

**From Conversion to Transformation:**  
**A Religious Interpretation of Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945)**

By

**Shin Ahn**

A Thesis Submitted  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
The University of Edinburgh

2006



## **DECLARATION**

I, Shin Ahn, hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any other academic institution. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

**Shin Ahn, August 2006**

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis examines Yun Chi-ho's (1865-1945) life and thought in a historical context from a religious perspective. Previous dominant interpretations, such as nationalistic, confessional, psychological, and sociological, largely ignored the religious dimension of Yun's life and work, and created contradictory images of Yun as "traitor," "hero," or "victim." In contrast, the thesis argues that Yun was a religious pilgrim who committed himself to Christianity and the process of reconciliation between divided Koreans in the midst of political turmoil and Japanese colonial oppression (1910-1945). By analyzing Yun's diaries and letters, as well as biographies and other secondary sources, the thesis focuses on the following three main themes.

First, Yun's concept of Christian mission was very different from his contemporaries in that he rejected sudden conversion through understanding theological dogma or preaching the Christian message without social engagement. Rather, emphasizing spirituality and faith in action, he advocated gradual transformation through Christian education and unity in the Church. Yun correlated Christian mission with education and attempted to improve moral and economic standards for ultimate political independence.

Secondly, as a lay theologian concerned with public issues, Yun sought to construct a new Korean identity, engaging with contemporary political issues in the colonial context. He clearly collaborated with Japanese colonialists, which tarnished his earlier reputation as a leader of democracy and the independence movement. His appeal for reconciliation between Koreans and Japanese was not a desire to be assimilated into one Japanese entity but a call for harmony and equality between different races with distinct identities.

Thirdly, Yun was a reformer and contextual theologian, accusing Western missionaries of arrogance and insensitivity to indigenous Korean culture. Introducing new horizons to indigenous traditions, he argued that people of the West and the East should learn from each other with respect and love because they were both sinful before God. Though he was very critical about religions, including Christianity, in terms of their pragmatic values, Yun didn't deny the religious truthfulness of non-Christian religions.

The thesis concludes that for Yun both his Confucian worldview and his Christian faith contributed to the creation of a viable Korean model for Christian mission and education.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not be possible without the support and assistance of many good people. First of all, I want to express my deep thanks and sincere respect for my supervisor, Dr Jack Thompson, Director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, who was willing to supervise me with boundless wisdom, care, and wit. I am also grateful to Dr Elizabeth Koepping and Prof. David Kerr (now at Lund University), who encouraged me in my research with generous hospitality and a warm concern. Other faculty members and fellow students at the Divinity School helped to enrich my knowledge of different religious traditions and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of religions. The seminars of the CSCNWW and Religious Studies (RS) gave me opportunities to share my research with fellow students, so I also thank Profs. Frank Whaling, Jim Cox, and fellow RS students.

I wish to thank Prof. Andrew Walls of the University of Edinburgh, Prof. Lamin Sanneh of Yale University, and Dr Brian Stanley of Cambridge University, who helped me to discover a new horizon of connecting RS with World Christianity. I am also grateful to Margaret Acton of CSCNWW, and Dr Paul Stuehrenberg and Martha Smalley of Yale University Library for their assistance. I also thank my former teachers of Seoul National University and Yale University, Profs. Chung Jin-hong, Kim Chong-suh, and Keum Jang-tae who showed me models of creativity and scholarship, and Profs. Jim Dittes and Nick Wolterstorff who encouraged me to construct my own perspective on interpreting a religious phenomenon.

I acknowledge that my research has received generous financial support from the British Government (ORS) and the University of Edinburgh (Studentship) over the past three years. The Korean Government Scholarship and Yale University Fellowships also supported my preliminary research at Yale, Oxford and Cape Town. I am also grateful to the committees of the British Association for the Study of Religions, the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, the Royal Historical Society, the Ecclesiastical History Society, and the International Conference on Peace & Reconciliation for providing me with generous bursaries to present research papers.

I am also grateful to Dr Sandy Roger of the Faith Mission Bible College, who invited me to give lectures on World Religions and Mission Studies. I also thank Korean churches and Edinburgh Divinity Korean Association for their prayers. I want to extend my thanks to my proofreaders, particularly Tom, Susan, and Amy, who read my thesis diligently, and to my students whom I have tutored at the Divinity School.

My family has been incredibly supportive throughout this process. I want to thank my parents and extended family for their prayers and support. My three daughters, Yu-jin, Yejin, and Soojin have been a great source of joy and happiness to me. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Eun-Ok Park for her endless support, sacrifice, and love, so I would like to dedicate my thesis to her with gratitude and love.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Declaration</b> .....  | <b>i</b>    |
| <b>Abstract of Thesis</b> .....   | <b>ii</b>   |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....   | <b>iii</b>  |
| <b>Table of Contents</b> .....  | <b>iv</b>   |
| <b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....  | <b>viii</b> |
| <b>Glossary</b> .....   | <b>ix</b>   |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....   | <b>1</b>    |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>Chapter 1: A Religious Interpretation of Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945)</b> .....          | <b>8</b>    |
| 1.1. Introduction .....   | 8           |
| 1.2. A Short Biographical Sketch of Yun Chi-ho .....                                  | 9           |
| 1.3. A Korean Christian in Action: Kim Yeong-hi's (1934) Portrait .....               | 12          |
| 1.4. A National Hero in a Colonial Tragedy: Kim Eul-han's (1978) Portrait .....       | 17          |
| 1.5. Insiders' Views: Confessional Interpretations .....                              | 20          |
| 1.6. Outsiders' Views: Reductive Interpretations .....                                | 23          |
| 1.6.1. "Young" Yun Chi-ho: A Political Interpretation .....                           | 24          |
| 1.6.2. "Archetype of Death": A Psychological Interpretation .....                     | 25          |
| 1.6.3. A Victim of Social Coercion: A Sociological Interpretation .....               | 28          |
| 1.7. A Religious Interpretation: Conversion and Transformation .....                  | 31          |
| 1.8. Conclusion .....   | 33          |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>Chapter 2: A History of Religions in Korea</b> .....                               | <b>35</b>   |
| 2.1. Introduction .....   | 35          |
| 2.2. Korean Religions as both Conservative and Syncretistic (or Pluralistic) .....    | 36          |
| 2.3. Korea as the Centre of the World .....   | 40          |
| 2.3.1. <i>Hananim</i> as the Korean Idea of the High God .....                        | 42          |
| 2.3.2. The Social Hierarchy of the <i>Joseon</i> Dynasty .....                        | 44          |
| 2.4. <i>Mugyo</i> as a Korean Indigenous Religion .....                               | 47          |
| 2.5. Buddhism as a Missionary Religion & Taoism as a Mystical Religion .....          | 50          |
| 2.6. Confucianism as an Educational System & <i>Silhak</i> (Practical Learning) ..... | 54          |
| 2.7. Christianity as a Western Religion and Education .....                           | 61          |
| 2.8. Conclusion .....   | 66          |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Chapter 3: A Fusion of Horizons between the East and the West, 1865-95 -----</b> | <b>67</b>  |
| 3.1. Introduction -----   | 67         |
| 3.2. New Confucian Reformers in the Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century -----             | 68         |
| 3.3. Conversion through Christian Education -----                                   | 74         |
| 3.4. Racial Discrimination in the American South -----                              | 80         |
| 3.5. Constructing a Korean Theology of Spirituality -----                           | 85         |
| 3.6. Christian Mission and World Religions -----                                    | 92         |
| 3.7. Conclusion -----   | 104        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 4: Politics, Mission, and Education, 1895-1920 -----</b>                 | <b>105</b> |
| 4.1. Introduction -----   | 105        |
| 4.2. Government Education Reform and Religious Renewal -----                        | 108        |
| 4.3. The Independence Club and the Waves of Democracy -----                         | 115        |
| 4.4. <i>Mokmingwan</i> (Governor of the People) and Christian Mission -----         | 119        |
| 4.5. Strengthening Self-Reliance in the Midst of Evils -----                        | 127        |
| 4.5.1. Korean Christian Education: Shakespeare or Strawberries? -----               | 132        |
| 4.5.2. <i>Chanmiga</i> (Songs of Praise) as a Response to Missionaries -----        | 138        |
| ✓4.6. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 -----                                 | 143        |
| 4.7. Imprisonment and the Korean YMCA -----   | 149        |
| 4.8. Conclusion -----   | 154        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 5: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Religion, 1921-1931 -----</b>           | <b>156</b> |
| 5.1. Introduction -----   | 156        |
| 5.2. Colonial Exploitation of Land and Korean Nationalism -----                     | 157        |
| 5.3. The Koreans as “Savages” and Practical Education -----                         | 162        |
| 5.4. Reformation and Regression: the Korean YMCA and Songdo School -----            | 168        |
| 5.5. Human Nature and the Golden Rule -----   | 174        |
| 5.6. The Bible as a History of Conquest and God as the “Father of All Men” -----    | 178        |
| 5.7. Two Koreas, Reconciliation, and the Union of 1930 -----                        | 182        |
| 5.8. The Image of God or Sinful Human? -----  | 186        |
| 5.9. Conclusion -----   | 189        |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Chapter 6: War and Theodicy, 1931-35</b> .....                                 | <b>191</b> |
| 6.1. Introduction .....   | 191        |
| 6.2. Making a Theodicy in a Sinful World .....                                    | 192        |
| 6.3. Fear and Forgiveness .....   | 196        |
| 6.4. Shinto and Sword .....   | 200        |
| 6.5. Korea as “an Ireland in East Asia” .....                                     | 204        |
| 6.6. Christian Missionaries: Friends or Masters? .....                            | 210        |
| 6.7. Religions: Christianity, Shinto, and Confucianism .....                      | 211        |
| 6.8. Religion and War .....   | 214        |
| 6.9. Conclusion .....   | 218        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 7: “A Scotland of Japan”: Imposing Japanese Identity, 1936-45</b> ---- | <b>219</b> |
| 7.1. Introduction .....   | 219        |
| 7.2. Colonial Unification as Assimilation .....                                   | 220        |
| 7.2.1. <i>Heung Eop</i> Club Incident, 1938 .....                                 | 223        |
| 7.2.2. Terrors, Tortures, and Two Masters .....                                   | 228        |
| 7.2.3. Japanese Nationalism as a Religion .....                                   | 232        |
| 7.3. Yun Chi-ho’s Unification: Equality and Diversity .....                       | 234        |
| 7.4. Patriotic Christians and the Proselytized Korean Church .....                | 240        |
| 7.5. When Might Turns Right, Who Can Throw the Stone at Japan? .....              | 244        |
| 7.6. Imposing Identity: from Yun Chi-ho to Ito Chikau .....                       | 248        |
| 7.7. Faith and Religions: “One Step Enough for Me” .....                          | 253        |
| 7.8. Conclusion .....   | 256        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 8: The Legacy of Yun Chi-ho: Mission as Transformation</b> .....       | <b>258</b> |
| 8.1. Introduction .....   | 258        |
| 8.2. Yun Chi-ho’s View on Peace and Reconciliation .....                          | 260        |
| 8.3. The First Letter for Reconciliation .....                                    | 262        |
| 8.4. The Second Letter for Embrace and Forgiveness .....                          | 267        |
| 8.5. <i>Aegukga</i> (Patriotic Song) as a Patriotic Hymn .....                    | 274        |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 8.6. Confucian Influence in Yun's Model -----                        | 278        |
| 8.6.1. Benevolent Paternalism as a Confucian Political Ideal -----   | 278        |
| 8.6.2. Confucian Harmony and Peace in the World -----                | 283        |
| 8.7. Yun Chi-ho's Model of Christian Mission as Transformation ----- | 287        |
| 8.7.1. Christian Education for Life -----                            | 287        |
| 8.7.2. Constructing a New Korean Identity -----                      | 292        |
| 8.7.3. Mutual Learning in Respect and Love -----                     | 296        |
| 8.8. Conclusion -----  | 299        |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Conclusion -----</b>  | <b>301</b> |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Bibliography -----</b>  | <b>304</b> |



