of the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be completed when the LWR project is completed.

—The U.S. and the DPRK will cooperate in finding a method to store safely the spent fuel from the 5 MW(e) experimental reactor during the construction of the LWR project, and to dispose of the fuel in a safe manner that does not involve reprocessing in the DPRK.

4) As soon as possible after the date of this document U.S. and DPRK experts will hold two sets of experts talks.

—At one set of talks, experts will discuss issues related to alternative energy and the replacement of the graphite-moderated reactor program with the LWR project.

—At the other set of talks, experts will discuss specific arrangements for spent fuel storage and ultimate disposition.

II. The two sides will move toward full normalization of political and economic relations.

1) Within three months of the date of this Document, both sides will reduce barriers to trade and investment, including restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions.

2) Each side will open a liaison office in the other's capital following resolution of consular and other technical issues through expert level discussions.

3) As progress is made on issues of concern to each side, the U.S. and the DPRK will upgrade bilateral relations to the Ambassadorial level.

III. Both sides will work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

1) The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S.



2) The DPRK will consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

3) The DPRK will engage in North-South dialogue, as this Agreed Framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such dialogue.

IV. Both sides will work together to strengthen the international nuclear non proliferation regime.

1) The DPRK will remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will allow implementation of its safeguards agreement under the Treaty.

2) Upon conclusion of the supply contract for the provision of the LWR project, ad hoc and routine inspections will resume under the DPRK's safeguards agreement with the IAEA with respect to the facilities not subject to the freeze. Pending conclusion of the supply contract, inspections required by the IAEA for the continuity of safeguards will continue at the facilities not subject to the freeze.

3) When a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, but before delivery of key nuclear components, the DPRK will come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA (INFCIRC/403), including taking all steps that may be deemed necessary by the IAEA, following consultations with the Agency with regard to verifying the accuracy and completeness of the DPRK's initial report on all nuclear material in the DPRK.

*Robert L. Gallucci*

*Head of Delegation of the United States of America,  
Ambassador at Large of the United States of America*

*Kang Sok Ju*

*Head of the Delegation of  
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,  
First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

THE JUNE 15 JOINT DECLARATION BETWEEN  
SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA OF 2000

In accordance with the noble will of the entire people who yearn for the peaceful reunification of the nation, President Kim Dae-jung of the Republic of Korea and National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea held a historic meeting and summit talks in Pyongyang from June 13 to June 15, 2000.

The leaders of the South and the North, recognizing that the meeting and the summit talks, the first since the division of the country, were of great significance in promoting mutual understanding, developing South-North relations and realizing peaceful reunification, declared as follows:

1. The South and the North have agreed to resolve the question of reunification on their own initiative and through the joint efforts of the Korean people, who are the masters of the country.

2. Acknowledging that there are common elements in the South's proposal for a confederation and the North's proposal for a federation of lower stage as the formulae for achieving reunification, the South and the North agreed to promote reunification in that direction.

3. The South and the North have agreed to promptly resolve humanitarian issues such as exchange visits by separated family members and relatives on the occasion of the August 15 National Liberation Day and the question of former long-term prisoners who had refused to renounce Communism.

4. The South and the North have agreed to consolidate mutual trust by promoting balanced development of the national economy through economic cooperation and by stimulating cooperation and exchanges in civic, cultural, sports, public health, environmental and all other fields.

5. The South and the North have agreed to hold a dialogue between relevant authorities in the near future to implement the above agreement expeditiously.

President Kim Dae-jung cordially invited National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il to visit Seoul, and Chairman Kim Jong Il decided to visit Seoul at an appropriate time.

*June 15, 2000*

*Kim Dae-jung, President  
The Republic of Korea*

*Kim Jong Il, Chairman, National Defense Commission  
The Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

THE JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA  
OF 2000

As the special envoy of Chairman Kim Jong Il of the D.P.R.K. National Defense Commission, the First Vice Chairman, Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok, visited the United States of America from October 9–12, 2000.

During his visit, Special Envoy Jo Myong Rok delivered a letter from National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il, as well as his views on U.S.-D.P.R.K. relations, directly to U.S. President William Clinton. Special Envoy Jo Myong Rok and his party also met with senior officials of the U.S. Administration, including his host Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Defense William Cohen, for an extensive exchange of views on issues of common concern. They reviewed in depth the new opportunities that have opened up for improving the full range of relations between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The meetings proceeded in a serious, constructive, and businesslike atmosphere, allowing each side to gain a better understanding of the other's concerns.

Recognizing the changed circumstances on the Korean Peninsula created by the historic inter-Korean summit, the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have decided to take steps to fundamentally improve their bilateral relations in the interests of enhancing peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, the two sides agreed there are a variety of available means, including Four Party talks, to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula and formally end the Korean War by replacing the 1953 Armistice Agreement with permanent peace arrangements.

Recognizing that improving ties is a natural goal in relations among states and that better relations would benefit both nations in the 21st century while helping ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. and the D.P.R.K. sides stated that they are prepared to undertake a new direction in their relations. As a crucial first step, the two sides stated that neither government would have hostile intent toward the other and confirmed the commitment of both governments to make every effort in the future to build a new relationship free from past enmity.

Building on the principles laid out in the June 11, 1993 U.S.-D.P.R.K. Joint Statement and reaffirmed in the October 21, 1994 Agreed Framework, the two sides agreed to work to remove mistrust, build mutual confidence, and maintain an atmosphere in which they can deal constructively with

issues of central concern. In this regard, the two sides reaffirmed that their relations should be based on the principles of respect for each other's sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and noted the value of regular diplomatic contacts, bilaterally and in broader fora.

The two sides agreed to work together to develop mutually beneficial economic cooperation and exchanges. To explore the possibilities for trade and commerce that will benefit the peoples of both countries and contribute to an environment conducive to greater economic cooperation throughout Northeast Asia, the two sides discussed an exchange of visits by economic and trade experts at an early date.

The two sides agreed that resolution of the missile issue would make an essential contribution to a fundamentally improved relationship between them and to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. To further the efforts to build new relations, the D.P.R.K. informed the U.S. that it will not launch long-range missiles of any kind while talks on the missile issue continue.

Pledging to redouble their commitment and their efforts to fulfill their respective obligations in their entirety under the Agreed Framework, the US and the D.P.R.K. strongly affirmed its importance to achieving peace and security on a nuclear weapons free Korean Peninsula. To this end, the two sides agreed on the desirability of greater transparency in carrying out their respective obligations under the Agreed Framework. In this regard, they noted the value of the access which removed U.S. concerns about the underground site at Kumchang-ri.

The two sides noted that in recent years they have begun to work cooperatively in areas of common humanitarian concern. The D.P.R.K. side expressed appreciation for significant U.S. contributions to its humanitarian needs in areas of food and medical assistance. The U.S. side expressed appreciation for D.P.R.K. cooperation in recovering the remains of U.S. servicemen still missing from the Korean War, and both sides agreed to work for rapid progress for the fullest possible accounting. The two sides will continue to meet to discuss these and other humanitarian issues.

As set forth in their Joint Statement of October 6, 2000, the two sides agreed to support and encourage international efforts against terrorism.

Special Envoy Jo Myong Rok explained to the US side developments in the inter-Korean dialogue in recent months, including the results of the historic North-South summit. The U.S. side expressed its firm commitment to assist in all appropriate ways the continued progress and success of ongoing North-South dialogue and initiatives for reconciliation and greater cooperation, including increased security dialogue.

Special Envoy Jo Myong Rok expressed his appreciation to President Clinton and the American people for their warm hospitality during the visit.

It was agreed that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit the D.P.R.K. in the near future to convey the views of U.S. President William Clinton directly to Chairman Kim Jong Il of the D.P.R.K. National Defense Commission and to prepare for a possible visit by the President of the United States.

THE SEPTEMBER 19 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE  
FOURTH ROUND OF THE SIX-PARTY TALKS OF 2005

The Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing, China among the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America from July 26th to August 7th, and from September 13th to 19th, 2005.

Mr. Wu Dawei, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Mr. Kim Gye Gwan, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK; Mr. Kenichiro Sasae, Director-General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; Mr. Song Min-soon, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the ROK; Mr. Alexandr Alekseyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; and Mr. Christopher Hill, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the United States attended the talks as heads of their respective delegations.

Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei chaired the talks.

For the cause of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia at large, the Six Parties held, in the spirit of mutual respect and equality, serious and practical talks concerning the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula on the basis of the common understanding of the previous three rounds of talks, and agreed, in this context, to the following:

1. The Six Parties unanimously reaffirmed that the goal of the Six-Party Talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

The DPRK committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards.

The United States affirmed that it has no nuclear weapons on the Korean

Peninsula and has no intention to attack or invade the DPRK with nuclear or conventional weapons.

The ROK reaffirmed its commitment not to receive or deploy nuclear weapons in accordance with the 1992 Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while affirming that there exist no nuclear weapons within its territory.

The 1992 Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should be observed and implemented.

The DPRK stated that it has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The other parties expressed their respect and agreed to discuss, at an appropriate time, the subject of the provision of light water reactor to the DPRK.

2. The Six Parties undertook, in their relations, to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recognized norms of international relations.

The DPRK and the United States undertook to respect each other's sovereignty, exist peacefully together, and take steps to normalize their relations subject to their respective bilateral policies.

The DPRK and Japan undertook to take steps to normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of unfortunate past and the outstanding issues of concern.

3. The Six Parties undertook to promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment, bilaterally and/or multilaterally.

China, Japan, ROK, Russia and the US stated their willingness to provide energy assistance to the DPRK.

The ROK reaffirmed its proposal of July 12th 2005 concerning the provision of 2 million kilowatts of electric power to the DPRK.

4. The Six Parties committed to joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate separate forum.

The Six Parties agreed to explore ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia.

5. The Six Parties agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the afore-mentioned consensus in a phased manner in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action".

6. The Six Parties agreed to hold the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks in Beijing in early November 2005 at a date to be determined through consultations.

THE FEBRUARY 13 AGREEMENT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF  
THE FIFTH ROUND OF THE SIX-PARTY TALKS OF 2007

The Third Session of the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing among the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America from 8 to 13 February 2007.

Mr. Wu Dawei, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Mr. Kim Gye Gwan, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK; Mr. Kenichiro Sasae, Director-General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; Mr. Chun Yung-woo, Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Mr. Alexander Losyukov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; and Mr. Christopher Hill, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State of the United States attended the talks as heads of their respective delegations.

Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei chaired the talks.

