

Peace Process, Candlelight Revolution and Political Change in Korea

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1. Peace as a Sudden Visitor Like a Thief in the Night

In the evening of April 27, most of Koreans were all greatly surprised to watch the government official announcement of the Panmunjom Declaration as a result of the summit meeting between President Moon Jae In and NK Chairman Kim Jung Un. The Declaration declared “No More War in Korean Peninsula, Open a New Age of Peace’.

It proclaimed to establish Joint liaison office in Kaesong, North Korea, resolve humanitarian issues(reunion of separated families), promote balanced economic growth and co-prosperity of the nation, promote connection and modernization of railways and roads between two Koreas, alleviate the acute military tension, eliminate the danger of war, start dialogue on disarmament and non-aggression agreement, and completely denuclearize Peninsular. The declaration also promised to establish direct hotline between two leaders.

We all could never image both leaders at their first meeting would make such an epoch-making declaration. Since there were rumor of war last year, and rumors of April or August crisis were spread in Korea, the Panmunjom Declaration was a shocking news for all Koreans. Fear of war disappeared suddenly. In this way peace came as a sudden visitor like a thief in the night

There was no dialogue between two Korea for last nine years of conservative and reactionary government of Lee Myoung Bak and Park Geun Hye. Instead of making effort to make peace between two Koreas, they made use of the military and psychological tension to justify their under-legitimate regimes.

Former liberal governments of Kim Daejung and Roh Moohyun respectively took open-door policy towards NK, and two presidents visited Pyongyang, NK Capital in 2000 and in 2007 respectively. While peaceful relations were established, the Keum Kang Mountain of North Korea was opened for tourism where massive South Koreans could visit, and the industrial complex was established in KaeSung where massive investments from Korean companies operated production with supply of NK workers. Lee government closed Keum Kang Mountain, and Park government closed the Kaesung Industrial Complex which resulted in a great loss of SK companies and NK worker had to stop working there.

After Moon's government was inaugurated in May 2017, Pres. Moon proclaimed, in July 2017 at Berlin, 'Peace Plan for Korean Peninsula' and proposed a dialogue with NK government. But NK did not respond, instead shot long-distance missile and conducted nuclear tests. In the end of year 2017, NK declared their nuclear armament was completed.

NK leader Kim Jung Un in his new year address of 2018 expressed to give priority to economic developments while keeping on military build-up. and hinted to have dialogue to improve the inter-Korea relations. He also said NK could meet SK authority to talk on the participation of the Pyongchang Winter Olympic which was to be held in February in South Korea.

President Moon responded promptly to start dialogue with North. SK authority demanded NK to reopen emergency hotline that had long been blocked by NK, and sent official team to talk on the participation. Both Koreas agreed to send and accept the NK team. In all, more than 600 participated in the sport event.

One of the NK government official delegates, Deputy minister Kim Yojung, NK leader Kim Jung Un's sister, was included as special envoy, and delivered a personal letter of Chairman Kim Jung Un to President Moon, and she verbally invited President Moon to Pyongyang for official visit. President Moon accepted the invitation and said, 'Let's make conditions' and further recommended NK delegates to try dialogue with the United States. Korean government gave maximum hospitable welcome to NK delegates. President Moon invited to his office and have lunch dialogue, and other ministers and staffs had given them maximum hospitalities.

Pres. Moon in response to NK leaders' letter, sent special envoy to NK to summit talk, and NK Kim in March 5. To special envoys from SK, NK leader proposed to meet Pres. Moon in April, expressed intention to dissolve military tensions, reopen dialogue and contacts on various levels between two Koreas, and reactivate the inter-Korea cooperation and exchanges, and denuclearize in exchange for guaranteeing security of the NK system, and express his wish to have dialogue with United States.