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ACC = Anglo-Chinese College, Shanghai
- CA = *Confucian Analects*
- CCC = Chosen Christian College (Yeonhi College), Seoul
- CWPR = Chicago World Parliament of Religions, 1893
- DM = *The Doctrine of the Mean*
- EWMC = Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, 1910
- GL = *The Great Learning*
- HEC = *Heung Eop* Club, a secret independence club
- IKCHS = Institute of Korean Church History Studies
- KJV = King James Version of the Bible
- KMC = Korean Methodist Church (Since the Union of 1930)
- LN = League of Nations
- MECS = Methodist Episcopal Church, South
- MFIM = March First Independence Movement, 1919
- NC = National Council
- NHCC = National History Compilation Committee
- NM = National Mobilization
- NMEC = Northern Methodist Episcopal Church
- NRSV = New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- PFC = Positive Faith League
- PG = Provisional Government of Korea, Shanghai, China (1919-1945)
- RS = Religious Studies
- Rumination* = *An Old-Man's Rumination, 1945*
- Songdo School = Songdo Higher Common School (former Anglo-Korean School)
- USA = United States of America
- WGPS = West Gate Police Station
- WM = *The Works of Mencius*
- YD = *Yun Chi-ho's Diary*
- YL = *Yun Chi-ho's Letter(s)*
- YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association
- YWCA = Young Women's Christian Association

## GLOSSARY

- Aekukgaemongundong* = Patriotic enlightenment movements
- Aegukga* = “The song of love for the country,” the Korean National Anthem
- Changssigaemyeong* = “Changing Korean names into Japanese style”
- Chanmiga* = “Songs of Praise,” hymns
- Cheondogyo* = “Heavenly way religion/sect,” a Korean new religion
- Cheongnyeonhaekuhoe* = Young students’ society
- Chinilpa* = “Pro-Japanese group,” a traitor with the nationalist discourse
- Gaehwagi* = An era of transition
- Gamri* = Superintendent, lawyer, and governor
- Ge* = Credit union
- Gunja* = A virtuous person, a gentleman, an ideal of Confucianism
- Guksadang* = “Korean National Shrine”
- Hananim* = An indigenous Korean god, the Korean idea of the high god
- Hangeul* = Korean indigenous language
- Heung Eop Club* = The club of promoting industry, a secret independence club
- Ilpyeondansim* = “A piece of red mind,” loyalty
- Jaganghoe* = The society of self-strengthening, a Korean nationalist movement
- Jeolgae* = “royalty,” a Confucian virtue
- Joseon* = The last Korean dynasty (1392-1910)
- Jungyong* = “The mean,” a Confucian virtue
- Minjung* = The masses, people
- Mokmingwan* = A governor of people, a righteous governor
- Mugyo* = A Korean indigenous religion, Korean Shamanism
- Naeseonilchae* = The Unification of the Japanese and the Koreans, a colonial policy
- Sansinnim* = The mountain god
- Silhak* = “Practical Learning,” a Neo-Confucian school in Korea
- Sinminhoe* = New People Society, an cultural independence movement
- Tobagi* = the Indigenous, resident, the native
- Wangdo* = “Kingly Way,” an ideal Confucian government by a virtuous king
- Yangban* = High class rulers during the Joseon dynasty
- Yangdaein* = “Western great man or giant,” Westerners, including missionaries

## INTRODUCTION

The ultimate aim of the historian of religions is to understand, and to make understandable to others, religious man's behavior and mental universe.<sup>1</sup>

Humans have various dimensions of their lives: political, economic, intellectual, moral, and religious. Though these cannot be separated from one another, Religious Studies as an academic discipline attempts to study the religious dimension of humans empirically. As Mircea Eliade claims, a historian of religions should place oneself inside the universe in order to understand its values to a religious person. The religious person believes that there is an absolute reality, which Eliade often calls "the sacred." The reality transcends the world, but at the same time it gives a religious person, who lives a life in the world, meaning. It is important to notice that Eliade attempts to make a clear distinction between a *religious (or ancient)* and *non-religious (or modern/profane) person*. As society became urbanized and modernized, the non-religious person developed. Regarding herself/himself as the subject and agent of history, the non-religious person refuses to appeal all to transcendence. Regardless of her or his awareness, however, a non-religious person fails to completely do away with religious behavior, for religious heritage is part of individual identity.

Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945) was a religious man, who experienced conversion and devoted his life to Christian mission in the midst of political turmoil, modernization, and Japanese colonialism. This thesis will examine the religious dimension of Yun's life and thought, which previous researchers have largely ignored, partly because they regarded the religious dimension as a private, marginal, or trivial in the relation with public life.

✓ The main research questions of the thesis are the following: First, how did Korean religious traditions affect Yun's idea of Christian mission and education? How did his religious ideas develop in his association with educational and ecumenical work? Secondly, why did Yun as a Christian leader collaborate with

---

<sup>1</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane – the Nature of Religion*, trans. by Willard Trask (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), 162.

colonialists in 1940s? And how did his religious conviction justify (or support) this collaboration? Thirdly, how did Yun understand religion in general and Christianity in particular? And how did this understanding influence his attitude toward other religions and his own faith?

Concerning the methodology of this thesis, I connect Religious Studies (RS) ✓ with World Christianity as an interdisciplinary means of understanding human religiosity in the Korean context. RS includes such different methodological approaches as history, phenomenology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and theology. Robert Segal and Donald Wiebe advocate a clear separation between the scientific study of religion and theology, whereas Frank Whaling claims that transcendence and personal faith should be also discussed in RS from a non-theological perspective.<sup>2</sup> Locating the theology of world religions within an integrated RS, Whaling asserts that Theology is different from RS. Theology deals with a particular religious tradition,<sup>3</sup> whereas RS is concerned with all religious traditions of the world. But a more fundamental difference is found in the objects of the study as Whaling points out,

The proper realm of theology is that of the science or knowledge of God. God or transcendence are [sic] central to the concerns of theology because the very word itself has to do with *theos*, God. If theology chooses *not* to concern itself with Ultimate Reality, legitimate questions can be asked and explanations are in order. Religious Studies, by contrast, is involved more in the study of religious data and in the religiousness of human beings. It is concerned to chart the history of different religious traditions and to explore the manifold data of religious traditions. It is concerned also to examine the intentions and the faith of believers. However its primary interest lies in the human side rather than the divine side of the religious equation. That which believers respond to, the object of their faith, is not the direct concern of Religious Studies. The religious dimension of human beings rather than Ultimate Reality as such is the legitimate concern of Religious Studies.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology and World Religions – A Global Approach* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 111. Whaling makes it clear that Christian Theology and RS “may overlap but they are not to be confused.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 128

In spite of these differences, Whaling is convinced that both RS and Theology complement each other because Theology can renew itself through its encounter with world religions as follows:

To know the religion of another is more than being cognisant of the facts of the other's religious tradition. It involves getting inside the skin of the other, it involves walking in the other's shoes, it involves seeing the world in some sense as the other sees it, it involves asking the other's questions, it involves getting inside the other's sense of 'being a Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, or whatever.'... The difference from dialogue is that passing over has the theological motive of renewing one's own theological insight by getting inside the theological consciousness of another.<sup>5</sup>

The interdisciplinary study of RS and Theology has the potential to contribute to mutual learning and dialogical exchange, but, in my view, its practical result does not seem necessary for a historian of religions. Distancing the scientific study of religions from confessional theology, World Christianity offers scholars a more viable interconnection between RS and non-confessional theology.

World Christianity, which is an interdisciplinary field rather than an academic discipline, pays more attention to the complexity of Christian interaction with indigenous religious traditions and its historical context than confessional theology does. When indigenous people in the non-Western world, including Africa, South America, and Asia, convert to Christianity, new forms of Christianity are created through the religious creativity of indigenous agents. Instead of previous religious traditions being removed from the cognitive horizons of indigenous people, they are interconnected or intermingled with the historical form of Christianity, as Eliade comments,

It is true that most of these rural European populations have been Christianized for over a thousand years. But they succeeded in incorporating into their Christianity a considerable part of their pre-Christian religious heritage, which was of immemorial antiquity. It would be wrong to suppose that for this reason European peasants are not Christians. But we must recognize that their religion is not confined to the historical forms of Christianity, that it still retains a

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-130.

cosmic structure that has been almost entirely lost in the experience of urban Christians. We may speak of a primordial, ahistorical Christianity; becoming Christians, the European cultivators incorporated into their new faith the cosmic religion that they had preserved from prehistoric times.<sup>6</sup>

The issues of continuity and identity in the process of conversion and mission have been discussed, particularly in the study of world religions as missionary religions, most notably Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.<sup>7</sup> The Buddha commanded his converts: “O monks, I am free from all the human and divine bonds and you, also are freed from them. Go forth, and walk, ... out of compassion for the world.”<sup>8</sup> Jesus also told his disciples: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”<sup>9</sup> The Qur’an also contains imperatives to spread Islam like this: “Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way.”<sup>10</sup> Confucianism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Shinto have less emphasis on missions due to their cultural and historical heritage, but some branches of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Bahai, and Hinduism are becoming missionary religions. Therefore, Mission Studies assumes the complexity of inter-religious encounter and cultural exchange in a historical context.

Andrew Walls, a Scottish historian, advocates the study of missions and World Christianity. He argues that Christian history has always been a battleground for two opposing tendencies – the *indigenizing principle* and the *pilgrim principle*.<sup>11</sup> A Christian has the desire to live as a Christian separate from other’s influences and

---

<sup>6</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 164.

<sup>7</sup> Max Stackhouse, “Missions: Missionary Activity,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 563-570.

<sup>8</sup> Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism – from the Origins to the Saka Era*, tans. by Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Universite Catholique de Louvain Institut Orientaliste: 1988), 297.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28: 18-20, NRSV.

<sup>10</sup> Surah 16: 126, A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London: Allen and Urwin, 1955, reprinted 1996)

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 7-9.

yet as a member of one's own society to make the Church "a place to feel at home." Before encountering the Christian tradition, believers have been conditioned by their context, so even after the conversion they continued to be influenced by their pre-Christian culture and history. In contrast, the pilgrim principle is a universalizing factor, which associates Christians with things and people outside the culture and group. Therefore, every Christian has "dual nationality" in the sense that she or he has a loyalty to the faith community, which links her or him to those groups opposed to that to which she or he belongs by nature. Therefore, Walls says, "it was impossible either to ignore the previous system of ideas, or to abandon it, or to leave it as it was. It had to be penetrated, invaded, and brought into relation with the word about Christ and the Scriptures which contained it."<sup>12</sup>

Lamin Sanneh, a historian of religions, compares Christianity and Islam in the light of the translatability.<sup>13</sup> According to Sanneh, there have been two methods of missions – *diffusion* and *translation*. The model of mission as diffusion is to make the missionary culture the inseparable carrier of the message. Religions like Islam expand from their initial culture base and are implanted in other societies primarily as a matter of cultural identity. Therefore, the Arabic language and Islamic law are indispensable elements in Muslim missions. By contrast, the model of mission as translation is to make the recipient culture the true and final locus of the proclamation, so that the religion arrives without the presumption of cultural rejection. For Sanneh, Islam has historically aligned itself with mission as diffusion, whereas Christianity generally follows the pattern of mission as translation.

From a religious perspective, the value and meaning of Yun's works can be understood in a historical context. Therefore, it should be noted that Yun's thought gradually changed throughout his whole life, whenever external socio-political and religio-cultural forces challenged him to seek a new meaning in life, resulting in new horizons. Facing the terror of war and colonialism, Yun kept diaries for sixty years,

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>13</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message – The Missionary Impact on the Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989) 29.

from 1883 to 1943,<sup>14</sup> thereby offering us his own reflections on Christian mission, education, and religion in general. The thesis assumes that Yun's diaries, letters,<sup>15</sup> works, and speeches were developed primarily as his creative responses to the many activities in which he was involved: Christian mission, Christian higher education, Japanese colonialism, the ecumenical movement, Korean nationalism and identity.

The thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter, which contains a short biographical sketch of Yun, examines previous interpretations of Yun's life and thought with their characteristics and limitations. Categorizing the existing approaches into three main trends of biographical, confessional, and reductive interpretations, I will point to the necessity of a religious interpretation in order to understand Yun's religious creativity.