I. The Parties held serious and productive discussions on the actions each party will take in the initial phase for the implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005. The Parties reaffirmed their common goal and will to achieve early denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner and reiterated that they would earnestly fulfill their commitments in the Joint Statement. The Parties agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the Joint Statement in a phased manner in line with the principle of "action for action."

II. The Parties agreed to take the following actions in parallel in the initial phase:

1. The DPRK will shut down and seal for the purpose of eventual abandonment the Yongbyon nuclear facility, including the reprocessing facility and invite back IAEA personnel to conduct all necessary monitoring and verifications as agreed between IAEA and the DPRK.

2. The DPRK will discuss with other parties a list of all its nuclear programs as described in the Joint Statement, including plutonium extracted from used fuel rods, that would be abandoned pursuant to the Joint Statement.

3. The DPRK and the US will start bilateral talks aimed at resolving pending bilateral issues and moving toward full diplomatic relations. The US will begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK as a state-sponsor of terrorism and advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to the DPRK.

4. The DPRK and Japan will start bilateral talks aimed at taking steps to normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of unfortunate past and the outstanding issues of concern.

5. Recalling Section 1 and 3 of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, the Parties agreed to cooperate in economic, energy and humanitarian assistance to the DPRK. In this regard, the Parties agreed to the provision of emergency energy assistance to the DPRK in the initial phase. The initial shipment of emergency energy assistance equivalent to 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil (HFO) will commence within next 60 days.

The Parties agreed that the above-mentioned initial actions will be implemented within next 60 days and that they will take coordinated steps toward this goal.

III. The Parties agreed on the establishment of the following Working Groups (WG) in order to carry out the initial actions and for the purpose of full implementation of the Joint Statement:

1. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula
2. Normalization of DPRK-US relations
3. Normalization of DPRK-Japan relations
4. Economy and Energy Cooperation
5. Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism

The WGs will discuss and formulate specific plans for the implementation of the Joint Statement in their respective areas. The WGs shall report to the Six-Party Heads of Delegation Meeting on the progress of their work. In principle, progress in one WG shall not affect progress in other WGs. Plans made by the five WGs will be implemented as a whole in a coordinated manner.

The Parties agreed that all WGs will meet within next 30 days.

IV. During the period of the Initial Actions phase and the next phase—which includes the provision by the DPRK of a complete declaration of all nuclear programs and disablement of all existing nuclear facilities, including graphite-moderated reactors and reprocessing plant—economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to the equivalent of 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil (HFO), including the initial shipment equivalent to 50,000 tons of HFO, will be provided to the DPRK.

The detailed modalities of the said assistance will be determined through consultations and appropriate assessments in the Working Group on Economic and Energy Cooperation.

V. Once the initial actions are implemented, the Six Parties will promptly hold a ministerial meeting to confirm implementation of the



Joint Statement and explore ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia.

VI. The Parties reaffirmed that they will take positive steps to increase mutual trust, and will make joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in Northeast Asia. The directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate separate forum.

VII. The Parties agreed to hold the Sixth Round of the Six-Party Talks on 19 March 2007 to hear reports of WGs and discuss on actions for the next phase.

THE DECLARATION ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOUTH-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS, PEACE AND PROSPERITY (“THE OCTOBER 4 SUMMIT DECLARATION OF 2007”)

In accordance with the agreement between President Roh Moo-hyun of the Republic of Korea and Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, President Roh visited Pyongyang from October 2–4, 2007.

During the visit, there were historic meetings and discussions.

At the meetings and talks, the two sides have reaffirmed the spirit of the June 15 Joint Declaration and had frank discussions on various issues related to realizing the advancement of South-North relations, peace on the Korean Peninsula, common prosperity of the Korean people and unification of Korea.

Expressing confidence that they can forge a new era of national prosperity and unification on their own initiative if they combine their will and capabilities, the two sides declare as follows, in order to expand and advance South-North relations based on the June 15 Joint Declaration:

1. The South and the North shall uphold and endeavor actively to realize the June 15 Declaration.

The South and the North have agreed to resolve the issue of unification on their own initiative and according to the spirit of “by-the-Korean-people-themselves.”

The South and the North will work out ways to commemorate the June 15 anniversary of the announcement of the South-North Joint Declaration to reflect the common will to faithfully carry it out.

2. The South and the North have agreed to firmly transform inter-Korean relations into ties of mutual respect and trust, transcending the differences in ideology and systems.

The South and the North have agreed not to interfere in the internal

affairs of the other and agreed to resolve inter-Korean issues in the spirit of reconciliation, cooperation and reunification.

The South and the North have agreed to overhaul their respective legislative and institutional apparatuses in a bid to develop inter-Korean relations in a reunification-oriented direction.

The South and the North have agreed to proactively pursue dialogue and contacts in various areas, including the legislatures of the two Koreas, in order to resolve matters concerning the expansion and advancement of inter-Korean relations in a way that meets the aspirations of the entire Korean people.

3. The South and the North have agreed to closely work together to put an end to military hostilities, mitigate tensions and guarantee peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The South and the North have agreed not to antagonize each other, i.e., to reduce military tension, and, i.e., to resolve issues in dispute through dialogue and negotiation.

The South and the North have agreed to oppose war on the Korean Peninsula and to adhere strictly to their obligation to nonaggression.

The South and the North have agreed to hold talks between the South's Minister of Defense and the North's Minister of the People's Armed Forces in Pyongyang in November to discuss ways of designating a joint fishing area in the West Sea to avoid accidental clashes and turning it into a peace area and also to discuss measures to build military confidence, including security guarantees for various cooperative projects.

4. The South and the North both recognize the need to end the current armistice regime and build a permanent peace regime. The South and the North have also agreed to work together to advance the matter of having the leaders of the three or four parties directly concerned to convene on the Peninsula and declare an end to the war.

With regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, the South and the North have agreed to work together to implement smoothly the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement and the February 13, 2007 Agreement achieved at the Six-Party Talks.

5. The South and the North have agreed to facilitate, expand, and further develop inter-Korean economic cooperation projects on a continual basis for balanced economic development and co-prosperity on the Korean Peninsula in accordance with the principles of common interests, co-prosperity and mutual aid.

The South and the North reached an agreement on promoting economic

cooperation, including investments, pushing forward with the building of infrastructure and the development of natural resources. Given the special nature of inter-Korean cooperative projects, the South and the North have agreed to grant preferential conditions and benefits to those projects.

The South and the North have agreed to create a “special peace and cooperation zone in the West Sea” encompassing Haeju and vicinity in a bid to proactively push ahead with the creation of a joint fishing zone and maritime peace zone, establishment of a special economic zone, utilization of Haeju harbor, passage of civilian vessels via direct routes in Haeju and the joint use of the Han River estuary.

The South and the North have agreed to complete the first-phase construction of the Kaesŏng Industrial Complex at an early date and embark on the second-stage development project. The South and the North have agreed to open freight rail services between Munsan and Bongdong and promptly complete various institutional measures, including those related to passage, communication, and customs clearance procedures.

The South and the North have agreed to discuss repairs of the Kaesŏng-Sinuiju railroad and the Kaesŏng-Pyongyang expressway for their joint use.

The South and the North have agreed to establish cooperative complexes for shipbuilding in Anbyeon and Nampo, while continuing cooperative projects in various areas such as agriculture, health and medical services and environmental protection.

The South and the North have agreed to upgrade the status of the existing Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation Promotion Committee to a Joint Committee for Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation to be headed by deputy prime minister-level officials.

6. The South and the North have agreed to boost exchanges and cooperation in the social areas covering history, language, education, science and technology, culture and arts, and sports to highlight the long history and excellent culture of the Korean people.

The South and the North have agreed to carry out tours to Mt. Baekdu and open nonstop flight services between Seoul and Mt. Baekdu for this purpose.

The South and the North have agreed to send a joint cheering squad from both sides to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The squad will use the Gyeongui Railway Line for the first-ever joint Olympic cheering.

7. The South and the North have agreed to actively promote humanitarian cooperation projects.

The South and the North have agreed to expand reunion of separated

family members and their relatives and promote exchanges of video messages.

To this end, the South and the North have agreed to station resident representatives from each side at the reunion center at Mt. Geumgang when it is completed and regularize reunions of separated family members and their relatives.

The South and the North have agreed to actively cooperate in case of emergencies, including natural disasters, according to the principles of fraternal love, humanitarianism and mutual assistance.

8. The South and the North have agreed to increase cooperation to promote the interests of the Korean people and the rights and interests of overseas Koreans on the international stage.

- The South and the North have agreed to hold inter-Korean prime ministers' talks for the implementation of this Declaration and have agreed to hold the first round of meetings in November 2007 in Seoul.
- The South and the North have agreed that their highest authorities will meet frequently for the advancement of relations between the two sides.

*Oct. 4, 2007*

*Pyongyang*

*Roh Moo-hyun*

*President, Republic of Korea*

*Kim Jong Il*

*Chairman, National Defense Commission*

*Democratic People's Republic of Korea*



# Notes

## FOREWORD TO THE KOREAN-LANGUAGE EDITION

1. [South Korea suffered a severe foreign currency crisis in 1997. In November, just a month before the presidential election that was to bring victory to Kim Dae-jung, the South Korean government had to ask the IMF for a bailout. Under the IMF management system, the Korean people had to witness the bankruptcy of a great number of businesses, including several big conglomerates, as well as unprecedented mass unemployment.—*Trans.*]

2. [The Kim Dae-jung administration (1998–2003) was the first to come into force through a peaceful turnover of political power in modern Korean history. This government, starting in the midst of South Korean economic crisis, set up three aims: economic reform, more democracy, and engagement with North Korea.—*Trans.*]

3. Paik Nak-chung, *Pundan ch'eje pyōnhyōkūi kongbukil* [The path of practice for transforming the division system] (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1994).

## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

1. The first was *Pundan ch'eje pyōnhyōkūi kongbukil* [The path of practice for transforming the division system] (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1994). This book will be referred to hereafter as *The Path of Practice*.

2. *Hanbandosik t'ong'il, hyōnjae chinhaenghyōng* [Unification Korean style, present progressive tense] (2006) and *Ōdiga chungdomyō ōtchaesō pyōnhyōg in'ga?* [Where is the middle way and wherefore transformation?] (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 2009).

3. This choice probably played a role in fetching this book another honor: the 2009 annual congress of the East Asia Publishers Conference announced the selection of “100 Books of East Asia,” including twenty-six titles in Korean (from the mid-twentieth century on); and the present volume was one of them.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Most of these pronouncements are available in the present book and the immediately preceding one, *The Path of Practice*. Similar discussions may also be found in my collection of literary criticism, *Minjok munhaküi sae tan'gye* [The new stage of national literature] (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1990). This book will be referred to hereafter as *The New Stage*.