President Moon sent Korean envoy, returned from NK, were sent to United States to explain the result of the dialogue between two Koreas, and delivered Kim's message of his wish to meet Pres. Trump, and Pres Trump agree to have a summit with NK Chairman. Korean government also sent special envoy teams to China, Russia and Japan to explain the result of Inter-Korea dialogue.

Through intensive negotiations between two Korea, two leaders met on April 27 at Panmunjom where the truce agreement was signed in 1953. As mentioned above the historical summit meeting was conducted and announced the Panmunjom Declaration which was again confirmed in the joint statement made by President Trump and Chairman Kim on June 12, Singapore.

While it was predicted that the summit would be canceled or postponed because President Trump sent an open letter to Chairman Kim to cancel the summit meeting. Meanwhile, a sudden, unannounced summit meeting between President Moon and Chairman Kim was held at Panmunjom of the Northern territory. Chairman Kim expressed his willingness to meet President Trump in June. After these stunning

moments, the negotiation resumed in Panmunjom between NK and US, while Chairman Kim sent special envoy NK Intelligence Chief Kim Young Chul to Washington to meet President Trump at the White House. Singapore Summit was resumed as originally planned.

Historical summit of President Trump and Chair Kim was finally held in Singapore on June 12, and they announced their joint statement: to promote mutual confidence building, work together complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and building a 'lasting a stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and recovering POW/MIA remains. After announcing the joint statement, President Trump stood at the press conference. He said the Korea-US joint military exercise will be suspended during the period of negotiation on the denuclearization.

Although the joint statement did not clarify the specific time table for denuclearization and normalization of relationship between two countries, both leaders built up a trust to further promote and normalization of interrelations. Based on this firm trust between them, they will soon declare to end the war between North Korea and United States, and further make Peace Treaty among related countries(NK, SK, China and US).

Chairman Kim must have been determined to follow a new tract of development. In his talk with President Trump in Singapore, he said 'It has not been easy to come to this point. For us the past has been holding us back, and old practices and prejudices have been covering our eyes and ears, but we have been able to overcome everything to arrive here today.' He determined to free himself from pressure of the past history, and he already freed from the past prejudices and practices. He seemed to reset developmental path of his country.

This summit meeting and the joint statement simply were regarded as a starting point to end the Cold War. Korean Peninsular has so far remain as the last Cold War terrain. To end the Cold War is meant to completely fashion and restructure not only the East Asian relationship, but also global system.

This summit meeting opened a new chance for South Korea and Japan to connect its economy with the continental countries and a new chance for North Korea to make access to oceanic countries in Asia and World. Fortress country of NK suddenly opens its door to the world.

Complete nuclearization and normalization of relations between US and North Korea will take time, but it already started peace process. North Korea released three American detainees last month, dismantled the nuclear test sites, and President Trump promised to cancel major Korea-US joint military exercises, which have been regarded as a great threat to North Korea.

The joint statement also reconfirmed and endorsed the Panmunjom Declaration in which not only complete denuclearization, but also disarmament, and stopping any hostile actions towards each other.

To this joint action between US and NK, all neighborhood countries like China, Russia and Japan, agree and support the North-South, and NK-US dialogue for the

denuclearization and guarantee of present system of the NK. Such a favorable conditions has never ever existed in history. Collaboration between President Trump, Chairman Kim and President Moon has already achieved much more than six party talks achieved on Korean Peninsular. It is a great opportunity for all Koreans and neighboring country people to get rid of fear of war, eventually make peace in this region.

2. Peace as an eventual achievement of Korean candlelight citizens.

Peace in Korea strongly is supported by Korean people. Moon Jae In government inaugurated in May 10, 2017, after former President was impeached and imprisoned for abusing power. As I will report in this paper, Korean citizens, 17 million in total, staged candlelight vigil for more than five months to demand President Park to step down from the power. President Moon himself also mentioned that his government is a candlelight government to uphold the spirit of the candlelight revolution.