The second chapter describes the history of religions in Korea, which influenced Yun's life and thought. Emphasizing the syncretistic (or pluralistic) nature of Korean religions, I address the central symbols of Korean religious traditions, including the city as a religious space, *Hananim* (an indigenous concept of god), and the Korean social hierarchy during the Joseon dynasty. Then, I explain individual religious traditions – *Mugyo*, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity, focusing on their syncretistic and missionary characteristics. In the section of Confucian and Christian traditions, I will focus on the educational and practical trends.

The third chapter, covering the period 1883 to 1895, deals with the influence of Confucian reformers on Yun's ideas and his conversion through Christian education. Along with his theological studies, I will mention Yun's personal experience of racial discrimination that allowed him to empathize with the black community in the USA. It is important to notice that Yun attempted to construct a

---

<sup>14</sup> NHCC, comp. *Yun Chi-Ho's Diary, 1883-1906*, 6 vols. (Seoul: Tamgudang, 1973-1976) and *Yun Chi-Ho's Diary, 1916-1943*, 5 vols. (Seoul: Sisamunhwasa, 1986-1989). Emory University (Atlanta, USA) has his original diaries, but the parts of 1907 to 1915 are missing. According to the witness of his family, the Japanese police confiscated them due to his involvement of 105 Persons Incident, 1912. During his three-years imprisonment (from 1912 to 1915), he could not keep them under close surveillance and control. Henceforth I will abbreviate references to these diaries as "YD."

<sup>15</sup> NHCC, comp. *The Collected Letters of Yun Tchi Ho* (Seoul: Sisamunhwasa, 1980). These letters cover the period of 1883 to 1945. Henceforth I will abbreviate references to these letters as "YL."



Korean theology of spirituality and criticized the agenda of the World Parliament of Religions in the light of Christian missions.

The fourth chapter, covering the period 1895 to 1920, discusses the major turning points in Yun's religious commitment. I will explore why political failures in governmental reform, the independence movement, and local administration reform caused Yun to commit himself to Christian mission. I will examine the characteristics of his distinctive understanding of Christian education, hymn writing, and Christian mission. It should be noted that his imprisonment changed his attitude towards colonialists, from nationalist to collaborative.

The fifth chapter, which covers the period 1921 to 1931, addresses Yun's responses to different ideologies such as colonialism, nationalism, racism, and communism, and his commitment to the YMCA and Songdo School. The key point is that Yun's understanding of human nature and God made analyzing history more complicated and ambiguous.

The sixth chapter, covering the period 1931 to 1935, deals with Yun's effort to build a theodicy in the midst of war and colonialism, and examines his perspective on the conflict between Northern and Southern Koreans and his criticism of Western missionaries. It is important to note that his understanding of world religions developed gradually into a general concept of religion.

The seventh chapter, covering the period 1936 to 1945, focuses on Yun's actual collaboration with colonialists under the severe oppression of imposing Japanese identity upon Koreans. The point is that Yun was different from colonialists in interpreting the policy of unification between the Japanese and the Koreans.

The eighth chapter examines Yun's legacy in Korean Christianity, particularly his model of mission as transformation. By analyzing his last works in 1945, *Rumination* and *Aegukga*, I will address Yun's view on peace and reconciliation, with "benevolent paternalism," his alternative political system to democracy and communism. I will then explain his contributions to Christian mission in three ways: Christian education, Korean identity, and mutual learning.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF YUN CHI-HO (1865-1945)

#### 1.1. Introduction

A historic religion ... is a form, an organized system. Nonetheless its characteristics are not fixed and rigid; rather they are in perpetual flux: *not manufactured but growing*, and in a state of incessant expansion. "Every religion, therefore, has its own previous history and is to a certain extent a 'syncretism.' Then comes the time when, from being a summation, it becomes a whole and obeys its own law."... Every historic religion, therefore, is not one, but several; not of course as being the sum of different forms, but in the sense that diverse forms had approximated to its own form and had amalgamated with this. This is true of even the great, and so-called world, religions, to a quite specific degree. Restricting ourselves to Christianity and Islam, for example, these are from the dynamic view point *syncretism*; and thus in Christianity we find, together with the inheritance of Israel, that of Greece and even a small bequest from Persia; and the scars on the amalgam, especially that of the Greek and Israelite spirit, have not yet completely healed! In Islam, similarly, Christianity, Judaism, and primitive religion met and fused together into a unique form.<sup>16</sup>

According to van der Leeuw, religion is not a "manufactured" concept but "dynamic" phenomenon because of its characteristics of mission, reformation, and revival.<sup>17</sup> Addressing "syncretistic"<sup>18</sup> dimension of religion, he argues that mutual influence occurs when different religions encounter each other. Though they appear to remain static, the meaning and structure of religious systems continues to be altered, especially during the reformations and missions. "The old possessions of religions were superseded to only a slight extent and retained in essentials with an altered significance."<sup>19</sup> When religions contact each other, they exchange their worldviews. Whenever such an encounter occurs among religions, a new meaning is added to the existing system. By the same token, as a Confucian Yun Chi-ho

---

<sup>16</sup> G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation – A Study in Phenomenology*. trans. by J. E. Turner (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963) 609-610. It should be noted that van der Leeuw argues that Shinto is a "religion free from syncretism, and therefore one that lacks a mission!" In this respect, he equates Shinto with Japanese nationalism.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 609-617.

<sup>18</sup> Van der Leeuw uses the term "syncretism" in two ways. First, it refers to a particular phenomenon as "the process leading from polydemonism to polytheism." Secondly, it indicates that the change of religious meanings and systems is to do with the dynamic of religions in a general sense. In this chapter, I refer to this second use.

<sup>19</sup> Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 611.

encountered a new religion, Christianity, in the late nineteenth century and as a result devoted himself to Christian mission and education in the early twentieth century. Enduring the oppression of Japanese colonialists, he attempted to construct a new Korean identity.

In this chapter, with a short biographical sketch of Yun, which captures significant event in chronological order, I will examine previous interpretations, including biographical, political, psychological, and sociological approaches, with four types of Christian historiography, which I have classified as “confessional” interpretation. Biographical works have focused on two different images of Yun, particularly under external pressures of colonialist and nationalist discourses. Examining the different views of insider and outsider, I will then point out the necessity of a religious interpretation that overcomes both the radical view of outsiders (or reductionism) and the confessional view of insiders (or parochialism).

### ***1.2. A Short Biographical Sketch of Yun Chi-ho***

On 23 January 1865, Yun Chi-ho was born in Asan, Southern Korea, the first son of the high class Confucian aristocrat, Yun Ung-ryeol (1840-1911), who later became Minister of Law and then Minister of Defence in the Korean Government, and his mother, Jeonju Lee (1844-1936). Yun belonged to the clan of Heyeong Yun, and his pen name was Jwaong (a sitting old man).

At the age of four, Yun studied Chinese with Jang, a local tutor. When he was eight years old, he moved to Seoul and studied Chinese classics under Kim Jeong-eon, a relative of the progressive Confucian, Seo Kwang-bum. At the age of fourteen, he studied with another progressive Confucian, Eo Yun-jung, and married Gang (who died in 1886). In 1881, when King Gojong ordered Eo and other Confucian reform-minded scholars to investigate modernization in Japan, Yun visited Japan with his teacher. After this commission was completed, Yun remained there to study Japanese and Western knowledge at Dojinsha School, a college founded by Nakamura Masanao (1832-1891), a Meiji Confucian reformer. Following the advice of Kim Ok-gyun, he studied English and became an interpreter of the Seoul American Legation in 1883.

After Confucian reformists, including his mentor Kim Ok-gyun, failed to achieve political hegemony in 1884, Yun fled into exile in Shanghai due to his involvement with the failed coup d'état (Gapsin Jeongbyeon). There, he entered the Anglo-Chinese College (later merged into Soochuw University in 1900), a Christian college, where he studied English, Chinese, and Western knowledge under Young John Allen (1836-1907) and W. B. Bonnell, American Southern Methodist missionaries. Under their tutelage, Yun became the first Korean Southern Methodist to be baptized in 1887.

In 1888, Yun went to the United States and studied theology at Vanderbilt University and then he began postgraduate courses at Emory College (later Emory University). He joined YMCA movement and frequently gave speeches on the foreign mission of East Asia in order to raise funds for missions in Korea. Encountering African American spirituality, Yun realized the importance of education. In 1893, he attended the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, witnessing the revival of Asian religions and realizing the necessity of Christian mission in action.

On his return to Shanghai, Yun taught English at the Anglo-Chinese College and married Ma Ae-bang (1871-1905), a Chinese Christian.<sup>20</sup> After Japan defeated China in 1895, he resigned his teaching post in Shanghai and returned to Korea. He became Secretary of the Korean government, Vice-Minister of Education, and then Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1896, he was ordered to attend the coronation of Nicholas II in Russia. On his return to Korea, he had an opportunity to stay in Paris and sent his *Confession* to friends.

In 1897, Yun joined the Independence Club and in the following year he became its President. After King Gojong dismissed the club in 1899, Yun was appointed as a local governor. For the next five years, he worked as mayor of four different towns in Northern Korea and Southern Korea. After Japan defeated Russia in 1904, he became Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs once again. When the Treaty of Protectorate was signed, however, he ended his political career.

---

<sup>20</sup> Yun's first wife Gang died in Korea during his exile in Shanghai and Ma also died in 1905.

In 1906, Yun became President of *Jaganghoe* (society of self-strengthening). He founded the Anglo-Korean School, a Southern Methodist college in Songdo and worked as its first Principal (1906-1912). In the following year, he married Baek Maere. In 1908, Yun also became Principal of Daeseong School in Pyeongyang and the President of *Cheongnyeonhakuho* (young students' society). As the only Korean, ✓ Yun attended the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. But after returning home, he was arrested in connection with the conspiracy to assassinate Governor-General Terauchi in 1912. During his three-year imprisonment, he studied the Bible and experienced a life-changing religious encounter.

After he was released in 1915, Yun became more involved in the YMCA movements and was appointed as General Secretary of Seoul YMCA in 1916, its President in 1920, and Chair of the National Korean YMCA in 1930. He became Vice-President of the Korean Branch of the Pan Pacific Institute in 1921 and then its President in 1925. He once again served as the Principal of Songdo Higher Common School (formerly the Anglo-Korean School) between 1922 and 1925, and became President of the Korean Sports Association in 1928.

In the 1930s, Yun opposed the Positive Faith League, led by his successor Cynn Heung-u, General Secretary of Seoul YMCA (1920-1935). He played an important role in uniting Northern and Southern Methodist Churches into one Korean Methodist Church in 1930, and he received a honorary Doctor of Law degree from Emory University. Later, he became President of *Heungeopgurakbu*, a secret branch of independence movement.

Yun worked as a board member of Chosen Christian College (1924-1930 and 1932-1942, later Yonsei University) and became its first Korean President in 1941, but he refused the post of President of Ewha College in 1934 and of Boseong College (later Korea University) in 1935. He was arrested because of his association with Heungeop Club and was forced to confess his guilt in the public. In 1940, Yun changed his Korean name to the Japanese name "Ito Chikau" and received a prize of merit from colonial government.

During World War II (1937-1945), Yun collaborated with the colonial government by supporting national movements such as General Mobilization of National Spirit (1938), Anti-English Society (1939), and the Total Strength of the

Nation (1940). He gave speeches in support of the colonial policy of Unification and in support of voluntary student soldiers. He was appointed Counselor of the Privy Council in 1941. In 1945, shortly before World War II ended, he became a member of the Diet in Japan and died of a stroke in Songdo on 6 December at the age of eighty.

### ***1.3. A Korean Christian in Action: Kim Yeong-hi's (1934) Portrait***

In 1934, Kim Yeong-hi published a hagiographical biography to celebrate Yun's seventieth birthday. Kim was a graduate of the Chosen Christian College and of Vanderbilt University (B.D. and M.A.) and completed his Ph.D. at Yale University in 1929. He returned to Korea and worked at Songdo Higher Common School and the Social Evangelistic Centre. When he wrote Yun's biography, he was probably working as Librarian at Ewha College. It took about one year for Kim to finish what he described as his "incomplete" biography.<sup>21</sup> He interviewed Yun and his friends, and visited many cities in order to collect memories and documents.