2. In English, the expression "Cold War regime" probably is used more frequently, but the word "regime" in this sense is rendered in Korean by *ch'eje*, the same word for translating "system."

3. To see the complicated character of the division ideology, see chapters 5 and 9 in this volume. And for comments I offered in 1987 on regional conflicts, see "Pundan sidaeüi chiyök kamjöng" [Regional feelings in the age of division], in *The Path of Practice*.

4. It merits mentioning here that "NDR" (national democratic revolution), another radical political line of the 1980s, made some theoretical advancement over "NL" (national liberation) and "PD" (people's democracy), at least in terms of the reunification issue. (See, for an example, Yi Chöng-no, "The Line of 'Reunification Movement' on the Basis of the Vision of 'Labor Emancipation'," *Nodong haebang* [Labor emancipation], October, 1989.) However, apart from the fact that its followers were extremely sectarian in their political practice, NDR was far from satisfactory because they also failed to achieve what was really needed at that time, that is, a dialectical sublation (*Aufhebung*) of various political positions including not only NL and PD but "liberal democracy" as well.

5. [The Korean National Community Unification Formula, presented by the Roh Tae-woo (No T'ae-u) government in September 1989, was a program for a self-reliant, peaceful, and democratic reunification. It proposed a roadmap that, starting with a restoration of trust between North and South and subsequent summit meetings, and passing through a transitional confederation, would eventually lead to a general election and the building of a united democratic republic on the whole peninsula. The formula was again confirmed in President Roh's address to the UN general assembly in September 1991.—*Trans.*]

6. [The Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between North and South Korea, or the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, was signed in 1991 at the fifth high-level talk between North and South, and took effect in early 1992. It confirmed the principles of reconciliation, nonaggression, cultural and economic exchange, and cooperation. It has provided an important rationale for a peaceful approach between two Koreas despite tight relations after the nuclear crisis set off by North Korea's 1993 withdrawal from the NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty).—*Trans.*]

7. In an exquisite compromise, the leaders of the two Koreas did include in their June 15 Joint Declaration of 2000 in Pyongyang a provision (Article 2) that somewhat ambiguously embraced the confederation scheme: "Acknowledging that there are common elements in the South's proposal for a confed-

eration and the North's proposal for a federation of lower stage as the formulae for achieving reunification, the South and the North agreed to promote reunification in that direction."

8. See chapter 6 in this volume.

9. It has already turned out that these cries were mostly to no avail and there was no correct foreseeing of the future—still less defending of the economy from the financial crisis of 1997. But it is likewise obvious that since the crisis, everybody has become aware of the importance of economic problems.

10. [A North Korean submarine was stranded in the eastern shore of South Korea near Kangnŏng in 1996, and almost all the crew committed suicide under the command of the captain. A few North Korean commandos on board the submarine, however, tried to escape by infiltrating the nearby mountain areas. They were eventually stamped out by Southern forces after a forty-nine-day combat campaign, but this unplanned military showdown claimed a dozen lives and had enormous costs for the South.—*Trans.*]

11. The picture has changed considerably over the years: Seoul's attitude became a lot more active during the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Mu-hyun years, while the George W. Bush administration's aid policy seemed both niggardly and short-sighted; but then, this is precisely what South Korea's attitude returned to with the advent of the Lee Myung-bak administration in February 2008.

12. [A popular revolution in 1960 overthrew the First Republic of South Korea under Rhee Syngman (Yi Sŏng-man). Triggered by university students' protests against electoral irregularities aimed at extending Rhee's twelve-year tenure, it became known as the "student revolution." It led to Rhee's resignation and the transition to the Second Republic.—*Trans.*]

13. [The June Uprising of 1987 was a popular democratic movement protesting maneuvers by the Chun Doo-hwan regime and its ruling party to prolong its rule through an indirect presidential election. Mass rallies continued throughout the country for twenty days and achieved some democratic changes, including a direct presidential election conceded in the declaration of June 29 by then ruling party presidential nominee, Roh Tae-woo.—*Trans.*]

14. [A coalition of twenty-seven people's [*minjung*] movement organizations formed in 1991 and dissolved in 2008. It worked as a rallying force for the national democratic movement, often in conflict with the government.—*Trans.*]

15. [The Association of Writers for National Literature [Minjok munhak chakka hoeüi], one of the two largest writers' groups in South Korea and probably the most prestigious, was founded in 1974 as the Council of Activist Writers for Freedom [Chayu silch'ŏn munin hyŏpüihoe], and at present goes by the name of the Writers' Association of Korea [Hankuk chakka hoeüi]. The author is one of the founders of AWNL.—*Trans.*]

16. [The June Uprising was immediately followed by the "Great Labor Struggles of 1987," that is, the biggest wave of labor struggles since the Korean War. Industrial workers could not join the mass street demonstrations of the June Uprising, but, in the wake of the June 29 Declaration, they began to fight



for their right to organize unions. The ensuing years saw a dramatic increase in unionization and political mobilization of the South Korean working class despite extremely repressive government and corporate responses.—*Trans.*]

17. [The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions is one of the two nationwide labor organizations in South Korea. Founded in 1995, it has taken a more progressive position than the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, which has existed since 1946.—*Trans.*]

18. [The Confederation of College Students' Associations in Korea was a major dissident student organization. It was founded in 1993, based on the realignment of Ch'ondaehyöp [National Council of University Student Representatives], which had been leading the student movement since the late 1980s. The confederation has kept up its struggle for the reunification of Korea and often has been criminalized for alleged pro-North Korean activities.—*Trans.*]

19. [Under the 1994 Geneva agreement between the United States and the DPRK, North Korea would freeze its nuclear program in return for two light-water reactors. Construction of the reactors, agreed to be completed in 2008, began in 1997 and came to a stop in 2003, and then was eventually canceled in 2006.—*Trans.*]

20. See my "Pundan sidaeüi kyegüp üisik" [Class consciousness in the age of division], in *The Path of Practice*.

21. Peter J. Taylor, "Modernities and Movements: Antisystemic Reaction to World Hegemony," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 20 (winter 1997), 1–17.

22. The argument that ecologically oriented thinking and movements "are not possible without overcoming the way of thinking based on the framework of class and nation" (Kwon Hyök-böm, "Muösi Saengtae Chihyangjök sagorül karomaknün'ga" [What hinders ecology-oriented thinking], *Ch'angchak-kwapip'yöng* [Creation and criticism, or *Quarterly Changbi*] 95 [spring 1997], 337) holds as long as discourses of class and nation are confined within the existing narrow framework. However, as I have already noted, class discourse in theories of the world-system and the division system transcends the boundary of a nation-state. The theory of the division system does not discard "national discourse" or political actions in terms of the nation-state, but it decisively differs from the familiar simplistic discourses of class in its recognition of the double aspects those practices have, namely, both as a means for reacting to the reality of the world economy and a way of concealing that very reality. Therefore, national movements or class movements in terms of an individual nation-state are considered indispensable elements in dealing with the global ecological crisis as well, but, at the same time, found liable to function as an obstacle to the formation of global antisystemic consciousness, including the ecological.

23. A 1997 UNESCO statistic, publicized by the Ministry of Education, reportedly shows that South Korea ranks thirty-second on the world human development index, while it ranks seventy-third in gender empowerment (that is, women's social empowerment) (*Hankyoreh Sinmun* [Han'györe daily], September 18, 1997, 1)—though I am not sure about the reliability or the exact

implication of those data. Japan, ranking seventh and thirty-fourth respectively, also shows a considerable discrepancy between the two indexes, but to a much smaller extent than South Korea.

24. For a discussion of the theoretical predicaments of women's liberation discourse in postmodern theories that endorse the importance of "difference" and denounce "essentialism," see Kim Yŏng-hŭi, Yi Myŏng-ho, and Kim Yŏng-mi, "P'ostŭmodŏn yŏsŏng haebangnonŭi dilemma" [The dilemma of postmodern theories of women's liberation], *Yŏsŏng kwa sahoe* [Women and society] 3 (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1992).

25. See *Minjok t'ongilŭl aptangginŭn kukhak* [Korean studies for expediting national unification], conference material for the Second International Conference on Korean Studies, Andong University, October 3–4, 1997, 143.

26. See n16 above.

27. See his "Minjok t'ongilŭl mosaekhanŭn kukhak" [Korean studies seeking reunification], in *Uri kukhakŭi panghyangkwa kwaje* [Directions and tasks for Korean studies in Korea], proceedings of the first conference held by the division of Korean studies, Andong University (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1997).

28. President Yi's second question was what to think about the two principles of "liberal democracy and market economy," which our government has proposed for the reunified Korean peninsula. During the general discussion I set forth my view on this question as follows: "The two principles of liberal democracy and market economy form the very basic premise of our government's idea for reunification, and they have considerable support in our society now. I'd like to indicate what to think about these principles in terms of overcoming the division system. My position is that neither of the two Koreas amounts to a real socialist state or a real liberal democracy, since I believe, contrary to what is usually said, that the division of Korea into North and South does not represent a situation in which socialism and liberal democracy confront each other, but a reality in which two half-states—one proclaiming itself as a socialist state and the other as a liberal democracy—are intertwined within the framework of the division system. Of course, there exists a difference of degree in the discrepancy between the stated idea and reality. As for North Korea, I think it is quite far from any genuine socialist state; as for South Korea, it has drawn somewhat closer toward liberal democracy as it has been successful in economic development and achieved some democracy through the South Korean people's painful struggle against dictatorships, but there's still a long way to go. It would, therefore, be considered a kind of progress if the reunified Korean peninsula could attain a level of liberal democracy higher than (or on a par with) what South Korea currently can show. The question is whether this is possible. If we complacently assume that this much of liberal democracy will do, or that at least the present level of liberal democracy will be secured if South Korea takes an exclusive initiative in the reunification process, I am afraid we won't get even that much. Unless we think through what the strengths and weaknesses of a liberal democracy are, and what other forms of democracy (such as people's democracy) are like,

and how we will achieve the most appropriate kind of democracy for the unified Korean peninsula, and unless we also ponder what specific stages we need to go through in order to achieve it, my feeling is that we shall fail to attain or preserve even the inadequate liberal democracy that we now have. So I suggest that we should dream big, even while we must attend to everyday problems, starting with the small ones.