Even though President Moon won by 42% of all votes at the time of election, support rate for his government is currently 75% and more. This means his policy was extensively supported by Korean people. Or he tries to respond to people's demand. Support rate of ruling party was also very high. Since opposition parties were divided and major opposition that were responsible for former President impeachment lost supports from general public.

On June 13, national election for local governments and superintendents of education was conducted. The ruling party won one-sidedly. Out of 17 provincial and metropolitan governors, ruling party won 14, while opposition party won two, and the remaining one was won by independent. In the provincial council election, the victory of the ruling party is much more one-sided victory. The result of this election, doubtlessly, endorsed, and strongly supported Moon's government peace process between the North and the South Korea, and also strongly accepted US-NK dialogue in Singapore.

Thus peace process in the Korean peninsular is an eventual achievement of Korean peoples' candlelight revolution.

Is the candlelight vigil really revolution? It is not a revolution, if a revolution should involve physical violence. It is not revolution, if a revolution should involve class revolution. It is not revolution, if it should involve extra-constitutional change. This candlelight revolution was instead peaceful one, people's, not a class revolution(regardless of what class or status they belongs to), institutionally allowed method was mobilized.

The candlelight revolution is carried out by candlelight citizens, their instrumental weapon was simply candlelight. Their goal was simply to change power, and restore the democracy. Nevertheless, the candlelight revolution changed, led to eradicate the deep-rooted irregularities, healed the oppressed minds, and revived people's basic rights, restructured the relationship between government and big business, and finally brought forth peace process in Korean peninsular.

3. Origin of Candlelight revolution.

In post World War II Korea, major political changes have been brought forth by people's struggles. In 1960, Korean student toppled down the dictator, Rhee Seungman. In 1980 Spring, citizens of Gwangju rose up to protest the bloody suppression of people's protests which resulted in death of several hundreds. In 1987 June, people's massive demonstration forced the military government of the time to accept people's demand: direct election of president, and other liberal policies. Candlelight revolution of 2016-2017 was in the line of such tradition of people's struggle.

After 1987 Struggle, in the liberal political opportunity, citizens and laborers organized themselves. Labor movement got strength, and its members increased, and stronger bargaining power. Alternative democratic labor movements also were organized into national federation.

Citizens organized civil society movements.

Major civil society movements such as the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice(CCEJ, 经济正义实践市民联合 1988), Korea Federation for Environmental Movement(KFEM 环境运动联合 1988, 1992), Korean Women's Association United(KWAU 女性团体联合 1987), People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy(PSPD, 参与连带 1993), Green Korea(绿色联合 1991) and other civil society movement organization came into being in late 1980s and early 1990s.

In addition, professional groups also launched citizens' movement. Professors, lawyers, medical doctors, dentists, artists groups organized themselves into respective national federations.

These social movements are all differentiated from the democratization movement in 1980s. Three categories should be made: labor movement, civil society movement, people's movement. There are also many other social movement organizations in Korea(According to statistics, 6169 organizations in 2000). These social movement took up various issues: watchdog on power institutions, environmental protection, economic justice and women's issue.

These social movements are basically independent from government, business, religion, and foreign powers. They mobilized necessary resources within Korea basically from the membership dues. Public in general supported these civil society movements, and media also supported civil society movement. Government had to recognize the civil society movement, and tried to build up some type of new governance to solve problems such as environmental issues.

In 2000, general election to form national assembly was carried out, civil society movement organized themselves into Citizens' Coalition for General Election. This coalition staged anti-campaign against the corrupt and unjust politicians. They listed the names of corrupt and unjust candidates, and disclosed at the press conference. Most of the listed candidates were defeated. I think the civil society movement could exert maximum influence at this time.

Korea's Women movement won impressive achievements: to enact or revise gender-related laws such as the gender equality law, the abolition of patriarchal family

system, and equal employment laws, etc.

Environmental organizations stopped large-scale development projects, fought against the nuclear power plant, and siting nuclear waste disposal. PSPD organized professionals to watch government, and business. Function and influence of the civil society movement are monumental in Korean history.