Kim describes Yun as a "religious man" with Christian ethics and a highly respected character. Claiming that "Yun's life was *always religious*,"<sup>22</sup> he argues that Yun "loved Korea and practiced Korean (moral and cultural) strengths in his action." For Kim, Yun was actively involved in Korean society, but still kept his Christian integrity intact. Therefore, he argues that Yun was "a Korean gentleman," who found a balance between Christian character and Confucian ideals, especially *Jungyong* (the mean) and *Jeolgae* (royalty).

Kim's biography contains many details about Yun's early education, which his diary failed to offer. First, Yun's early dream was revealed. As a private tutor, Jang was strict about Yun's education and daily life. When he was seven years old, Yun spent the winter studying with Jang at *Baeknyeonam*, a Buddhist temple. While studying the beauty of nature, Yun learned to offer the following prayer to the mountain god: "*Sansinnim* (Mountain god), help me to become Governor of

---

<sup>21</sup> Kim indicates that this biography is "incomplete," because he doesn't have enough time to collect information, or enough space to edit the information collected. It is more important that colonial government forced the publisher to omit 874 lines before publishing the final draft.

<sup>22</sup> Kim Yeong-hi, *Jwaong Yun Chi-ho Seunsang Yakjeon* (A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho), 1934, reprinted (Seoul: Jwaong Yun Chi-ho munhwasaephoe, 1999), 310-311, my italics.

Southern Junra Province. All I want to do is to become Governor of Junra Providence.”<sup>23</sup> Cultivating oneself and then practicing one’s virtues in government was a Confucian ideal.

Secondly, Kim described Yun’s early contact with Japanese reformers. While he was studying Japanese and Western knowledge at Dojinsha School, Yun seems to have been influenced by its founder, Nakamura Masanao, “who was good at Confucian classics and supported Christianity enthusiastically.”<sup>24</sup> However, Nakamura developed an anti-missionary attitude after a Western missionary, who had rented his house, cut trees in its garden without his permission. Nakamura even persuaded the Japanese Emperor to convert to Christianity, advocating Western education. It seems likely that Yun’s teachers, including Masanao, influenced his view on Christian education and his intimate but critical attitude to Western missionaries. With regard to international relations, Kim sees Korea as a “salve” under China’s Emperor. As Interpreter of the American Legation, Yun took a political centrist position, somewhere between the Progressive Party (or Liberal Party) and the Conservative Party. The former reformed Korean society based upon the examples of Japan’s modernization, while the latter sought to preserve the traditional relationship with China. Yun’s political position seems to have been closer to the Progressive Party, which he advised General Foote to support.<sup>25</sup>

Thirdly, Kim deals with Yun’s earlier contribution to the opening of Protestant Missions in Korea. In July 1884, Yun persuaded Kim Ok-gyun and other officials to appeal to King Gojong, and received his permission to begin Christian missions of education and medicine. In this sense, the beginning of Protestant missions was a result of a political decision made by the Korean King and government officials, rather than a religious motivation of the Koreans themselves. Even though he was a Confucian, Yun was convinced that American missionaries would promote the spread of education, development of civilization, and political

---

<sup>23</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 46.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

renewal according to the Western pattern.<sup>26</sup> At Easter 1885, soon after Yun left for Shanghai, the first American missionaries arrived at the West coast of Korea. Scranton founded Ewha School for women, and Appenzeller began Bejae School for men. In Shanghai, Yun experienced conversion after having regular contacts with missionaries and submitted himself to the “God of love and morality,” arguing that “love is the essence of the universe.”<sup>27</sup>

Fourthly, Kim examines how Yun’s missionary mind was formed in the United States and how he later committed to evangelism and Christian mission. After completing his secondary schooling in Shanghai, Yun was admitted to Vanderbilt University as a “special student.” According to Kim, Yun’s desire to introduce the Korean Church to a Western audience motivated him to give itinerant speeches on Korea and he founded an attentive audience because the themes of Japan and China dominated the consciousness of American intellectuals.<sup>28</sup> During this period, Yun became “a great resource to develop Southern Methodist mission in Korea.” After moving to Emory College, he was also influenced by Candler’s vision “to evangelize the whole world.” Yun donated two hundred dollars<sup>29</sup> to open a Christian school in Korea, which Kim regards as “the first case in Korea Mission History.”<sup>30</sup> After returning to Shanghai, he taught English and married Ma Laura, a Chinese graduate of McTyeire Home and School<sup>31</sup> in March 1894. But the assassination of his mentor, Kim Ok-gyun by the Korean government in Shanghai terrified Yun. The year after he came back to Korea, he became Vice-Minister of Education and helped the Southern Methodist Mission to start their work. Bishop Hendrik and Dr. Reid visited Korea and bought land for the first mission station of the Southern Methodist Church. In the 1880s and 1890s missionaries were deeply involved in Korean politics. After the Japanese assassinated Queen Min in 1895, Underwood and other missionaries

---

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93.

<sup>29</sup> Kim later mentions two hundred fifty dollars instead of two hundred dollars. In fact, this money was spent in meeting debts of Yun’s American education, not in supporting missionary works in Korea.

<sup>30</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Laura Askew Haygood (1845-1900) founded this school in 1892 with help of Young John Allen.



stayed with King Gojong for security at the palace. With the missionaries, Yun Ung-ryeol (Yun Chi-ho's father) and pro-Russian politicians attempted to rescue the King from the hands of pro-Japanese politicians. This plan failed, so Yun Ung-ryeol went into exile in Shanghai under the protection of Methodist missionaries.

Fifthly, Kim gives us detailed information about Yun's political career as a local administrator, major, and judge. In May 1896, Yun attended the coronation ceremony of Nicholas II with Min Yeong-hwan. After he returned to Korea in 1897, Yun became a leader of the Independence Club and an editor of *the Independent*, the first English-Korean newspaper. Criticizing corruption of government and promoting democracy amongst the Koreans, his supporters regarded Yun as even a future leader of the Republic Government. Prime Minister Jo Byeong-sik attempted to assassinate Yun, but failed. The club was dismissed and Yun was removed "from the centre of power to its margin,"<sup>32</sup> where he started to reform the Korean society on a local level. Yun first worked as a *Gamri*<sup>33</sup> (superintendent) of Deokweon, located in North Eastern Korea for one and half years. Kim described Yun as a reformer and righteous *Mokminkwan* (an official who governs his subject) in that he recovered order and improved the condition of his people. He also solved the problem of Catholic missionaries, called *Yangdaein* (western great man) by Kim, who misused extraterritorial rights and played the role of judge and local administrator. By contrast, Yun sought to protect his people from tax collectors of the central government by reforming local administration and giving fair judgment on legal issues. According to Kim, Yun "attempted to build a peaceful village on the basis of democracy and public opinion without any foreign intervention or oppression of central government."<sup>34</sup> He forbade deforestation, set up a new school for youths, and planned to send the most talented Korean students to Japan's military academy. But accusing Yun of "loving subjects too much and harming government," the central government dismissed him from office. Yun was appointed *Gamri* of

---

<sup>32</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 172.

<sup>33</sup> In Korea, ten cities including Pyeong Yang, Samhwa, Changwon, had the post of *Gamri*. As a local diplomatic judge, his main role was to deal with affairs between Koreans and foreigners.

<sup>34</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 179. Yun seemed to have an idea of "ideal village," which he later applied to Songdo.

Samhwa, located in North Western Korea, where he continued to reform administration and remove social evils such as *Ge* (credit union), bribery, and swindling, encouraging the knowledge of Korea at *Seodangs* (traditional local primary schools). When the riot of farmers broke out in Weonsan, Yun was re-appointed as *Gamri* of Deonweon and Weonsan and played the role of a peacemaker. Encouraging night schools, and the planting of orchards for apple farming, he enlightened people.<sup>35</sup> According to Kim, Yun said, "Let's love land and preserve it. Let's study all that land can give us. Learning is good, and poem is good. Office is good and scholar is good. But even though there are treasures next to us, don't starve because of ignorance and laziness. Don't lie and eat if we have works to do our best."<sup>36</sup> In December 1901, people in Weonsan built a monument to commemorate Yun's work on behalf of the public.<sup>37</sup> When another riot erupted in Hamheung, Yun investigated the corruption of local administrators and persuaded *Minjung* (the mass) to disperse. In July 1903, he was again sent to be Mayor of Cheonan, located in West Southern Korea, a dangerous town, where miners had murdered his predecessor and attacked farmers. Gambling and violence were often a problem in mining towns, but Yun solved the problem by arresting the ringleaders and the Japanese director of the mines, and exhorting an American owner of these mines. After he became Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in March 1904, Yun rejected a government plan to give Japan the right to clear deserted lands. The predominant images of Yun in Kim's biography are of a Christian in action and a righteous *Mokminkwan* (governor of people). Before and after 1905 when the treaty of protectorate was signed, much information was censored, including Yun's commitment to *Jaganghoe* (the society of self-strengthening) in 1907. Focusing on Yun as an educator related to Anglo-Korean School and YMCA, Kim regards Yun's action as "a lonely shout in the wilderness."<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Yun consulted Baptist missionary M. C. Fenwick and made apple orchards.

<sup>36</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 198.

<sup>37</sup> The following inscription was written in the monument, "Mayor and Judge Yun Chi-ho Memorial, You did your best to save subjects and your sincerity achieved a model of law far away."

<sup>38</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 256.

Finally, Kim recognizes the importance of Yun's international religious networks such as the World Association of Sunday School, Laymen's Conference, and the World Missionary Conference. Kim describes Yun's leadership at the YMCA (1916-1920) and Songdo Higher Common School (1922-1925), as a charity of works. Kim argues that a "Christian social and ethical perspective" formed Yun's life and thought, especially his spirit of social service and charity.

#### ***1.4. A National Hero in a Colonial Tragedy: Kim Eul-han's (1978) Portrait***

Kim Eul-han (1905-1992) published the first complete biography of Yun in 1978. Kim was a journalist who had studied in Waseda University, Japan, and had worked at *Seoul Newspaper*. He describes Yun as "a frontier who met wrong dates" and "a symbol to represent the tragedy of modern Korean history."<sup>39</sup>

Kim focuses on Yun's contribution to Bible translation, the Korea Sports Association, and the Society of Disseminating Scientific Knowledge.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that Kim believed that Yun wrote the Patriotic Song in 1904 on the basis of Kim Dong-seong's witness.<sup>41</sup> When a British naval vessel visited Korea in the autumn of 1904, the officers proposed to King Gojong that their military band play the Korean national anthem. As Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yun was ordered to create a national anthem. He wrote its words and adopted the Scottish tune of Auld Lang Syne.

Contrary to Kim Yeong-hi's biography (1934), which omits many important independence historical events including the Hague Emissaries Accident which forced the abdication of the Korean Emperor in 1907, Kim Eul-han adds these events to his new biography. King Gojong sent three emissaries to the Second World Peace Conference at the Hague, but due to the indifference of world powers, their mission achieved no practical result. Moreover, he mentions various other nationalistic events such as the suicides of Min Yeong-hwan, Jo Byeong-se, Hong Man-sik, and Lee

---

<sup>39</sup> Kim Eul-han, *Jwaong Yun Chi-ho Jeon* (A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho), 1978, reprinted (Seoul: Ulyumunhwasa, 1998), 17-21.

<sup>40</sup> Kim Yong-kwan founded this society and announced the first Day of Science on 19 April 1934. Colonialists dismissed it in 1938 because they were afraid of its potential political danger.

<sup>41</sup> Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 82.

Sang-seul in protest against the Protectorate Treaty in 1905, and the suicide of Lee Jun, one of the Hague emissaries, in 1907. Their opposition movements failed, and served to hasten Japan's occupation. Kim Eul-han addresses the nationalists' assassination of pro-Japanese American politician Stevenson in 1908 and of Ito Hirobumi in 1909. He defends Yun by insisting that he didn't behave as a baron although he became a baron after the death of his father in 1911.<sup>42</sup>

It should be noted that Kim seems to regard Yun's cultural nationalist movement through education and mission as an alternative to the extreme nationalist movements which promoted violence, bombing, and assassination. Yun became President of the Society of Self-Strengthening in 1906 and of the *Sinminhoe* (New People Society) in 1907. Both societies sought for gradual independence on the basis of educational and cultural enlightenment and economic growth among the Koreans.