“The same can be said for the market economy. There is no single country that can be free from the logic of the world market. Vietnam offers the best example: it achieved reunification through a communist victory but is now trying to become a part of the world capitalist market, even at a lower status than South Korea. Likewise, the Korean peninsula also must remain a part of the world market regardless of by whom and how the reunification is accomplished, and it is proper that we should do our best to keep our economic status from becoming lower than that currently enjoyed in South Korea. But together with such a practical attitude, we should also work toward an insight into what is destructive and devastating for civilization about the market economy, where the way to reach beyond the market economy may lie, and how much of a contribution our reunification can make on that journey. Only then shall we manage significantly to realize even the liberal-democratic values on the reunified Korean peninsula, and to maintain such quality of life as may be possible within the capitalist world-system.”

29. [The historical statement agreed by the authorities of the North and South in 1972. It pronounced three principles of reunification: national autonomy, peace, and grand national unity. See Appendix B for the text of the statement.—*Trans.*]

30. [A foreign policy adopted by the Roh Tae-woo regime, which opened South Korea up to socialist countries. South Korea signed a series of treaties of amity with Hungary (1989), the Soviet Union (1990), and China (1992). President Roh’s successful Northern Policy isolated North Korea, whose leaders had entertained hopes for corresponding normalization process with the United States and Japan.—*Trans.*]

## CHAPTER 2

1. [On May 18, 1980, in protest against General Chun Doo-hwan and his military circle’s coup by extending martial law throughout the nation, students and citizens staged massive demonstration in Kwangju, demanding the lift of martial law, the disbandment of the newly emerged military circle (its leading figures were Chun and General Roh Tae-woo) and, above all, the release of Kim Dae-jung, who had been arrested by the new military power elite the day before, later to be sentenced to death by the military court. The military regime dispatched airborne troops to stamp out the protest, and more than 200 civilians were killed and thousands injured during the ten days of uprising. The U.S. government remained silent on this massacre, triggering anti-American sentiments among Korean students.—*Trans.*]

2. Strictly speaking, this “age” denotes a stage or phase within the more familiar term “the age of division.” The slight element of exaggeration in “the age of the IMF” is registered by quotation marks. The word *sidae* used in the Korean original may be variously rendered as era, age, or period.

3. See chapter 10 in this volume.

4. [“North Wind” is a figurative term for the attempts by South Korean ruling forces to capitalize on tensions between the North and South to obtain favorable election results. In April 1996, when South Korea was facing a general election, for instance, there was a shooting incident in the DMZ near P’anmunchŏm involving North Korean soldiers. Suspicions arose of South Korean instigation, or some kind of collusion between the North and South. See n2 in chapter 5 of this volume.—*Trans.*]

5. [The four-party talks, or the Beijing talks, were first proposed in 1996 by the U.S. president, Bill Clinton, and President Kim Young-sam (Kim Yŏng-sam) of South Korea and were held six times from 1997 through 1999.—*Trans.*]

6. [The March 1 Independence Movement was the first nationwide Korean independence movement during the Japanese colonial rule, which significantly affected contemporary national movements in China and India. The name refers to an event that occurred on March 1, 1919, the funeral day of Kojong, the last Chosŏn emperor. During a series of peaceful and unarmed demonstrations that began that day and continued for about two months throughout Korea, more than 7,000 Koreans were killed by the Japanese army.—*Trans.*]

7. [More than three million citizens sold gold to the banks to help repay the South Korean foreign debt in 1997 and 1998. The value of gold collected amounted to more than \$2 billion.—*Trans.*]

8. Bishop Ch’oe Ch’ang-mu, “The Direction to Be Taken by the Civilian Activities to Aid the North in 1998,” 4–5, paper presented at the policy colloquium on “Humanitarian Aid to the North under the New Administration” sponsored by the Korean Sharing Movement [Uri minjok sŏro topki undong]. I myself have offered a similar opinion in the “Conversation” in *Quarterly Changbi* 99 (spring 1998), 30–31.

9. See Ch’oe Wŏn-sik, “Segyech’ejŏi pakkasŭn ŏpda” [There is no outside the world-system], in *Quarterly Changbi* 100 (summer 1999). My brief comments are also found in the same pages.

10. *The Path of Practice*, 236, 237.

## CHAPTER 3

1. Bruce Cumings, “The Seventy Years’ Crisis and World Politics in the mid-1990s” (translated as “Ch’ilsip nyŏng’anŭi wigiwa onŭlŭi segye chŏngch’i”); and Haruki Wada (Wada Haruki), “‘Tongbuk asia kongdongŭi chipkwa chosŏn pando” [“The common house of Northeast Asia” and the Korean peninsula].

2. Regarding this question I once wrote in the chapter “Pundan sidaeŭi minjok kamjŏng” [National sentiment in the age of division] in *The Path of*

*Practice* (1988): “A fairly prolonged period of division tends to produce certain feelings and ties peculiar to the South or the North—in addition to ‘regional sentiments’ exclusive to certain regions like Kyöngsang-do, Chölla-do, or Kangwon-do, and ‘national sentiment’ at the level of the whole peninsula. These feelings and ties are one of the sources that can be used most easily by what Professor Kang Man-kil dubbed ‘division statism’ in distinction from true nationalism. Yet the feeling of oneness among South Korean people should not be directly equated with the ideology of the division state. Its potential is ambivalent—it may either evolve into national sentiment of a healthy kind, or it may go against it” (*The Path of Practice*, 100).

3. The discourse of national literature was frequently identified with the “NL” (National Liberation) camp because, in addition to the very name “national literature,” it had theoretical conflicts chiefly with the “PD” (People’s Democracy) camp, who, after all, were more advanced than the other in theoretical elaboration. But it was none other than in the name of national literature that already in the mid-1980s one warned of “the danger of nullifying, in the name of ‘national liberation,’ the scientific recognition of our reality that discourses of national literature and people’s literature have painstakingly achieved, and of underestimating the actual potential of the [South Korean] people.” (See my “Minjok munhaküi minjungsöngkwa yesulsöng” [The popular and artistic attributes of national literature], in *The New Stage of National Literature* (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1990), p. 57. This volume henceforth will be referred to as *The New Stage*.)

4. See my “Minjok munhaknonkwa pundan munje” [The discourse of national literature and the question of division], and “Onülüi minjok munhak-kwa minjok undong” [National literature and national movements today], in *The New Stage*, 159–62 and 78–84, respectively.

5. See my “T’ong’il undongkwa munhak” [The reunification movement and literature], in *The New Stage*, 127–29. For an English version, see Paik, “The Reunification Movement and Literature,” trans. Kenneth M. Wells, in *South Korea’s Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, edited by Kenneth M. Wells (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995).

6. [This article was retitled and included as chapter 3 of the original Korean-language book. The present translation, however, excised the chapter, for the complicated context surrounding the debate is deemed unnecessary for the English-language reader.—*Trans.*]

7. Above all I was disappointed that the discussion was turning into a kind of verbal hassling, instead of meeting my expectation for a collaborative endeavor to elucidate the reality of division in a more systematic and holistic manner and to look for proper guidelines for praxis. For instance, in response to my pointing out that Son confused “the policy intentions” of the respective governments with “the logic of the system,” he retorted that when it came to such confusion it was rather my own invention (“Reconsiderations,” 296–97). Now, *even if* what I called the “common interest” referred to “the policy intention” (which was far from the case, for I meant of course objective interests as

part of the logic of the system, and the phrase “interests or policy intentions” was Professor Son’s, not mine), such a retort might prove grist for my personal edification but is hardly a contribution to the debate itself. Moreover, I was distressed by his continuing neglect of even the commonsense fact of the qualitative differences of Korea’s division from either Germany’s or Vietnam’s; I felt him way beyond my limited power of persuasion when he insisted that the Soviet and East European bloc, though now in ruins, had, while it had lasted, constituted “the socialist world-system” quite equivalent to the capitalist world-system; and I was just dumbfounded when he asked in triumphant reproach why, if North Korea was a part of the same division system as the South, there had been no corresponding phase of a national security campaign after the death of Chairman Kim Il-sung. Nonetheless, I will refer in this paper to some of the comments he made in “Reconsiderations” and the panel discussion, when deemed appropriate.

8. Yun says: “I have persisted in my criticism, because the point was to criticize the deficiency of imagination that could recognize the rule of imperialism only as semi-feudality.” Panel discussion, “Hyöndan’gye han’guk sahoeü söngkyökkwa minjok undongü kwaje” [The character of South Korean society and the task of the national movement at the present stage], in *Changbi* 1987 (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 1987), 58.

9. Although it is a somewhat different topic, I would like briefly to comment on my “misreading” in which I extended Professor Son’s argument—that the “socialist states” including North Korea are taking part in the world-system as units of the interstate system but do not constitute part of the capitalist world-economy—to his understanding of Wallerstein as a whole. As he himself points out (“Reconsiderations,” 294–95), his position clearly diverges from Wallerstein’s, and I have on no occasion misunderstood this fact. Perhaps I somewhat overstated the case when, in finding fault with his quotation (as a way of expounding his position) of the very passage in which Wallerstein defined the interstate system as the superstructure of the world-economy, I read it as evidence of his insufficient knowledge of Wallerstein’s work. But the real issue lies elsewhere: if the “interstate system” is something other than the superstructure of the capitalist world-economy, as Son, contrary to Wallerstein, would have it, then what on earth might it be the superstructure of? True, one might do away with the very notion of base and superstructure, and simply juxtapose the world-economy and the interstate system as two discrete things. Or one might even put forward the idiosyncratic idea that the interstate system is the superstructure simultaneously shared by the two heterogeneous bases of capitalist and socialist world economies. But is either the actual position of Professor Son’s? Some scientific investigation seems in order indeed.

10. Immanuel Wallerstein, “The TimeSpace of World-Systems Analysis: A Philosophical Essay,” *Historical Geography* 23:1–2 (1993), 8.

11. “Therefore, just as on the theoretical terrain we have to perform different levels of analyses simultaneously according to the nature of the object, so

on that of praxis we ought to be capable of waging simultaneous battles: first, the long struggle with the contradiction of capitalism as participants in the world-system; second, a more direct confrontation with the ‘contradiction of the division’ as participants in a subsystem named the division system; finally, daily struggles for (say) domestic democratic reforms as members of South Korean society, which constitutes a still lower subclass of that subsystem. And to say this is altogether different from just ‘horizontally enumerating’ the various contradictions that the South Korean people have to overcome” (from my “Recent Developments”).

12. These problems in Pak Sun-sōng’s position were also pointed out by Son Ho-ch’ōl and Paek Yōng-sō in the panel discussion cited above (139–40).

13. Wallerstein’s particular contribution lies in his contention that at least in the regions that have already been incorporated into the capitalist world-economy, the proletarianizing of the half-proletariat goes on *despite its being against the interest of the capitalist class*. Instead, capitalism keeps on seeking profits by incorporating new regions into the world economy and creating new half-proletariats there. Obviously this process cannot go on endlessly. See Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983), chapter 1.