In 2000s, Korean society changed into a new phase. Information environment has changed so that people's relationship became more and more virtual. Membership of civil society movements were generally decreasing or stagnant. Citizens can participate in social movements in various ways.

In 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup were held in Korea. Supporter assembled in public squares to massively stage supporters' movement. They were connected through internet. Participants did not need to get help from any movement organizations. These experiences of mass gathering remained an impressive collective memory.

There was a massive candlelight vigil in 2002, to protest against the US military base after two Korean middle school girls were killed in a traffic accident by US military personnel. Flag of United States were torn apart in the mass rally in Seoul Square. These movement was overlapped with supporters of Presidential candidate, late Roh Moo Hyun.

Candlelight vigil became a major repertoire of citizens' movement in 2000s. Korean citizen in a couple of hundreds of thousand took to street to protest with candlelight in their hands against the unjustifiable impeachment trial of President Roh in 2004. In 2008, a massive candlelight vigil was staged to oppose the import of American beef that might cause mad-cow disease.

In 2014, April 16 a passenger ship called Saewolho bound for Jeju Island was sunk in the southwest Sea. Out of 476 passengers, 295 persons were not rescued. Most of the passengers were high school students. They were on board in order to participate in school trip. Captain and major crews abandoned the sinking ship, not announcing passengers to leave the ship. Marine police and other government institutions did not rescue the students and other passengers. President Park did not take proper action to rescue the student. These accident aroused enormous angry among the citizens, and began to take candlelight again. Families of the deceased or missing students set up tents in Guanghwamoon Square to protest. Candlelight vigil for Saewolho continued more than two years to the point of anti-Park Geunhye rally in 2016.

4. Candlelight Revolution in 2016-2017

Korean National Assembly passed a bill to impeach President Park in December 9, 2016. It was the power of 17 million people's candlelight that forced the national assembly to pass the bill.

In October 16, a civilian news media, JTBC, disclosed a tablet PC in which the irregularities of Park government was included. She abused Presidential power to give privileges to her close friends. President Park soon apologized next day, but the public did not accept her apology. It was not a matter of apology. From the weekend, people get together at the Square to hold candlelight.

Some maybe attended the candlelight vigil to protest the maltreatment of Saewolho disaster. Many Koreans had a gloomy vision on Korean society. 'Hell chosun(Korea)' was self-mocking buzzword. In fact, unemployment rate of youth was very high(12%, official report), the highest suicide rate of the old(among OECD countries), the highest poverty rate of the old generation, the lowest fertility rate among the OECD countries. However, the main and most powerful voice of people's protest was to terminate the rule of President Park.

They were not mobilized by anybody. Citizens assembled by twos or threes. All walks of life took to street. High school students, salaried man and woman, family with children, housewives with their children in their bay carts, elders. Middle aged people who had experiences of democratization movement took their children to the Square. One said 'to come here with children means I bet my life!' .

Civil society movement organizations also participated in the rally, but not as leaders of the candlelight vigil, but acted as invisible supporters of the candlelight vigil. They had to set up the stages where people can speak, and they made entertainment programs. They had to file suits to offset the police control, and they mobilized, and managed resources for the rally. They kept low-key position in the candlelight vigil.

Candlelight vigil started in mid-October, 2016 and continued to the point of impeachment of President Park in March 10, 2017. For 20 weekend rally, total of 17 million participated in the rally.

One picket said 'I represent myself' . The candlelight citizens did not welcome the politicians, intellectuals, and celebrities to give speech in the rally. They did not like any social movement organizations to take hegemony in the movement. The rally invited the students, farmers, workers, and women, etc. socially weak strata people.

It is a movement of an identity. One picket said 'Is this a nation on earth?'

Or one read in the picket, 'It is a shame to have such government.'