Concerning Yun's activities in the Korean YMCA, Kim claims that Yun contributed to the protection of the autonomy and unity of the Korean YMCA from the Japanese YMCA. He also holds that Yun was tortured during his imprisonment period (1912 to 1915) and that Yun was "half dead when he was released."<sup>43</sup> For Kim, colonialists used Yun as a "sacrifice offering" in order to oppress secret independence movements, to arrest Christian leaders, and to suppress the independence spirit. Kim even argued that Yun regretted remaining in Korea when he experienced aggressive and oppressive colonial policies such as Changing Names and Oneness of Japanese and Koreans, especially when Yun's aged mother died in February 1936.

One very positive aspects of Kim Eul-han's biography is that he covers a period which the former biographer, Kim Yeong-hi, was unable to touch – from 1934 to 1945. Japan's invasions of Manchuria in 1931 and of China in 1935, and *Changssigaemyeong* (changing Korean names into Japanese style) in 1939, were analyzed from Japan's colonial and nationalistic point of view. Kim pays more attention to the *Heungeopgurakbu* (club of promoting industry) Incident in 1938, which later scholars regard as a turning point of Yun's collaboration. Addressing the

---

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

nationalistic character of the club, Kim insists that it was a secret independence society which sought to raise independence funds and unite Koreans in the name of the enlightenment of people and the encouragement of industrial growth. Japanese police arrested its members and tortured them. The President, Yun, and other members were released due to the reporting of the press that spurred the intervention of Japanese moderate politicians.<sup>44</sup>

Kim Eul-han explains Yun's collaboration as "the last method to protect educational and religious institutions from the persecution of colonialists." His compromise with colonialists left an indelible stain on his name, but Kim claims that under colonial policies such as the policy of Shinto Shrine visitation, the volunteer system for military service, forced labour, and conscription, Yun played a role as "breakwater in lessening the damages upon Korean communities."<sup>45</sup> Kim claims that after two Korean newspapers were forced to cease publication in 1940, Yun became "anti-Japanese." However, Kim doesn't offer enough evidence to prove this sympathetic evaluation of Yun's collaboration.

In addition, Kim examines the political situation soon after independence in 1945 and notes Yun's anti-Japanese stance. The Soviet Union army occupied Northern Korea including Songdo where Yun stayed, while the American army controlled Southern Korea. There were conflicts and tensions between the USA and the USSR, nationalists and communists, and pro-protectorate and anti-protectorate among the Koreans. When the United States occupied Seoul in September 1945, the Soviet Union army withdrew from Songdo. During these political events, Yun wrote two English letters, which he named "*An Old Man's Ruminations*," to Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, Commander of the United States Occupation Forces in Southern Korea. As Kim indicates, Yun argued that pro-Japanese Koreans except "wicked" ones should be granted amnesty and that planting democracy or communism in Korea was premature.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-136.

One of the strengths of Kim's biography was that it gives us information about Yun's death in detail. Kim writes that on his way home from the dentist, Yun lost consciousness and was in a coma for a week. He died from a stroke on 6 December 1945. His funeral service was held at *Jonggyo* Church in Seoul, and his body was buried at the family cemetery in Asan. Kim's biography gives us important events about Yun's latter life even though it was written without the benefit of Yun's diaries and letters. One of his main arguments was that Yun's collaboration with the Japanese government was a forced action under severe persecution.

### ***1.5. Insiders' Views: Confessional Interpretations***

Korean Christians frequently utilize a historiography that interprets events and reconstructs the meaning of their faith in history. There have been four main distinguishing research paradigms in the study of Korean Christianity: *mission* church history; *nationalistic* church history; *minjung* (the mass or people) church history; and *holistic* church history.<sup>47</sup> Though Yun has been interpreted according to each methodology, they all seem to have defended Yun and his Christian identity by concentrating on his early positive contribution to Korean society and Christian mission, and regard his latter collaboration as a forced action and even an expression of a patriotic mind towards the suffering Koreans.

First, Paik Lak-jun,<sup>48</sup> a *mission* church historian, sees Western Christianity as the subject of Korean Church History. Using this lens, a Korean Christian history is interpreted as one part of the expansion of Western Christianity. Paik argues that Yun represented a minority view of the educated Korean Christians that saw Christianity as a solution "to save the country by injecting into it a new faith and a new moral dynamic."<sup>49</sup> Yun's position is distinguished from the majority view of his

---

<sup>47</sup> Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *Hanguk Gidokgyoeui Yeoksa* (A History of Korean Christianity), vol.1 (Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1989), 1-10.

<sup>48</sup> Paik Lak-jun (L. George Paik) read theology and history at Princeton Seminary (Th.B., 1925) and Princeton University (M.A., 1925). He finished a Ph.D. thesis with K. S. Latourette at the Yale University in 1927. He has been regarded as one of founders of Seongyosagwan (Historiography of Mission). He was President of Chosen Christian College (present Yonsei University) and Minister of Education, South Korean Government.

<sup>49</sup> L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910* (Seoul: Yonsei University, 1971), 426.

contemporary Korean Christians, who saw many defects, including “the inherent conservatism of the Church, the want of the social application of Christianity, and the low intellectual standard.” In contrast, Yun attempted to regenerate his country by incorporating the power of Christianity into Korean society rather than escaping from “this present evil world.” Concerning the issue of collaboration with colonialists in the 1940s, Paik claims that “Yun volunteered to collaborate with the Japanese colonial power in order to mitigate the persecution which the Japanese had forced upon the Korean people and churches.”<sup>50</sup> Paik regards Yun as a hero of Christian mission and a martyr of Japanese persecution in a wider sense.

Secondly, Min Kyeong-bae,<sup>51</sup> a *nationalistic* Church historian, concentrates on the Korean Church by itself as the autonomous subject of history.<sup>52</sup> Min describes Yun as “the great shepherd who [Koreans] thought of as the pioneer” and argues that “Yun’s internal or personal suffering should be understood as the collective suffering of [Korean] national history.”<sup>53</sup> He even asserts that Yun was “a historical theologian”<sup>54</sup> in the sense that Yun tried to find the meaning of salvation in the midst of the historical suffering and oppression, just as the Israelites did during the period of Babylonian captivity.

Thirdly, *minjung* church historians like Ju Jae-yong, Kim Yong-bok, and Jeon Taek-bu see *minjung* or people<sup>55</sup> as the subject of history. Ju pays attention to Yun’s presidency of the *Independence Club* and his editorship of the *Independent*. On the

---

<sup>50</sup> Lak-jun Paik, forward to *Jwaong Yunchihojeon* (A Biography of Yun Chi-ho), by Kim Eul-han (Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1975; reprint, Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1998), 14.

<sup>51</sup> Min Kyeong-Bae studied at Chosen Christian College, and the Universities of Aberdeen and London. After completing his Th.D. at Doshisa University, he became Professor of Church History at Yonsei University.

<sup>52</sup> Kyeong-Bae Min, *Hangukgidokgyohois* (Korean Church History), 3<sup>rd</sup>. (Seoul: Yosei University Press, 1996)

<sup>53</sup> Kyeong-Bae Min, foreword to *Yunchihoui Saengaewa Sasang* (Yun Chi-ho’s life and thought), by Jwaongyunchihomunhwasaephoe (Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1998), 10.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>55</sup> Jung Young Lee, “Minjung Theology: A Critical Introduction,” in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. Jung Young Lee (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984), 3-5. The word “minjung” is the Korean pronunciation of two Chinese characters, “min” and “jung.” These literally mean “the mass people” or “common people.” In the Korean context, the common people who have been oppressed by the small group of the elite or yangban (also known as gentry) belong to the minjung.

one hand, Yun played a leading role in caring for the needs of suffering and oppressed people. On the other hand, he published *the Independent* in Hangeul (the indigenous language of lower class Koreans).<sup>56</sup> With similar sympathy, Kim Yong-bok asserts that the 105 Persons Incident, the so-called “Conspiracy Case,” for which Yun had been prosecuted and sentenced to six years imprisonment, allowed the Christian community to suffer with Korea – a parallel to the biblical narratives:

One could not avoid analogies between the experiences of the Korean people and the biblical stories of Exodus, the torture of Jesus under Pontius Pilate and the trial of Jesus in the court of Pilate... Indeed the Bible was the book of parables and stories which provided rich symbolic resources for Korean Christians to understand and interpret the destiny of their people, not simply the destiny of the Christian church.<sup>57</sup>

By the same token, Jeon Taek-bu interviews lay people and compiles their memories and private documents to reconstruct a hidden or forgotten Korean Church History on the local level. For Jeon, Korean Church history is about the story of *tobagi* (indigenous) Korean evangelists, especially lay people, the uneducated, and women, not the exclusive and privileged story of Western missionaries, ordained ministers, educated elites, or men. He emphasizes the importance of local narratives more than national or international stories. Jeon claims that Yun was a significant example of what Korean mission had accomplished by the effort of the Korean lay people.<sup>58</sup>

Fourthly, “holistic” church historians, including Lee Man-yeol<sup>59</sup> and Gim Heung-su, attempt to overcome the first three historiographies by introducing an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates historical, theological, and religious perspectives into the study of church history. It seems, however, that Yun’s

---

<sup>56</sup> Chai-yong Choo, “A Brief Sketch of a Korean Christian History from the Minjung Perspective,” in *Minjung Theology – People as the Subject of History*, ed. the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conferences of Asia (New York: Orbis Books, 1981), 74.

<sup>57</sup> Yong-bok Kim, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” in *Minjung Theology – People as the Subject of History*, ed. the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conferences of Asia, 99.

<sup>58</sup> Taek-bu Jeon, *Tobagi Sinangsanmaek* (Mountain Range of Indigenous Faith), vol. 1. (Seoul: Gonghwachulpansa, 1977), 236.

<sup>59</sup> Lee Man-yeol completed Ph.D. in Korean History at the Seoul National University and became Professor of History at Sukmyeong Women’s University.



historical events as the Independence Club and the 105 Persons Incident is slightly overlooked by these scholars, but the pro-Japanese cooperation of his latter life is emphasized. They soften their position in the end by stating that “these pro-Japanese Christian leaders were also victims ... exploited by Japanese colonialism.”<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, Yu Dong-sik and Jung Young Lee, Korean systematic theologians, argue that “the first Christian intellectual to advocate social and political action”<sup>61</sup> Yun gave a theoretical basis for the emergence of *minjung* theology that was adopted by Kim Jai-jun, a Korean theologian and founder of *Gidokgyo* Presbyterian church.<sup>62</sup>

### ***1.6. Outsiders' Views: Reductive Interpretations***

Though Korean church historians and theologians recognize the significance of Yun's socio-political theology, there has been not a single Ph.D. thesis on Yun Chi-ho's religious thought, particularly his contribution to educational missions and ecumenism. Since his diaries were compiled between 1973 and 1989, only three major Ph.D. theses have been written on Yun and his general political ideas: Yu Yeong-yeol's work in 1984 and Yang Hyeon-he's and Koen De Ceuster's works in 1994, which I will review.

---

<sup>60</sup> Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *Hanguk Gidokgyoui Yeoksa* (A History of Korean Christianity), vol. 2 (Seoul: Christian Literature Press, 1990), 322-323.

<sup>61</sup> Dong-sik Yu, *Hankuksinhakui Gwangmaek* (The Vein of Korean Theologies) (Seoul: Junmangsa, 1982), 46.

<sup>62</sup> Jung Young Lee, “Korean Christian Thought,” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 311.

### 1.6.1. "Young" Yun Chi-ho: a Political Interpretation

Yu Yeong-ryeol, Professor of History at Soongsil University, completed his PhD thesis (at Korea University in 1984) on Yun Chi-ho and his political thought, particularly during *Gaehwagi* (an era of transition), from 1865 to 1905.<sup>63</sup> His study focuses on the "young" Yun Chi-ho, so he pays less attention to the development of his political thought during the colonial period (1910-1945). Rather, Yu explained Yun's latter collaboration by analyzing the early formation of his political reformation thought.