14. I have reservations, however, about directly linking with fascism the whole discourse of “transcending modernity” of the Kyoto School in the early 1940s. Though ignorant about the contexts of Japanese intellectual history, I feel that in order for progressive Japanese intellectuals to get over their alienation from the sentiments of the common people and their consequent ineffectuality, a more elaborate and immanent critique of the discourse of “transcending modernity,” such as that offered by Takeuchi Yoshimi, would be required. See Takeuchi Yoshimi, “Kindai no chokoku” [Transcending modernity] (1959), in *Nihon to ajia* [Japan and Asia] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1993).

15. Of course, this is not to deny the world-historical significance of the anti-imperial struggles of the Vietnamese people, but only to point out that their type of unification does not apply to the Korean peninsula, and, also, that it was a particular way of coping with a task that belonged historically to a lower dimension than the overcoming of the division system in Korea.

16. The English word “modern” is translated either as *kūndae* (the long historical period since the late sixteenth century, still in progress) or *hyōndae* (the contemporary, or a very recent period), which is a sign of the relative richness, at least on this issue, of the Korean language (and Chinese and Japanese, which have the same vocabulary). Thus, if we East Asians were leading the global discourse of modernity, Western people might be using *contemporary* or some other word to designate our *hyōndae*, while taking extreme care not to use *modern* for it, as its meaning could then be confused with *kūndae*. But things are unfortunately quite otherwise, so that we must rack our brains deciding which term we should adopt every time we translate the ambiguous English word. On the other hand, *modernity* in English has the meaning of both *kūndaesōng* (characteristics or aspects of the modern period) and *kūndae* in the sense of the modern age. Controversies over the identity of *kūndaesōng*



may be something we cannot help, but we needn't invite added confusion by using *kūndaesōng* where *kūndae* is the right translation.

17. "Truth" is sometimes rendered in the upper case to evoke the difference between the two Korean words, *chilli* [ultimate or fundamental truth] and *chinsil* [true facts or reality], the latter always in the lower case.

18. Here I transcribe verbatim his quotation of my words in his review (275): "It is not so much that correct cognition—probably meant for objective truth—provides a correct means to appropriate action, thereby ensuring its success, as that a theory issuing from the questioning about 'fundamental truth' is in itself inseparable from practice, and has the power of Truth that reveals itself through practice" (*The New Stage*, 348). Now, it might look like nitpicking, but I should say that one needs to be more precise in quoting others. The parenthetical "probably meant for objective truth" is no doubt an interpolation by Yi himself, and even if the confusion thus caused might not last long, it would nevertheless have been better at least to put the words "objective truth" within quotation marks, since the point of my writing was to take issue with what he (along with many others) would call "objective truth." However, the term "fundamental truth" has no quotation marks in my original, and if he kindly intended to emphasize the intention of the author rather than inciting skepticism in the reader, it would have been more appropriate to put the whole of "the questioning about fundamental truth" in quotes. For I was not positing "fundamental truth" as some mystical entity in opposition to "objective truth," but was arguing that "Truth is not an object or entity which humans may—or forever may not—know; but is that which allows us, by leading us beyond the distinction of being and nothingness, this-ness and that-ness, to know what should be known and do what should be done, day by day" (*ibid.*). In other words, instead of absolutizing what is commonly called the "objective truth," we should keep the stance of *questioning* about a *more fundamental* truth (or Truth).

19. I will skip an examination of this issue here, because, apart from severe limitations of space, I have already discussed it, though with insufficient thoroughness, in sections 4 and 5 of my essay "Chakp'um, silch'ōn, chilli" [Work, practice, truth], in *The New Stage*; and in section 4 of "Segye sijangūi noliwa inmuon kyoyukūi inyōm" [The Logic of the World Market and the Idea of Humane Education], in *The Path of Practice*.

20. See on this point Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Modern, Anti, Post and Neo," *New Left Review* 210 (March–April 1995).

21. [The fourth republic of Korea, which lasted from 1972 to 1981. It started with Park Chung Hee's palatial coup d'état called the October Yushin, which term, an obvious namesake for the Meiji Ishin of nineteenth-century imperial Japan, brought to many people's minds Park's pro-Japanese career. The new Yushin constitution secured Park a lifelong tenure and very seriously damaged basic human rights and democratic principles.—*Trans.*]

22. "Original modernization theory transformed Weber's overtly Western-centric theory of world religions into a universal account of global change that



still culminated in the social structure and culture of the postwar Western world. Eisenstadt proposes to make modernization itself the historical equivalent of a world religion, which relativizes it, on the one hand, and suggests the possibility of selective indigenous appropriation, on the other”(Alexander, 92).

#### CHAPTER 4

1. This essay is based on a presentation at the FRONT DMZ international conference hosted by the Society for the DMZ Arts & Culture Movement, August 11, 1995, Seoul, Korea. The conference was held as part of a variety of events, including a series of art exhibitions for the abolition of the Military Demarcation Line and the ecological preservation of the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone). It enjoyed the participation of many people from various fields, including artists and scholars from Germany, the United States, and elsewhere.

2. David Harvey, “The Nature of Environment: the Dialectics of Social and Environmental Change,” *Socialist Register 1993* (London: Merlin Press, 1993), 25.

#### CHAPTER 5

1. [The population density in Seoul and its environs is extreme, with 49 percent of the South Korean population living in the area as of 2010, causing a series of social problems including further marginalization of already ailing regional economies.—*Trans.*]

2. At about the time of this talk some unusual disturbances took place along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) near P’anmunchŏm, including trespassing by some North Korean soldiers across the Military Demarcation Line. Press coverage of these incidents no doubt influenced the outcome of the elections (in which the government party again emerged as the largest group in the National Assembly) to a considerable extent, as is widely acknowledged. [P’anmunchŏm is a border village within the Demilitarized Zone established jointly by North Korea and the United Nations Command. Since the 1953 Korean War Armistice Agreement was signed here, it was formally named the JSA (Joint Security Area) and has long been a meeting place for the two sides.—*Trans.*]

3. The political situation underwent still another change in 1997, when the reform drive of the Kim Young-sam government came to virtual bankruptcy, and as competition for a “moderate” image began with a view toward the upcoming presidential election.

4. That is, the sentiments of the Taegu and Kyŏngbuk areas, the home region of Chun and Roh.

5. [A full-scale joint military training exercise by U.S. forces and the South Korean military held between 1976 and 1993. From the first, North Korea regarded Team Spirit as part of the United States’ preemptive nuclear attack plan against them. From 1994 to 1996, it continued to be scheduled but was repeatedly canceled to encourage North Korea to disable its nuclear weapons

program. The annual U.S.–South Korea joint military exercise resumed and continues under different names.—*Trans.*]

6. [The general election of 1996 held after Kim Dae-jung's return to the political scene in 1995. The election result reflected regional divides: the ruling party won almost half of the seats, and Kim Dae-jung's party and the party of Kim Jong-pil (Kim Chong-p'il) swept the seats in their respective primary regions. Kim Dae-jung formed a coalition with Kim Jong-pil and was elected as president in the following presidential election of 1997.—*Trans.*]

7. [Taegu was the power base of three presidents, Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo-hwan, and Roh Tae-woo, all of them military men, but under President Kim Young-sam (whose particular base is Pusan and South Kyöngsang Province rather than Taegu and North Kyöngsang) it became an open ground without a hegemonic figure. Since Kim Dae-jung's presidency (1998–2003), however, it reverted to virtual one-party rule and today remains a stronghold of Hannaradang (the Grand National Party) and Pak Kün-hye, Park Chung Hee's daughter and one of its main leaders.—*Trans.*]

8. This and many other legal restrictions have been either removed or softened under Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Roh Mu-hyun, but at the time of this talk the prohibition against third-party interventions was so strict as to include any party outside the company union (i.e., even the industrial union or federation of unions directly concerned) as a third party.

9. [A private organization of army officers clandestinely formed in 1963 with the initiative of the eleventh graduates of the Military Academy under the implicit sponsorship of Park Chung Hee. Chun Doo-hwan, Roh Tae-woo, and other members appropriated important positions in the army, forming the power elite inside the South Korean military. Hanahoe made possible Chun Doo-hwan's military coup in 1979 after the assassination of Park, and its members enjoyed a monopoly of political power in the Chun regime. It was dissolved in 1993 as a result of military reforms made by Kim Young-sam.—*Trans.*]

## CHAPTER 6

1. [Habermas's remarks were published in English translation as "National Unification and Popular Sovereignty," *New Left Review* 219 (September–October 1996).—*Trans.*]

2. Paik, "South Korea: Unification and the Democratic Challenge," *New Left Review* 197 (January–February 1993), 79.

3. Martin Hart-Landsberg, "Korean Unification: Learning from the German Experience," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 26:1 (1995), 72.

4. Habermas, "National Unification and Popular Sovereignty," 12.

5. *Ibid.*, 5. He even remarks earlier in the speech that "national unification . . . fell into the lap of the citizens of the old Federal Republic at a lucky moment of world history"(4).

6. *Ibid.*, 6, his emphasis.

7. *Ibid.*, 8.

8. See Paik, "South Korea," especially 76–78. A similar though briefer discussion is available in German: Paik, "Die Lehren aus der Vereinigung Deutschlands für Korea," in *Deutschland und Korea: Begegnung in der Teilung*, edited by Bernhard Moltmann and Rainer Werning (Hannover: Schmitt, 1993), 42–43. More detailed treatments of the notion are available in Korean, for example in *The Path of Practice* and the subsequent debate in *Quarterly Changbi* 84 and 85 (summer and autumn 1994), and 87 and 89 (spring and autumn 1995).

9. Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Agonies of Liberalism: What Hope Progress?," *New Left Review* 204 (March–April 1994), 10.

10. Habermas, "National Unification," 8.

11. *Ibid.*, 6.

12. Hart-Landsberg, "Korean Unification," 67–68. The idea, however, of a crucial lack of a national discourse is mine.

13. Habermas, "National Unification," 9.

14. *Ibid.*, 10.