One said 'I came here to turn over a better country to our children' . The candlelight participants were motivated from their identity and value. Slogans changed and escalated from 'Step down' to 'Impeach' , and further to 'Arrest' .

Candlelight revolution was a peaceful and pleasant revolution. Unlike candlelight rallies in the past, there was no confrontation with police. No arrest. Non-violent peaceful rally. Participants usually took back garbage, and clean the streets. Volunteers collected money from participants to prepare the rally. Participants willingly paid money. Some made food for distribution, while others prepared pickets for others. Consideration for the weak, children, women, elder became a basic norm of the Square. Non-violence also became a basic norm, since police cannot use violence towards non-violent citizens. Only by maintaining the peaceful rally, children, women and physically weak people can participate.

5. Sociology of Social Movement: Candlelight Vigil

(1) People's revolution without a single Hero(Heroine)

'We are candlelight' is a title of documentation written by a Korean journalist. Everyone became the subject of the candlelight revolution. This revolution, with participants of 17 million, did not produce any single hero or heroine. The candlelight vigil refused to organize themselves. There was loose supporters' organization that were composed of civil society movement. Any attempts to organize the candlelight participants were refused. Even the supporters' organization was dissolved after President Park was impeached.

As expressed in the slogan 'I represent myself'. Candlelight citizen raise questions on the representative politics.

(2) 'Cloudization' of movement.

SNS was a major communication means in the rally. It was known that traffic of SNS rapidly increased in the day of the rally. In October 2016, news media JTBC ignited the candlelight by revealing the irregularities of Park government. The weekend rally came into being simultaneously. Citizens used the SNS communication to mobilize each other. In the Square, people communicate each other to find their friends through SNS. Further, media also send off live broadcasting from the Square. Citizens may participate directly in the Square, or may watch television, or may use smartphone or computer to watch and participate. Even Koreans in foreign countries also participate through these new media.

These smartphone and media communication in the square seems to produce an organic entity that oriented people's action and voices. This also happened in Arabic Jasmine Revolution in 2010-2011. Al Jazeera asked in tweeter participants to send a video footage for use. Actually Al Jazeera mediated communication networks by relating the video records of struggle in the world.

(3) Emergent Norms in the Square

The square is a place that produce new norms and values. They said no any authority, celebrity, and power. They wanted equality among themselves. They wanted to participate in any movement directly by themselves, not mediated by other organizations, leaders, parties. The Square is also a place for mutual consideration and cooperation. The Square is a place to mobilize voluntary resources. These are messages that the candlelight revolution is aimed at.

6. What did candlelight revolution change in Korea.

President Moon said his government inherit the 2016-2017 candlelight revolution.

(1) Change the political mainstream

Conservative parties...in process of fading out.

(2) Normalization of abnormality.

Restoring history textbook. Guangju memorial ceremony.

Temporary employees to regular employment.

- (3) Game changer from power politics to direct participation of citizens.

Deliberate democracy, consensus conference to solve social conflict: Nuclear Power Plant.

Entrust major decision to citizens.

- (4) Eradication of deep-rooted irregularities.

Misuse and personal appropriation of government budget.

- (5) *Me-to and With-You* movement/power shift in gender relations

- (6) Lead Peace Process as a major actor in international politics.

- (7) Reform of big business/business-politics connection.

- (8) Private power abuse (Korean Airline Family violence on employees)

Concluding Remark

Korean society is presently undergoing restructuration. The social and political structure that had maintained Korean society, and grasped Korean people is rapidly changing. Gender relation is changing. Cold War mentalities and institutions are shaken or eroding. We may have to struggle more and longer to eradicate the deep-rooted irregularities in government, national assembly, jurisdiction, and society in general. We may have to take to street with candlelight more and more again if this revolution is blocked.

We may be faced with the ‘liquid society’ (Zygmunt Bauman). Our target is how to restructure, and what to institutionalize to realize the candlelight citizens’ dream.

Thank you