In the first part, Yu deals with the birth of Yun's desire to reform politics in Korea by analyzing his overseas studies in Japan, China, and the United States, and then his leadership in the Independence Club and *Aekukgaemongundong* (patriotic enlightenment movements). In the second part, he examines Yun's modern reformation thought, methods of revolution, and the logic behind this collaboration with colonial powers. It should be noted that Yu believed that Yun had a critical view of traditional Confucianism, "not in its essence, but in its application to historical situations."<sup>64</sup> But Yu gives us a general impression that Yun accepted the United States as "a model of modern society," based on Christian spirit, democracy, and civilization, and at the same time, Japan as "a model of modernization," which was in harmony with Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto.<sup>65</sup> In this respect, Yu failed to notice that Yun constructed a Korean model that critiqued the American and Japanese models.

Concerning the political methods that Yun appealed to, internal revolution, peaceful self reformation, reformation under the rule of a civilized nation, and civil enlightenment are explored. Yu goes on to argue that Yun interpreted Christian and educational missions not in an individual sense but also on a social level. According to Yu, what changes Korean society and improves its moral and economic strength, in Yun's mind, is not church but school. Yun suggested that the new location of Christian missions should be within Christian education because it connects

---

<sup>63</sup> Yeong-yeol Yu, *Gaehwagiui Yun Chi-ho Yeongu* (The Study on Yun Chi-ho in Early Modern Korea) (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1985).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-181.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

evangelism with labour and work,<sup>66</sup> reconfirming Yu Dong-sik's idea that Yun was "the first Korean to practice '*missio Dei*' or 'a theology of mission'."<sup>67</sup>

Yu holds that Yun's "defeatism based on pessimistic view of history," an "overemphasis on enlightenment," an Asian type of racism against white races (or xenophobia), and social Darwinism point of view made Yun collaborate with colonialists.<sup>68</sup> Yu describes Yun's contributions to democracy, nationalism, and modernization, and his limitations and problems in political reformation, and gives us the first intensive analysis of the early formation of Yun's political ideas, but his work doesn't examine Yun's religious dimension, particularly his view on Christian missions, education, and inter-religious issues.

### ***1.6.2. "Archetype of Death": a Psychological Interpretation***

Yang Heon-he, (now Assistant Professor of Church History, Ewha Women's University), completed her PhD thesis at the Department of Religious Studies in the University of Tokyo (1984).<sup>69</sup> In her work, Yang applies a psychological approach to the study of Yun Chi-ho and his identity. Using Eric Erickson's theory of identity,<sup>70</sup> she compares two Korean Christian responses to the problem of creating a new identity under colonial oppression. Though she gives a new insight to scholars of Yun Chi-ho, Yang began her research on the false assumption that Yun committed suicide in December 1945 due to the guilt of his collaboration with colonialists. Furthermore, she reconstructs Yun as "a model of the death of national identity," whereas she saw Kim Gyo-sin (1901-1945) as "a model of creative renewal of national identity,"<sup>71</sup> who created a Korean type of the Non-Church movement. She claims that Yun had a contradictory belief, which agitated for Christian reformation thought without the justice of God.

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 239, see also Yu, *The Vein of Korean Theology*, 46.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-272

<sup>69</sup> Heon-he Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin* (Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin) (Seoul: Hanul, 1994).

<sup>70</sup> See, Erick H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959) and Francis L. Gross, Jr. *Introducing Erik Erikson* (London: University Press of America, 1987).

<sup>71</sup> Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin*, 17.

Yang examines the change of Yun's worldview in three respects. First, instead of the Confucian worldview, Yun accepted "Christian imperialism." Emphasizing such discontinuity of religious worldview in Yun's thought, she claims that Yun had a "dualistic dream" of China versus Japan or the West. But, it should be noted that she points out that the Confucian tradition of moral optimism still remained in Yun's thought after his conversion.<sup>72</sup> Yang rightly claims that Yun sought for a Confucian ideal in politics by extolling the government virtue, but she criticizes Yun for not making the people (the mass) the subject of reformation. Yang claims, rather, that Yun limited the power to reform to the Korean King. She claims that Yun believed Korea was the property of the Korean king, and thus it was his obligation to reform Korean society. Seeing Yun's conversion as "an extension of Confucian self-cultivation," she characterizes his concept of the Christian God as "a magical power to generate human powers in moral perfection."<sup>73</sup> She concludes that Yun's Christianity was "a religion of self-salvation," regarding his baptism as a tool of self-realization, not as a confession based on a conversion experience.<sup>74</sup> Her negative evaluation of Yun needs to be reexamined by taking into account more of his life and thought.

It should be noted that Yun's understanding of Christianity was extended to include social movement when he experienced American social life. But, Yang points out that Yun had a "contradictory" faith in that he accepted both social Darwinism and imperialism. She attempts to explain the relationship of Yun's Christian faith to his acceptance of the theory of the survival of the fittest. However, by generalizing some fragments of his reflections on particular events without considering their historical context, Yang makes Yun's Christian faith seem more ambiguous and difficult to understand. For example, she overlooks Yun's critical attitude to Western missionaries and colonialists and his devotional life as shown in his diaries and letters.

---

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

It is also important that Yang criticizes Yun's view of people (*minjung* or the mass). According to her, Yun despised people's intellectual and moral ability believing that the people were too "powerless and ignorant" to deal with national political issues.<sup>75</sup> In the process of her generalization, Yang ignores Yun's political exile as a mayor in local areas, where he sought to empower the masses. Contrary to her explanation, Yun rather recognized the importance of people's needs and respected their opinions. He was even accused of "harming national benefits by loving people too much."<sup>76</sup>

Yang also points out deterioration of Yun's faith: from "exoteric" to "esoteric." She claims that Yun gave up the "essential meaning and value of Christianity" and retreated into an internal religious life since the colonization of Korea appeared to be inevitable and hopeless. However, she oversimplifies Yun's worldview when she constructs the following dichotomy:<sup>77</sup>

Civilized/ industrial/ Western nations = good = eternal blessing  
Uncivilized/ primitive/ non-Western nation = evil = eternal condemnation

Comparing Yun's thought to Calvin's double predestination,<sup>78</sup> Yang claims that his "dualistic" and "static" concept of the world resulted from a Confucian worldview and incorporated Social Darwinism. I think that in this respect Yang misinterprets Yun's theological position. Indeed, Yun was not a Calvinist but an Armenian Methodist, who considered the possibility of sanctification in the human life. When he preached against Predestination at Bristol in 1740, John Wesley claimed that the grace or love of God is free in all to whom it is given. According to Wesley, "The doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God" and it "destroys the comfort of religion, the happiness of Christianity." This doctrine even "destroys [human] zeal for good works." Therefore, Yun, who was a convinced Methodist, is more likely to consider Predestination "a doctrine full of blasphemy." Therefore, Yang needed to

---

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>76</sup> Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 155-156.

<sup>77</sup> Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin*, 45-47, 54-55, and 72.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. In the same chapter, Yang mentions that Yun disagreed with Calvin and Paul regarding the predestination.

for good works.” Therefore, Yun, who was a convinced Methodist, is more likely to consider Predestination “a doctrine full of blasphemy.” Therefore, Yang needed to explore Yun’s thought in a Methodist tradition as well as a Confucian context. For instance, one finds parallels between Confucian self-cultivation and Wesley’s Christian perfection. Therefore, it is possible that Yun’s emphasis on ethics and works was influenced or strengthened by not only Confucianism but also Methodist theology.

One of the main weaknesses of Yang’s work is its disregard for Yun’s religious thought and historical context, which is probably due to the nature of her comparative study. Therefore, in the process of generalization, she often misrepresents Yun’s theological and religious position. In order to support her comparative study, Yang seems to have “manufactured” an image of Yun that opposes the image of Kim Gyo-sin.

### *1.6.3. A Victim of Social Coercion: a Sociological Interpretation*

Ever since those post-liberation days, the figure of Yun Chi-ho has evoked mixed feelings. On the one hand, he is remembered for his “commendable” involvement in the pre-occupation modernization movements but, on the other hand, he is loathed for his public identification with the Japanese authorities during the later part of the occupation. Especially this latter attitude is a continuation of the highly polarized – and therefore simplistic – interpretation of the collaboration issues as it was prevalent in the immediate post-liberation period. Analyzing collaboration in such a way is, however, twice reductionist. It reduces, on the one hand, the complex nature of socio-political life during the occupation period to a simple opposition between nationalism and collaboration. On the other hand, such an analysis is an example of political reductionism, interpreting social activities as political expressions.<sup>79</sup>

As described earlier, Yu Yeong-ryeol argues that prior to 1906 “national pessimism,” “realistic and situational ideology,” and “social Darwinism based on the logic of power” led Yun to collaborate with the Japanese authorities. In contrast, Koen De

---

<sup>79</sup> Koen De Ceuster, “From Modernization to Collaboration, the Dilemma of Korean Cultural Nationalism: The Case of Yun Ch’i-ho (1865-1945)” (Ph.D. thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1994), 705.

later period of Japanese colonial occupation. They both focus on collaboration as the key issue, but their approaches differ in that Yu emphasizes internal (or ideological and political) elements while Ceuster pays more attention to external (or social) elements in Yun's collaboration.

According to Ceuster, Japan's severe oppression and restriction made collaboration an "inevitable choice." But Yun remained a "cultural (or moderate) nationalist" until he died, even though external coercion of colonialists and his internal justification made his political position more ambiguous. Yun was convinced that "individual regeneration was the core to the resurrection of the Korean nation."<sup>81</sup> Therefore, he devoted his life to education by helping Koreans to adopt "the high standards of civilization of the West." Seeing the adoption as "a slow process of popular education," cultural nationalists, including Yun, believed that "under the leadership of an enlightened – Westernized – elite, the Korean nation would be reconstructed."

While Yu mentions briefly Yun's collaboration, Ceuster successfully explains the issue of collaboration, (which had been regarded as a "taboo subject" in Korean history) in order to overcome "considerable distortions" of previous nationalist Korean historians. In moving towards a "more balanced approach," Ceuster mentions the necessity of the study of cultural (or moderate) nationalism related to the issue of collaboration.

Historians in Korea have largely focused their attention on a number of movements, dealing with each of them separately, without necessarily indicating the relations that existed among them. This is as well true for the piecemeal approach to the independence movement, as for the ahistorical way collaboration is dealt with. In the case of the nationalist movement, a wide variety of different groups are often brought together under the sole denominator of independence movement, even though they were, ideologically, diametrically opposed to each other. A fact that is also conveniently disregarded, is the case of moderate nationalists who turned collaborators during the occupation years. A double distortion thus occurs. On the one hand, the semblance of a united national independence movement is upheld, while, on the other hand, collaborators are simultaneously depicted as traitors who have defaulted national dignity.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ceuster, "From Modernization to Collaboration," 706.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Pointing out that “many collaborators had previously been involved in the nationalist movement,” Ceuster analyzes not only the “coercion” inflicted by the Japanese colonialists, but also the ideological motives behind the “conversion” of nationalists. Instead of a synchronic approach, which he calls “simplistic” and “ahistorical,” Ceuster offers “a diachronic overview of the ideological evolutions” of cultural nationalists, particularly Yun, within the nationalist movements.<sup>83</sup> Cultural nationalism was “an elite movement of modern intellectuals,” based upon “gradualism and cultural development.” This movement looked down upon popular culture, so it received criticism from the socialist and communist movements from the 1920s onwards.<sup>84</sup>

Ceuster asserts that Yun represented a group within cultural nationalism. Therefore, he explains the premises by which cultural nationalists justified their collaboration with colonialists. His dissertation is divided into two parts: biography and analysis of Yun’s life and thought. Though he deals with socio-cultural history as well as political history on a wider scale including China and Japan, Ceuster’s description of Yun’s Christian faith overlooks his religious creativity within Korean Methodist tradition and Confucianism.<sup>85</sup> Addressing Christianity and its relationship with nationalist movements, he pays less attention to the dynamics of Yun’s faith in terms of inculturation, indigenization, and contextualization. Moreover, by limiting his religious thought to the boundary of Christianity, Ceuster overlooks the inter-religious dimension of his religious formation and consequent commitments to Christian mission and education.