15. Perry Anderson, *A Zone of Engagement* (London: Verso, 1992), 331.

## CHAPTER 7

1. [The international symposium "Vision for the Korean Race in the Twenty-First Century" was held in Iksan, October 11–12, 1996, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Wŏnkwang University. The university was founded by Wŏn Buddhist order, a new religious order that Sotaesan Pak Chung-bin founded in 1916. See Chapter 10 for a discussion of the state-building proposal of Song Chŏngsan, the second Prime Dharma Master of Wŏn Buddhism.—*Trans.*]

2. [Master *Sotaesan*, combining a persuasion of Buddhism, various traditional Korean and Asian thought, and modern scientific thought, founded Wŏn Buddhism in 1916. Wŏn means "circle," a symbol of the ultimate truth. Its founding motto is "With this Great Opening of matter, / Let there be a Great Opening of spirit." *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism*, new English ed. (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Publishers, 2006).—*Trans.*]

3. See 110 in chapter 1 of this volume.

4. [In 1996, six ethnic Korean shipmates of Chinese nationality who worked for a South Korean deep-sea fishing vessel teamed up to kill eleven other sailors, including the captain and boatswain, in response to the harsh treatment they suffered at the hands of the South Korean sailors. All six are now in prison serving life sentences.—*Trans.*]

5. This point was emphasized especially by the Chinese-Korean scholars attending the conference. A discussant further asked how South Koreans, who could not attain harmony with Chinese-Koreans, could achieve a reunification embracing North Koreans.

6. As always, there were during the discussion session of the conference some skeptical comments on the possibility of such an alliance. Relevant pas-

sages in chapters 1 and 10 of this book may offer an additional answer. That said, as to the remark that my presentation was too critical of South Korea and my idea of a compound state bore resemblance to North Korea's proposal for a "Koryŏ Democratic Confederal Republic," I did not address it at the scene because there were other more important topics to discuss; nor do I feel the need to explain myself here.

7. [See chapter 10 in this volume for a detailed discussion of the outlook on state building of Song Chŏngsan, the Second Dharma Master of *Wŏn* Buddhism.—*Trans.*]

## CHAPTER 8

1. This article was originally presented in 1994 at an international conference held at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, and published in *The Cultures of Globalization*, edited by Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). A Korean version was published in *Naeilŭl yŏnŭn chakka* [Writers who open the future] 5 (January–February 1997), with the present chapter as an addendum.

2. Ch'oe Wŏn-sik, "Minjok munhak chakka hoeŭiga ponŭn t'ongil undongŭi panghyang" [The Association of Writers for National Literature on the direction of the unification movement], *Naeilŭl yŏnŭn chakka* [Writers who open the future] 10 (November–December 1997).

3. Kim Yŏng-ho, "Chakkawa t'ongil munje" [Writers and the problem of unification], *Naeilŭl yŏnŭn chakka* 10 (November–December 1997).

4. Kim criticizes Ch'oe's notion of a compound state in Korea, saying that "it overlooks the issue of the concept of sovereignty, the most important component of a nation-state."<sup>(27)</sup> This might do as a rhetorical forerunner to the all-too-unimpeachable advice that "for [Ch'oe's] argument to become a more solid one, further research needs to be done toward a practical answer to the issue of sovereignty that lies unresolved between the North and the South" (*ibid.*). But I cannot agree with him if he means that it is impossible to work out the sovereignty issue because a compound state is involved, or that Ch'oe actually overlooked the issue of sovereignty. As Kim himself mentions, the sovereignty issue remains "unresolved between the North and the South," each of which is laying claim to the status of a unitary state with sovereignty over the entire peninsula, and nobody has so far come up with a magic formula to resolve the issue. To my knowledge, however, "compound state" is a most extensive concept covering all kinds of states except a unitary state, including all varieties of federations and confederations; therefore, to bring it up in the Korean context amounts to a very general and abstract proposition that the issue of sovereignty should be resolved in a flexible and innovative way without being tied to the model of the unitary nation-state. Thus, it would be demanding too much of a literary person or organization at this stage that they should go beyond the general proposition and come up with a "practical solution." As for me, I expressed my agreement with the idea of "a detour of a

confederation" suggested by Habermas during his recent visit to Korea, adding that even the final destination of such a detour need not be a unitary state, but might as well be a new form of federal state adapted to our particular situation (see chapter 6 in the present volume).

5. See "Pundan ch'ejëü insikül üihayö" [Toward an understanding of the division system], in *The Path of Practice*, 13.

6. In this connection, it was an overdone kindness on Kim's part to explain, even citing the etymology of the French word *régime*, that regime is not exactly identical with system.

7. See the addendum ("Pundan ch'ejë nonüüü chinjönül üihae" [Toward progress in the discussion of the division system]) to the article cited in n5, *The Path of Practice*, p. 43.

8. See Sö Chae-chin (J.J. Suh), "On North Korea's Underground Economy," in *North Korea's Economic Policy and Underground Economy* (Kimhae: Inje University Institute of Social Science, December 1996).

## CHAPTER 9

1. [In October 1979, the Park Chung Hee regime deprived Kim Young-sam, the then leader of the opposition party, of his National Assembly seat. This, combined with suffocating political oppression, touched off massive demonstrations in Pusan and Masan, Kim's political hometowns. Though violently quelled by the military regime, the uprising deepened the internal fissure of the regime, which ended up in the assassination of Park by one of his right-hand men, the chief of the KCIA.—*Trans.*]

2. [Actually, it was a series of nationwide demonstrations from June 10 on. The Korean *yuwol hangjaeng* literally means "June Resistance Struggle" and is also translated as "the June Democratic Resistance Movement."—*Trans.*]

3. [The new labor law was intended to soften employment stability without any plan to strengthen a poor social safety net, and the revised National Security Planning Agency Law was largely regarded as an regressive move recalling the days of military dictatorship. The Kim Young-sam government consequently suffered popular resistance nationwide.—*Trans.*]

4. [In January 1997, the Hanbo Group, at that time South Korea's fourteenth largest conglomerate, went bankrupt. An investigation revealed a lot of illegal financial transactions where its founder and chairperson Chöng T'ae-su had bribed many politicians, including Kim Hyon-ch'öl, President Kim Young-sam's son, to put pressure on several banks to approve loans for its new steel-mill project. The scandal aggravated the already ailing South Korean economy, leading to the IMF bailout at the end of the year.—*Trans.*]

5. [In December 1997, in the name of the grand harmony of the nation, President Kim Young-sam pardoned the two former presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, who only several months earlier had been sentenced by the Supreme Court to capital punishment on charges of rebellion, high treason, and receiving bribes.—*Trans.*]

6. See section 4, “Perspectives on the Period after the June Uprising,” in my “Reunification Movement and Literature” [1989], in *South Korea’s Minjung Movement*, edited by Kenneth M. Wells (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995), 202–7.

7. Supplementary note (1998): Soon after the first peaceful regime change was realized with the victory of the so-called DJP (Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-pil) coalition in the December 1997 presidential election, I was asked whether I still held to my judgment expressed in this paragraph. The gist of my answer was as follows: First, I had been wrong to underestimate, even though for a time, the significance of the coalition between opposition parties for the sake of a regime change, given the circumstances that no new forces were yet strong enough to replace the three Kims; but second, the proposition that “the grand conservative coalition cannot create a stable conservative culture, though it might stifle the reform process,” despite the aforementioned mistaken judgment, still remained valid. See “Hoehwa: Paek Nakch’ong pyŏnjibinege mutnūnda” [A conversation: Editor Paik Nak-chung queried], *Quarterly Changbi* 99 (spring 1998), 8–11.

8. For the paradoxical expression “a division system without division,” see my “Chigusidaeüi minjok munhak” [National literature in the age of globalization], *Quarterly Changbi* 81 (fall 1993), 121.

9. [This chapter was originally delivered in May 1997 at a symposium hosted by a coalition of progressive scholarly organizations.—*Trans.*]

10. On the very day [April 20, 1997] I finished this paper, Hwang Chang-yŏp, a former secretary of the Korean Workers’ Party in charge of international affairs, arrived in Seoul. He claimed in his arrival statement that he decided to come to the South to prevent war and seek a way to a peaceful reunification “hand in hand with the brothers in the South.” The possible level of solidarity between him and South Korean citizens regarding his avowed goals will depend on the following: (1) how strictly his activities will be based on his scholarly conscience, (2) how much liberty will be granted to him by the government and the security authorities, and finally, (3) to what extent he as a thinker will be able to accept the existence of the people who do not merely follow the decision of the party or the Dear Leader, but make their own decisions and at times put up resistance. Because his arrival had long been expected, his case was not absent from my mind while writing the passage on “look[ing] for ways to find among them comrades in the movements for overcoming the division system.” Yet what I primarily had in mind was a problem much more fundamental and in some sense quite unpromising. Generally speaking, of North Korean defectors (whose number is quite large now), those who once belonged to the privileged strata in the North continue to be well off in the South, while those who were mere “people” there are likely, also, to be poorly off here. The tendency among some activists, intellectuals, and literary people who often talk about “the nation” or “the people” to exclude the latter category of defectors as potential subjects of solidarity is something we need to do away with.

[Hwang Chang-yŏp, having studied Marxist-Leninist philosophy at Mos-

cow University, was known to have been deeply committed to establishing the theory of *juch'e* (Subject), the official ideology of North Korea. He defected from North Korea and came to Seoul in April 1997.—*Trans.*]

## CHAPTER 10

1. Song Chöngsan, *Köngukron* [On state building], in *Han uran han ich'ie* [One household, one truth], edited by Pak Chöng-hun (enlarged and augmented edition, Iksan: Wönpulgyö Publishers, 1987) For a comparison between programs of different political parties and Song Chöngsan's, see Pak Sang-kwön, "Song Chöngsanüi köng'uknone taehan üüüwa kü hyöndaeyök chomyöng" [Reflections on the present meaning of Song Chöngsan's *On State Building*—A comparison with the political programs of different parties of the time], *Wönbulgyo Sasang* [Wön Buddhist thought] 19 (n.d.).

2. Fortunately, Prof. Kang Man-kil attended the symposium as a discussant, and as a scholar of modern Korean history made various comments that were in the nature of "historical examination." His comments, as recorded by the reporter, were published in the magazine *Wön'gwang* (December 1997) under the title "Könguknonüi yöksajök ihae" [An historical understanding of *On State Building*]. In revising this paper, I am quoting some of Prof. Kang's views and add my comments so as to fill in the historical aspect of the present discussion.

3. In this respect, my approach is quite different from the prevailing attitude within Wön Buddhism, which acclaims *On State Building* by proudly enumerating those conceptions of Song Chöngsan's that were to be materialized in the ensuing history of Korea.

4. See *On State Building*, chapter 8, section 1, in *Han uran han ich'ie* [One Household, One Truth], edited by Pak Chöng-hun (enlarged and augmented edition, Iksan: Wönbulgyo Publishers, 1987), 343. This edition, however, shows many textual differences from the early edition included as the appendix in *Wönbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan* [The collected old texts of Wön Buddhism], vol. 4, that go beyond lessening the number of Chinese characters and modernizing the spelling. First, the word "appendix" was left out of page 343, consequently blurring the fact that "Three Periods for State Building" and "Twenty-One Summaries" are not part of the main text. In addition, the phrases "left and right wing" and "communism" were reworded into different expressions. The new edition also has attempted to correct mistakes in the original edition, but in some instances I found it difficult to determine which version was more reliable. However, a photographic copy of Chöngsan's holograph manuscripts was included in the *Bulletin* distributed on the day of the symposium, which solved many textual problems. Citations in this paper are from *Han uran han ich'ie*, which is more readily available and easier to read, but I restored the original text when I found that the later edition had made unnecessary revisions.

5. "[Of] the left or right" is one of many examples that are not found in *Han uran han ich'ie*, but in *Wönbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan* and the holograph.



6. Kang Man-kil pointed out in the discussion that the conflict between left and right began to grow sharply after December 1945, when the issue of placing Korea under trusteeship became a burning political issue, which is to say that the conflicts were not quite so sharp when *On State Building* was published in October. Prof. Kang expressed his admiration of Chöngsan's foresight regarding the political situation.

7. The last (seventh) section, "Encouragement of Religions," may leave room for doubt for nonreligious people. The section, however, is quite different from an unconditional promotion of religious faith and even contains proposals that could draw opposition from religious people: "Some adherents of religion are attached to superstitions and prejudices, so that they fail to promote citizens' normal life and people's well-rounded morals. It will also be one of the essential policies for the millennial prosperity of the nation to encourage religions suitable for the edification of citizens (while we may also reform or prohibit inappropriate religions), and thus to let politics and religion work together as two sides of the same coin." Here we encounter Song Chöngsan's unique idea of *chönggyo tongsim* [politics and religion with a common heart], which differs from old-fashioned theocratic rule, yet also from the complete separation and mutual nonintervention of church and state, which constitutes a general principle of modern democracy. Here we have a glimpse of his critical attitude regarding past religions or religions of *sönch'ön sidae* [the Era of the Older Day].

8. *The Scriptures of Wön Buddhism*, part 2, *Doctrine*, chapter 4, section 1:A, new ed. (Iksan: Wönbulgyo Publishers, 2006), 30–31.

9. Regarded in *Wön Buddhism* as the culminating part of the "Threefold Study" (i.e., Cultivating the Spirit, Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles, and Choice in Action; cf. *The Scriptures of Wön Buddhism*, 30–36).

10. Chapter 6, "The State," *Sejön* [Book of the secular life], in *Chöngsan chongsa pöbö* [The Dharma words of Cardinal Master Chöngsan]. See also section 30 of "To'un p'yön" [Chapter on the future of the Way], in *The Dharma Words of Cardinal Master Chöngsan*: "In the past, we tried to reach Peace Under Heaven [*p'yöngch'önha*] by means of the Way for governing the world, but in future we are to take the Way of Peace Under Heaven as our mainstay and reach Peace Under Heaven by using as a tool the Way for governing the world. The Way for governing the world is the Way of politics, while the Way of Peace Under Heaven is the Way of "the rule of Way and the rule of virtue." *Wönbulgyo Chönsö* [Complete texts of *Wön Buddhism*] (Iksan: Wönbulgyo Publishers, 1995), 986. Translations are mine, as there is no authorized English version of *The Dharma Words of Cardinal Master Chöngsan*.

11. As a typical examples, see Han Chong-man. "Chöngsan Chongsaüi kön'guknonko" [A Study on Chöngsan's *On State Building*], *Wönbulgyo sasang* [*Wön Buddhist thought*] 15, 413–14; and Kim Ki-wön, "Chöngsan Chongsaüi saengkwa sasang" [The life and thought of Cardinal Master Chöngsan], in *Wönbulgyo ch'ilsipnyön chöngsinsa* [The seventy years of spiritual history of *Wön Buddhism*] (Iksan: Wönbulgyo Publishers, 1989), 304–5.

12. See section 31 of "The Future of the Way" in *The Dharma Words of*



*Cardinal Master Chǒngsan*, where Chǒngsan suggests that we should “make use of the essence of every teaching,” including “the essence of science” as well as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Also, in section 35, he talks of *tongwon tori* (the same origin and principle of all teachings): “apart from the three main religions of the world, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, not only established religions such as Confucianism and Daoism, but also newly emerging religions all over the world, if we examine their root, have the same origin in the Truth of *Il-Wǒn* [One Circle].” Chǒngsan himself did use expressions like “the material civilization of the West” and “the spiritual civilization of the East,” but his purport is poles apart from the doctrine of Eastern Way, Western Technique: “This is the age of overall communication between East and West, so all the dharmas are bound to be fused into one dharma. Material civilization has flourished in the West, so we borrow it from them as opportunity offers; the East has an advantage in spiritual civilization, so we may lend it to them as opportunity offers; and we shall have a rounded world as a result. The Founding Master [Pak Chung-pin] has combined the great fortunes of the East and the West, so his Way and virtue will reign over the world, and the fruits of the Great Opening will spread in all the directions, so that the Great Way of One Circle will be the blessing of the entire world.” *Yuch’ok p’yǒn* [Last testaments], in *The Dharma Words of Cardinal Master Chǒngsan*, section 5.

13. Chǒngsan says, “Just as it is important for a surveying engineer to take the base point, so it is important for our practice and work to do the same. The base point of practice should be the practice of one’s mind, and the base point of deliverance should be one’s own deliverance.” But he hastens to add, “I am not, however, saying that your own deliverance should be completed before working for the deliverance of the masses, but that one should pursue the study of all sciences by basing it on the practice of one’s mind, and that one should work for the deliverance of others without neglecting the efforts for one’s own deliverance.” “*Mubon p’yǒn*” [Attending to the basics], in *The Dharma Words of Cardinal Master Chǒngsan*.

14. “An equal reunification” that Prof. Kang Man-kil has so eloquently stressed is of course far from this kind of collusion. See Kang, “*Minjok t’ongilül mosaekhanün kukhak*” [Korean studies exploring national unification], in *Uri kukhaküi panghyangkwa kwaje* [Directions and tasks for Korean studies], edited by the Andong University Faculty of Korean Studies (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1997), esp. 312–14. As for myself, though fully sympathizing with Kang’s rejection of reunification by force or by unilateral absorption, I have avoided that expression because, first of all, in the real world where discrepancies in power exist and the law of cause and effect is in operation, it is impossible to achieve a literally “equal” reunification (unless the word is merely to indicate denial of “one-sided absorption or conquest”), so that talk of “equal reunification” might lead to unrealistic expectations; and second, the discourse of the division system gives priority to the opposition between the division system and the people of the North and the South rather than that between North and South Korea, so that to what extent the respective views of

either government ought to be brought to bear in the process of reunification must be judged in terms of how responsive those views are to the interests of people, and the issue of “equality” between the two governments’ respective contributions becomes a secondary matter.

15. I think Kang is right in praising Chōngsan for this degree of awareness of class, irrespective of whether he accepts revolutionary changes or not. But as may be seen in the expression *kakkye kakkūp* [every walk and rank of life], Chōngsan does not seem to understand “class” in terms exclusively of economic position in a social formation, as is usual in modern social science.

16. The record of the symposium published in *Wōn’gwang* reads simply, “This seems to be a difference between a religious leader who was working within the country and overseas independence activists” (Kang, “Kōn’guknonūi yōksajōk ihae” [An Historical Understanding of *On State Building*]). But to the best of my memory, the purport of his actual comment was to remark on Chōngsan’s *limitation*, owing to his being a religious leader.

17. [Just a month after the establishment of the South Korean government on August 15, 1948, a special commission was set up to investigate and punish those who had notoriously collaborated with Japanese colonial rule. The then ruling government of Rhee Syng-man refused to cooperate with the commission and finally dismissed it despite the overwhelming support of the South Korean people.—*Trans.*]

18. The editor of *Han uran han ich’ie* has substituted “idea or ideology for equality” for “communism,” and “the principle of the idea for equality” for “the principle of ‘common ownership’.”

19. Literal meaning of the Korean *kongsan* (*kongsanjuūi* being the word for communism).

20. “Can we establish an equal society by focusing on material things? Public spiritedness should spread in order to construct an equal society. Can we make a peaceful world focusing on struggle? People must feel indebted and grateful to one another before true peace can be established.” (Section 19, “To’un p’yōn,” in *The Dharma Words of Cardinal Master Chōngsan*)

21. The editor of *Han uran han ich’ie* replaced “left-wing thinkers” and “right-wing thinkers” with “on one side” and “on the other side.”

## CHAPTER 11

1. The Southern (i.e., South Korean), Northern, and Overseas Committees joined together to launch the All-Korean Committee for Implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration in March 2005.

2. [The term foregrounds the author’s contention that we are entering a new stage that will eventually be on par with the term “era,” despite the recent regressive moves of the Lee Myung-bak administration. The slight element of exaggeration that the readers might feel in the term “June 15 Era” is registered, as in the case of the “IMF age” (see n2 in chapter 2 of this volume), by quotation marks.—*Trans.*]

3. See my *Hanbando sik t'ong'il, hyōnjae chinhaenghyōng* [Unification Korean-style, present progressive tense] (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 2006).

4. [President Roh Tae-woo's ruling party failed to secure the majority in the general election in April 1988 despite victory in the December 1987 presidential election. After making a secret agreement with Kim Young-sam and Kim Jong-pil, two opposition-party leaders, Roh announced a merger for a new majority ruling party in January 1990. This political move was widely regarded to be against democratization, enabling Roh to suppress the national-democratic movements as well as the leading opposition party of Kim Dae-jung.—*Trans.*]

5. [The first nuclear test by North Korea gave some Japanese a good excuse to condemn and even attack resident Koreans in Japan, especially young middle- and high-school female students at Korean national schools [*minjok hakkyo*], which traditionally have been seen as pro-North Korean.—*Trans.*]

6. See my "Hanbando simin ch'amyōhyōng t'ongilkwa chōnjigujōk han-minjok net'ūwōkū" [Participatory reunification in the Korean peninsula and the global Korean ethnic network], *Yōksa pip'yōng* 77 (2006), 27–29. A Japanese translation appeared as "Kan (Chōsen) hantō shiki tōitsu towa nanika," *Kan* 28 (2007), 259–60.