---

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-8, Ceuster defines cultural nationalism as the “section of the nationalist movement that, during the reign of Governor-General Saito Makoto (1919-1927, 1929-1931), opted to remain within the confines of the law as defined by the Japanese occupation authorities.” Instead of engaging political affairs, it concentrated on the renewal of Korea’s cultural identity. In a wider sense, he includes the Kapsin Coup (1884), the Kabo Reforms (1895), the Independence Club (1896-98), the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement (1906-08), and the Cultural Movement (1920-26).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 594-647.



### ***1.7. A Religious Interpretation: Conversion and Transformation***

As has been reviewed already, one of the main weaknesses of previous interpretations is that they have overlooked the religious creativity of Yun, especially his view of Christian mission: preaching the Gospel and educating the Koreans. Overemphasizing his eventual collaboration with colonialists later in life, most works seem to fail to understand the religious dimension of Yun's life and thought. Indeed, in the light of Christian mission, he actively engaged himself in educational and ecumenical works during the Japanese colonial period, so a new perspective is needed that explores Yun's religious creativity. As Mircea Eliade, a historian of religions, declares, "a religious phenomenon will only be recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level, that is to say, if it is studied as something religious."<sup>86</sup>

Unlike previous works, this thesis will focus on the religious dimension of Yun's life and thought, especially his educational and ecumenical works. It will be argued that his concept of Christian mission was not solely the conversion of the masses but also for gradual transformation. He shifted the emphasis of Christian mission from conversion by evangelism, which American missionaries tended to concentrate on, to transformation by education. According to Yun, a conversion should be followed by a full scale transformation of personal and social life. Conversion without the change of life and the reform of society was dangerous and incomplete. Therefore, he tried to improve, not only his own moral life, but also the moral life of his country by teaching the Christian message and utilizing its spiritual and moral powers.

✓ In the thesis, both conversion and transformation are key categories in analyzing Yun's religious thought. Lewis Rambo, a scholar of conversion studies, comments on the importance of conversion as follows:<sup>87</sup>

There is a hunger within every human being for the kind of meaningfulness associated with new life, new love, new beginnings.

---

<sup>86</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1958), xiii.

<sup>87</sup> Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 4.

Religious conversion offers that hope and provides that reality to millions of people.

Replacing the term 'event' with the term 'process,' Rambo refutes the popular mythology of conversion. First of all, though he doesn't exclude the possibility of sudden conversion, Rambo claims, "conversion is very rarely an overnight, all-in-an-instant, wholesale transformation that is now and forever."<sup>88</sup> Secondly, he connects "religious/institutional" change with "spiritual/ personal" change against the popular polarization, and argues that "all conversions are mediated through people, institutions, communities, and groups."

It is important to notice that the word "conversion" has several possible meanings: "simple change from the absence of a faith system to a faith commitment, from religious affiliation with one faith system to another, or from one orientation to another within a single faith system."<sup>89</sup> In spite of many possible meanings, the central meaning of conversion is change. Defining conversion as "a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations,"<sup>90</sup> Rambo argues that most studies on conversion have been "too narrow in orientation and too deeply rooted in religious traditions." In my thesis, therefore, I will use the term "transformation" as a process over time, which is distinguished from the term "conversion" as a single event.

In contrast, A. D. Nock makes sharp distinctions between Christian and Jewish conversion and the form of conversion in the ancient pagan world,<sup>91</sup> suggesting that Jewish and Christian conversion is complete, radical, and decisive, whereas pagan religious change is merely an add-on to a person's life. Unlike Nock, this thesis will argue that even Christian conversion has a dimension of 'syncretism' and indigenization, which Nock calls "an add-on." Instead of claiming that the

---

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> A. D. Nock, *Conversion – The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933).

Christianity replaced a previous religious worldviews, I will examine the cases of the 'fusion of religious horizons' in the process of evangelism and transformation.

Therefore, I will use the term 'conversion' in a more descriptive, rather than normative, way. According to the normative approach, a "genuine" conversion is formulated by the theological convictions of a particular tradition. Focusing on a descriptive approach rather than explaining a specific theological perspective, I will deal with the varieties and complexities of conversion in the context of a multi-religious Korea. In this sense, conversion will be treated as "a dynamic, multifaceted process of transformation."<sup>92</sup> Even the possibility of hybrid or double belonging such as "Confucian Christian" and "Korean Japanese" will be explored in a Korean historical context.<sup>93</sup>

### ***1.8. Conclusion***

In this chapter, I have drawn a short sketch of Yun's life, revealing the complexities of his careers in religious movements and political institutions. His cross-cultural background in education, his existential situations in the middle of conflicts, and tensions of colonialists and nationalists explained partly why Yun sought to find a religious solution in reforming Korean society. Two biographies had been written under the social and political pressures of colonialists and nationalists, so it is hard to capture two portraits of Yun as a Christian activist and a national "hero" in his own historical context. Indeed, biographers seem to have created the images which political authority allowed them to publish within the ideological boundary of colonialism and nationalism.

Unlike these biographers, Christian historians and theologians attempted to interpret Yun as a Christian reformer, emphasizing his role within the Christian community and church history. Keeping a confessional position, they have mainly defended Yun in the issue of his later collaboration with colonialists, by reemphasizing his earlier contribution to Christian mission and democracy or by revealing the inevitability of collaboration under severe oppression. Rather than

---

<sup>92</sup> Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 6.

<sup>93</sup> See, Catherine Cornille, "Double Religious Belonging: Aspects and Questions," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 23 (2003), 43-49.

analyzing Yun's theological and religious innovations, they tended to remain silent on the subject, instead considering Yun and other Christian leaders who collaborated with colonialists, as helpless "victims."

Recent reductive interpretations have reflected other sides of Yun's life and thought, such as political, psychological, and sociological. These interpretations seek to incorporate his religious background on a limited scale, but they seem to have failed to achieve 'thick description' of Yun's religious creativity. Rather, by simplifying or generalizing the complexities of Yun's religious ideas, they created dubious images of Yun as "young" political reformer, "the archetype of death," or a cultural nationalist who was forced to collaborate with colonialists. It is important to notice that their research revealed not only their own limitations but also the necessity of a religious interpretation.

As Kim Yeong-hi pointed out, Yun was "always" a religious man. But, his reflections on individual religious traditions and the general concept of religion have been largely ignored by previous confessional and reductive interpretations. For instance, Yun's criticism of Western Christianity and his attitude to other religions should be evaluated in the light of his appreciation of Christian mission and education. Correlating religion with politics, culture, and education, Yun established a legacy of social engagement in Korean Christianity and proposed a viable model of gradual Christian reform of society. Therefore, a religious interpretation will reveal new understandings of Yun's life and thought, which have long been neglected and hidden.

## CHAPTER TWO A HISTORY OF RELIGIONS IN KOREA

### 2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the historical background of traditional Korean religions, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when Yun Chi-ho was alive as a religious man. In order to fully understand the religious environment during this period, we need to examine how indigenous Korean religious traditions such as *Mugyo* developed and how world religions like Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity were introduced into the Korean soil.

Instead of describing particular religions separately,<sup>94</sup> I will first focus on the central symbolism of Korean religious imagination by illustrating the indigenous concept of *Hananim* and the socio-political structure of Korean society. Paying more attention to the interaction of different traditions and their characteristics as missionary religions, I will explain Korean religious traditions, which were very influential in the formation of Yun's religious life and thought and challenged his concept of Christian mission.

With regard to the use of terminology, I will argue that there were no such general forms of religion as 'shamanism,' 'animism,' and 'polytheism' during this period in Korea.<sup>95</sup> Rather than accepting such theoretical terms, which have been invented in the West to "manufacture" Korean religions as general religious phenomena, I will use alternative indigenous terms to describe Korean religions. For example, instead of the western term, "shamanism," I will use *Mugyo*; this indigenous term gives us an insider's view of the Korean belief system.

---

<sup>94</sup> In this respect, I disagree partly with James Grayson's historiography of Korean religions. He makes it clear that he sees religion in Korea "not as an abstract phenomenon, but as a component of Korean culture which has grown and developed through time." Therefore, he deals with religions "separately" in order to identify religious reaction to culture and inter-religious influence. Particularly, in part four on the Modern Era (1872 - present), Grayson analyzes Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, *Cheondogyo*, and *Sinheung Jonggyo* in order. In contrast, I will first focus on main symbols of Korean religious traditions and meanings in their historical context.

<sup>95</sup> For example, Ung Kyu Park, *Millennialism in the Korean Protestant Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). Seeing Korean shamanism as "a synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (p.22)," Park argues that Korean history is "a religious progression from shamanism (or animism) to Buddhism to Confucianism to Christianity (p.19)." Despite his contribution to comparative studies, he still uses the terms of shamanism, animism, and monotheism.

Consequently, when I refer to world religions and their historical encounters, I will also adopt the terms which Koreans used to classify their own religious system.

## **2.2. Korean Religions as both Conservative and Syncretistic (or Pluralistic)**

In Korean history, there has never been “a religious vacuum.” Various world religions coexisted in Korea before Christian missionaries came to transmit their teachings to Koreans. During the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), Confucianism as the state religion permeated all areas of Korean life, especially *Yangban* (the ruling class), but Buddhism, Taoism, folk religions, and new religious movements also played important roles in spiritual formation among *Pyeongmin* (common people). In this sense, one characteristic of Korean religions was “multi-religious belonging.” ✓ Although Confucians followed the Confucian rituals, they also consulted shamans for advice at times of individual or family crisis, and visited Buddhist temples in mountains. They studied Confucian classics and practiced Confucian virtues, without losing respect for the spirits of ancestors. The rulers, including the Korean King and *Yangbans*, offered sacrifices to the spirits of mountains, rivers and ancestors when they faced national disaster and foreign invasions.

Just as each country (or nation) has its own distinct history, culture, and religion, so also Koreans have experienced unique religious and cultural histories in their social and existential contexts in East Asia. In the late nineteenth century, however, some Westerners, including colonialists and missionaries, described Korea (then, Joseon) as a “primitive” nation, located in the “Far East,” somewhere between China, Russia, and Japan.<sup>96</sup> Seeing Korea geographically as “a bridge for the transmission of Chinese civilization to Japan,” they paid little attention to its own history of religions. Korea has not only been described so ambiguously and generally in geographical terms, but also in Western terms of intellectual and religious

---

<sup>96</sup> About the travel narratives of Korea, see Charles Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée* (Paris : Palmé, 1874); Isabella Lucy Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbours* (London: John Murray, 1898); Alfred Edward John Cavendish, *Korea and the Sacred White Mountain* (London: G. Philip & Son, 1894); Lillias Horton Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots – Life in Korea* (Boston : American Tract Society, 1904); Angus Hamilton, *Korea* (London : William Heinemann, 1904); and George Nathaniel Curzon, *Problems of the Far East : Japan, Korea, China* (London: Longmans, 1894).

imagination. Korea and its religious traditions seemed of little concern to scholars; it was still on the margins of Western knowledge and imagination.

As Edward Said points out, Westerners, including intellectuals, have reconstructed, invented, or produced their own “distorted” images of the East or Asians by using their own system of classification from their colonial prejudice or local worldviews.<sup>97</sup> Instead of respecting indigenous cultures and understanding them in empathy from indigenous eyes, they manufactured the so-called “Korean religion(s)” from their own perspective and to meet their own needs.<sup>98</sup> Even though they sometimes recognized the possible dangers of personal prejudice, cultural bias, or methodological failure,<sup>99</sup> Western scholars and even Korean scholars, particularly those who were trained in the West, failed to use indigenous categories to understand Korean religions. For instance, James Grayson, a Christian scholar and expert on Korean religions, comments on the general traits of Korean religions as follows:

It is the author’s opinion that the *most dynamic religious force* during the past hundred years has been Christianity... It is the author’s opinion that *Korean religious experience on the whole tends to be conservative in nature*... When considering the history of Korean religions... Korean religious experience has a strong *conservative element* in it, and a tendency to avoid a significant degree of *syncretism*.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

<sup>98</sup> See, Russell McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997). Concerning the usage of the term “manufacturing,” McCutcheon uses this term in order to criticise the general claim that religion is *sui generis*. In contrast, I adopt this term in order to debunk Western misconceptions of Korean religions, asserting that religion in a Korean context is *sui generis*, unique, and autonomous. On the other hand, Jensen uses this term in order to accentuate the ongoing conceptual process by which Confucianism has been made and remade by Westerners and Chinese themselves. But I use this term in the sense that sociological, psychological, and historicist explanations (or manufactures) fail to understand Korean religions in their own terms. On my methodology, see chapter 1.