7. The Geneva Agreed Framework between the United States and the DPRK was signed in October 1994. [According to the memorandum, North Korea promised to freeze its nuclear facilities in return for the offered construction of two light-water nuclear reactors. The normalization of complete political and economic relations was also agreed upon, but its implementation was repeatedly delayed until the U.S. declared its abrogation following the 9/11 terrorist attack.—*Trans.*]

8. [The Northern Limit Line designates a demarcation line in the Western sea. At the time of armistice in 1953, the NLL was not agreed upon by both sides, and has remained in dispute ever since.—*Trans.*]

9. The core provision of Resolution 1718 is a ban on the transport or transfer of nuclear-related materials and technology.

10. [The September 19 Joint Statement of 2005 was signed at the fourth round of the six-party talks by representatives from six countries. North Korea accepted the abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as an early return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, while the other parties, expressing their respect for North Korea's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, agreed to discuss the provision of light-water nuclear reactors to the DPRK at a later date, as well as providing fuel energy in exchange for immediate measures toward eventual denuclearization.—*Trans.*]

11. [The "Anti-Kim, Anti-Nuclear Movement" is an umbrella term for an array of right-wing political and civic organizations that have advocated the extermination of communists including Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il. North Korea's nuclear program has been a popular rallying cry for them, but their "antinuclear" stance stopped there, paying no attention, for instance, to the United States' nuclear arsenal.—*Trans.*]

12. [North Korea calls the great famine in the mid-1990s and their efforts to overcome it as “The Arduous March.”—*Trans.*]

13. [The late Chōng Chu-yōng founded the Hyundai Group, Korea’s second largest transnational conglomerate as of the 1990s, which consisted of automobile, ship-building, semiconductor, and other businesses. In 1998, he crossed the borderline through P’anmunchōm with 500 “unification cows,” dramatically promoting North-South economic cooperation. This historic visit soon led to the launching of the Mt. Kūmgang tourist enterprise, which has been symbolic of progress in inter-Korean relations.—*Trans.*]

14. [Director of the Center for Progressive Movement Studies.—*Trans.*]

15. William Perry’s visit to North Korea in 1999 as a special envoy to then U.S. President Bill Clinton marked the beginning of “the Perry Process.” It was a comprehensive and integrated approach to end the North Korean nuclear program. According to “the Perry Process,” North Korea was supposed to forgo its missile launches and freeze its nuclear program, while the United States was supposed to ease its sanctions against North Korea. At the same time, South Korea and Japan were to take their own steps for normalizing their relations with North Korea. This process would lead to verifiable assurances that North Korea had ended its program for weapons of mass destruction, and, eventually, to normalization of relations between North Korea and the United States.—*Trans.*]

16. Chair of the executive committee, Center for Peace and Disarmament, People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy.

17. A long-time peace and reunification activist.

18. [Military Operation Plan 5027 was authored by the United States and South Korea to prepare for an all-out war against North Korea. Since the wartime military operational command of both U.S. and South Korean armed forces is still in the hands of the United States (until 2012), Operation Plan 5027 is under the overwhelming influence of the U.S. military. The plan has been regularly—usually every other year—revised and updated. It was initially defensive, but the 1998 version included preemptive strikes against major military targets in case of imminent North Korean military action. It is said that the 2002 version, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, even added a plan to assassinate Kim Jong-il as well as for the United States to strike against North Korea without prior consultation with South Korea.—*Trans.*]

19. [For the text of the February 13 Agreement, see Appendix B.—*Trans.*]

## CHAPTER 12

1. This commemorative event, held in Seoul on June 12, 2008, featured lectures by Bruce Cumings, Wada Haruki, and Paik Nak-chung, the last delivered in Korean. The present English version has been slightly revised by the author.

2. [The October 4 Joint Declaration, proclaimed after the Second Inter-Korea Summit between Roh Mu-hyun and Kim Jong-il in 2007, succeeds and further specifies the spirit of the earlier June 15 Declaration, the first North-

South summit. It consists of eight articles, including the following: the establishment of the West Sea Special Peace Zone, the early launching of the second phase of the Kaesŏng Industrial Complex, and the renovation and mutual use of the Kaesŏng-Shinŭiju railroad, not to mention the reaffirmation of the spirit of mutual respect and trust. The Lee Myung-bak government, which succeeded that of Roh Mu-hyun, has never expressed any manifest intention to recognize the two declarations that North Korea posits as the basic premise for inter-Korean dialogue. See appendix B for the complete text of the declaration.—*Trans.*]

3. [The 1992 Joint Declaration for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula became effective, together with the Inter-Korea Basic Agreement, in early 1992, following the Sixth Inter-Korea High-Level Official Talks. By denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, it purports to defuse the danger of nuclear war and to promote favorable conditions for a peaceful unification.—*Trans.*]

4. [In 2002, candlelight rallies first began in protest against the U.S. military whose armored vehicle accidentally killed two Korean middle-school girls, and thereafter came to be major form of direct political expression for ordinary Korean citizens. There are two remarkable cases of candlelight rallies in recent years: first, when Parliament passed an impeachment bill against then President Roh Mu-hyun in March 2004, hundreds of thousands of citizens took to the streets of downtown Seoul and major cities; second, when the new Lee Myung-bak administration decided to lift the ban on the import of the U.S. beef without due guarantee of its safety against Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, nationwide candlelight rallies continued more than two months from April to June in 2008, successfully keeping up their peaceful, free, and even festive spirit despite often violent responses from the police.—*Trans.*]

5. These hopes seemed to receive a boost when President Lee, speaking at the opening of the National Assembly on July 13 of the same year, affirmed his readiness to respect “all existing agreements between North and South,” but they suffered a serious setback with the accident of a South Korean tourist shot to death by a North Korean soldier on the same day. The subsequent handling of this and other events would seem to indicate that the very hope for the administration’s “pragmatism” was probably misplaced to begin with.

## CHAPTER 13

This chapter was translated by the author with the assistance of Beckhee Cho.

1. [The Four Great Rivers Project is a major civil engineering project being pursued by the Lee Myung-bak administration with the proclaimed aim of preventing flooding, solving water shortage problems, and improving the quality of the drinking water of South Korea’s four major rivers. Despite broad public opposition—including expressions of concern from local governments, opposition parties, academia, environmental groups, and the four major religious orders that the project would wreak havoc with the nation’s natural environment while doing little to actually bring about the promised

benefits—the government has pushed forward with unusual speed and little regard for procedural regulations. The “Water-Friendly Region Law” gives the Korea Water Resources Corporation extraordinary powers to develop leisure and tourist facilities in the vicinity of the four rivers. The opposition claims that this law is meant to compensate the corporation for the huge debt incurred by undertaking the Four Rivers Project as the government’s proxy, a legally questionable move serving to exempt much of the project’s funding from legislative scrutiny.—*Trans.*]

2. [Lee Myung-bak’s campaign slogan and subsequent policy—“Denuclearization, Opening, 3000”—promises to help North Korea reach a per capita GDP level of U.S.\$3,000 within ten years in return for giving up its nuclear program and opening its society to the outside world.—*Trans.*]

3. [The South Korean navy corvette *Chōnan* split in two and sank on March 26, 2010, near Paeknyōng g Island in the West Sea, killing forty-six seamen. The Lee Myung-bak administration organized a joint military-civilian investigation group (JIG) to look into the cause of the incident. The JIG announced in its interim report on May 20 that the *Chōnan* had sunk as a result of a North Korean torpedo attack, a charge that Pyongyang denied. The Lee government took the case to the UN Security Council, calling for a UN resolution condemning North Korea. However, with China and Russia opposing it and independent scientists raising doubts about the JIG findings, the Council only agreed on an ambiguous presidential statement condemning the incident without specifying North Korea as the culprit.—*Trans.*]

4. [The term signifies the influence on election results by negative developments in North-South relations. The governing party suffered a serious setback in the wake of the anti-North campaign waged by the government on the issue of the alleged torpedo attack.—*Trans.*]

5. [After close to five years of strikes, demonstrations, and legal battles, summarily discharged workers at Kiryung Electronics won their struggle for reinstatement; likewise, female train attendants of the high-speed trains (Korea Train Express, or KTX) at KORAIL were victorious in their battle to gain regular employee status.—*Trans.*]



# Sources

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Chapter 1 was first presented under the title “Making the Reunification Movement a Daily Practice for Overcoming the Division System” in the Second International Conference for Korean Studies, held at Andong National University, October 3–4, 1997. The paper then was substantially revised and complemented for submission to the conference volume and slightly modified for the Korean edition of 1998.

Chapter 2 is a new essay written for the Korean edition of 1998. The chapter was written as a supplement to chapter 1, in response to the great social changes that took place in Korea after the writing of chapter 1, such as the 1997 financial crisis and IMF bailout.

Chapter 3 was first published in Korean in the fall 1995 issue of the *Quarterly Changbi*.

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Chapter 7 is a slightly revised version of a paper read at the international symposium “Vision for the Korean Race in the Twenty-First Century,” which was held in Iksan, October 11–12, 1996, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Wŏn’gwang University.

Chapter 8 is an addendum to an essay published in the January–February 1997 issue of *Naeilül yŏnŭn chakka* [Writers who open the future]. The essay was based on a paper presented at an international conference held at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, in 1994.

Chapter 9 was presented at a conference in May 1997 co-hosted by Haksul tanch’e hyŏbŭihoe [Association of Progressive Scholars] and *Hankyoreh Sinmun* [Han’gyŏre Daily] commemorating the tenth anniversary of the June Democratic Uprising. This essay is also reprinted in *Yuwŏl minju hangjaengkwa hankuk sahoe* [The June Democratic Uprising and Korean Society] (Seoul: Tangtae, 1997).

Chapter 10 was originally read at the symposium celebrating the Centennial of the Birth of Song Chŏngsan under the theme of “North-South Reconciliation and Song Chŏngsan’s Proposals for State Building,” hosted by the Association of Wŏn Buddhist Studies of Korea, October 27, 1997. It was published in the sixth issue of *The Bulletin of the Association of Wŏn Buddhist Studies of Korea*, and later in the monthly *Wŏn’gwang* (December 1997) in a slightly revised form. The author made more extensive revisions for the 1998 Korean edition of this volume.

Chapter 11 is based on a public lecture delivered on November 23, 2006, as part of a lecture series to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the launching of the Internet newspaper *Pressian*, which posted a transcript of the talk in the ensuing week. The text was revised with a newly written addendum when the series of lectures were collected and published in the volume *Yŏrŏsi hamkke* [Many together] (Seoul: Pressian Books, 2007). The present English version follows this text.

Chapter 12 is based on a presentation in English at a conference held in Seoul on June 12, 2008. The conference was hosted by the Kim Dae-jung Foundation in commemoration of the eighth anniversary of the June 15 Joint Declaration.

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