<sup>99</sup> James Huntley Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 2. In his introduction, Grayson clearly declares that his work has been done as “a Christian [Methodist] Minister,” rejecting the general concept of “Korean religion.” As a former Methodist missionary to Korea, Grayson even argues that at present “Christianity is *the most dynamic*, if not yet dominant, form of religion in Korea (p.3)” as Confucianism dominated Joseon society.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 271-272, my italics.

Contrasting the “conservatism element” with “syncretism,” Grayson concludes that a strong tendency of conservatism has been one of the main characteristics in Korean religious experience. He gives us examples of Korean conservatism such as the long enduring “folk religion” (or “primal religion”), monastic *Seon* Buddhism, Chu Hsi (in Korean, Ju-hi) centred Neo-Confucianism, and “conservative” Christianity. In my view, however, his conclusion is in a danger of simplification and generalisation, based on a compartmentalized analysis on Korean religions.

Contrary to Grayson, who ascribes conservatism to Korean religions, recent, as well as early, Korean scholars continued to emphasize a “syncretistic/pluralistic” element.<sup>101</sup> For example, accepting Yu Dong-sik’s theology of culture, Kim Kyoung Jae, a Korean theologian, argues that *Pungryudo*, which Kim defines as faith in *Hananim*, the monotheistic heavenly God, is the “archetype” of the Korean religious mind.<sup>102</sup> Avoiding the negative connotations of the term “syncretism,” Kim creates alternative terms such as “harmony,” “inclusiveness,” “fusion,” “diversity,” and “combination,” when he mentions inter-religious dynamics in Korean history. Analyzing instances of syncretism, Kim comments as follows on the inclusiveness of Korean spirituality:

[F]or the Korean people the world religions could be received and developed in the structure of Korean spirituality, *Pungryudo*. The world religions like Buddhism and Christianity have been indigenized with and through the structure of Korean *Pungryudo*.

Jung Young Lee, a Korean theologian, also argues that “Koreans are basically syncretic.” Constructing a Korean theology, particularly in the context of Korean immigration community in the United States, Lee makes use of the “syncretistic” nature of Korean religions.<sup>103</sup> Analyzing Korean multi-religious history, he claims

---

<sup>101</sup> Among Korean Christian theologians, Jung Young Lee, Yun Dong-sik, Kim Kyoung Jae, Byeon Seon-hwan, Cheo Byeong-heon, and Yun Seong-Beom have attempted Korean theologies in a Korean religious context by using the model of inculturation and contextualization.

<sup>102</sup> Kim Kyoung Jae, *Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1994), 61.

<sup>103</sup> See, Jung Yong Lee, *Ancestor Worship and Christianity in Korea* (Lewiston : E. Mellen Press, 1988); *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* ( Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996); *Marginality – the Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); *Korean Preaching : an Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).



that understanding Korean Christians is not only “understanding the theological orientation of the Korean church,” but also “understanding other religions in Korea.”<sup>104</sup>

In spite of Grayson’s dichotomy of conservatism vs. syncretism, it is important that we can reach an opposite conclusion that Korean religions are syncretistic (or pluralistic) in nature. As Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh, and Jack Thompson illustrate in their works,<sup>105</sup> African indigenous religions and cultures changed Western forms of Christianity in the process of inculturation, indigenization, or contextualization.<sup>106</sup> In the same way, such historical evidences can also be found in Korean religious history. The examples of Shamanism, *Seon* Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, and Christianity, which Grayson uses in order to demonstrate “conservative” tendencies of Korean religions, might be interpreted as going against his argument. First of all, the so-called “Korean Shamanism” (which I prefer to call *Mugyo*) can be regarded as syncretistic in the sense that it embraces different deities such as Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse and Jesus into its spiritual pantheon and changes its structure in different times or places. Secondly, Korean Buddhism also accommodates Taoism and folk religions by adopting *Chilseonggak* (temple of seven stars), *Sansingak* (temple of mountain spirit), and producing “syncretistic/pluralistic” forms of deities, rituals, and architectures within a Buddhist worldview. Thirdly, Korean Confucianism can be regarded as “syncretistic/pluralistic,” because it also embraces Taoism and Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism, under the name of “Western learning,” as we find in Confucian Catholics, including Jeong Yak-yong.

---

<sup>104</sup> Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 29.

<sup>105</sup> See, Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History : Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (1996) and *Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History - Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (2002); Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity- the Religious Impact* (1983), *Translating the Message – Missionary Impact on Culture* (1989), and *Encountering the West – Christianity and Global Cultural Process* (1993); and Jack Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi – Donald Fraser’s Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture* (1995), and *Touching the Heart – Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi, 1876-1888* (2000).

<sup>106</sup> See, Ruy O. Costa, ed. *One Faith, Many Cultures – Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization* (New York: Orbis, 1988), xii-xiv. According to Costa, inculturation deals with “the symbolic exchange between the faith being preached and the receiving culture.” Indigenization includes this inculturation and “conscious power struggles between foreign missionaries and national leaders.” As a third level, contextualization addresses “a process of conscientization about power struggles in the world, in which the church participates either actively or passively.”

Korean Christianity, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, keeps shamanistic, Buddhist, and Confucian elements within its worldview, ritual, and community.<sup>107</sup>

### ***2.3. Korea as the Centre of the World***

Just as Western intellectuals constructed concepts and categories to understand religious traditions, Koreans created their own system to classify world religions when these “other” (or “foreign”) religious traditions invaded the cognitive map of the Korean worldview. Though Westerners located Korea and its religions as marginal from their intellectual and religious centres in the West, the Koreans were convinced that they were at the “centre of the world.” In ancient Korea, there had been “sacred” centres such as Gaeseong and Pyeongyang in not only a political but also a religious sense. A former capital, Gaeseong (or Songdo), had been regarded as the centre of the world during the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). For the next five hundred years, Seoul became the capital and played the role of religious and political centre for the Joseon dynasty. In the early twentieth century, Sincheon and Pyeongyang in Northern Korea were seen as “a Jerusalem in Korea” or “an Edinburgh in Korea,” for the Christian presence transformed the whole town and deeply influenced non-Christian life.<sup>108</sup>

When the Koreans built the new capital city in Seoul, *Jongmyo* (the royal shrine) and *Sajik* (the altar for the spirits of earth and grain) first moved from Gaeseong. *Jongmyo* and *Sajik* had been two important sanctuaries of the Korean religious systems, particularly at the national level. *Jongmyo* had tablets for previous kings and queens, for whom regular rituals took place five times – in the four seasons and the last month of lunar calendar. Spirits of royal ancestors were believed to protect the wealth and health of royal descendents from evil spirits or black magic. *Sajik* was the temple of the spirits of earth and agriculture, to whom the Korean

---

<sup>107</sup> Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 22-40. According to Lee, shamanism influenced the emphasis in Korean Christianity on healing, on charismatic appeals in preaching and prayers, on material blessings through spiritual power, and on the experience of ecstatic trance during worship. The service of early-morning prayer in the Korean church was influenced by the Buddhist tradition. Under Confucian influence, Korean Christians saw education as one of the most important dimensions of life and emphasised the Bible as the foundation of Christian life as Confucian classics shaped Confucian life.

<sup>108</sup> Jeon, *Tobagi Sinangsanmaek* (Mountain Range of Indigenous Faith), vol.3 (Seoul: Korea Christian Literature, 1992), 111-189.

rulers prayed for the success of harvests and the security of the nations. *Cheon* (heaven) was regarded as the highest deity, but Korean kings were not able to perform the sacrificial rituals to heaven. It was regarded that only Chinese Emperor had the right and duty to do so. In 1897, when King Gojong announced the founding of the Korean Empire, the temple of heaven was built in Seoul, but it was demolished by the Japanese in 1913.

After moving *Jongmyo* and *Sajik*, the new capital had first to be sanctified by building new gates and orienting their direction on the basis of the traditional Korean worldview of *Yin-Yang* and five elements.<sup>109</sup> For instance, when designing gates in Seoul, the North gate was made smaller than the South Gate in order to balance *Ying* and *Yang* by preventing evil powers from the North. The four gates and a central pavilion were named after five main Confucian virtues – *In* (kindness), *Ui* (rectitude), *Ye* (decorum), *Ji* (wisdom), and *Sin* (sincerity). Therefore, Seoul was more than a just capital of politics: it was in a religious sense the centre of the world.

It is easy for scholars who are working from their own Western perspective, using a dualistic approach to attempt to understand Korean cultures and religions, to fail to understand the Korean religious worldview. Indeed, Koreans have not separated “the sacred” (“the religious” or “the personal”) from “the profane” (“the secular” or “the social”) in the Western way. The sacred to Koreans might appear secular to the Westerners and vice versa. Therefore, in order to understand Yun’s life and thought, we need to examine a Confucian way of life from a Confucian perspective.

As Herbert Fingarette, a philosopher, argues in his analysis of the *Analects*,<sup>110</sup> the community of man itself was “sacred” to Confucius and Confucians. “Instead of being diversion of attention from the human realm to another transcendent realm, the

---

<sup>109</sup> Koreans understand the nature of the cosmos on the basis of the doctrines of Yin and Yang and five elements. Ying and Yang are two principles which produce everything in the world. Yin is female and destructive, while Yang is male and creative. The interaction of these two principles results in five elements, which play a role in producing everything. There are two different orders of the five elements, that of production;- wood, fire, earth, metal, water; and that of overcoming;- fire is overcome by water, water by earth, earth by wood and wood by metal, producing the series, fire, water, earth, wood, metal. In the case of direction, wood (east), fire (south), earth (centre), metal (west), and water (north).

<sup>110</sup> Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius – The Secular as Sacred* (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972).

overly holy ceremony is to be seen as the central symbol, both expressive of and participating in the holy as a dimension of all truly human existence.”<sup>111</sup> Their concern is about “man’s life on earth,” which is both individual and collective. Therefore, self-cultivation is important in the process of its preparation as well as its realisation through social actions. One of the main Confucian ideals is to make this world a peaceful and united community on the basis of virtue, under a righteous leader who has an ability to respect humanity and embrace its different expressions.<sup>112</sup> “[T]he true king leads the way; the people consent and voluntarily follow; what is taught and followed is the *tradition*, the way of the Ancients.”<sup>113</sup> For Korean Confucians, paradise should be established on the earth through cultivating virtue. Where virtue is practiced, there is the centre of the world. This conviction had been strengthened by the Korean faith of *Hananim*, an indigenous god.

### ***2.3.1 Hananim as the Korean Idea of the High God***

Since Koreans believed that they were living at the centre of the world, they also believed in a central divine being in their spiritual world. Just as one virtuous leader rules the whole nation, so a powerful god in heaven manages the order of the world and destiny of the people.

The supremacy of Hananim is apparently acknowledged by all, whether Confucianists, Buddhist, or Shintoists. At the request of the high priest at a Buddhist monastery, some years ago, I talked with him and his monks about Christianity, and recited for them the Ten Commandments, and was rather surprised when he endorsed them all, saying that they coincided with the teachings of Buddha. On my calling his particular attention to the First Commandment, and asking how he reconciled it with the worship of Buddha, pointing to the idol, he at once replied, “Oh, Hananim is supreme, he is chief; Buddha is only the lesser god.” This is hardly a tenet of Buddhism, but it well illustrates the Koreans’ attitude toward Hananim.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. Emphasising the difference between Western and Confucian religious worldviews, Fingarette argues that “Confucius’s vision provides no basis for seeing man as a being of tragedy, of inner crisis and guilt; but it does provide a socially oriented, action-oriented view which provides for personal dignity (36).”

<sup>112</sup> See chapter 8.

<sup>113</sup> Fingarette, *Confucius*, 62.

<sup>114</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *The Religions of Eastern Asia* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 110.

Koreans believed that everything had a spirit that was part a hierarchical spiritual system corresponding to the visible political structures. *Hananim*, the personified highest deity living in heaven, controls the destiny of people, spirits, and even nature. *Hananim* decided the vicissitudes of nations and spirits, giving kings wisdom and health and supplying good weather for agriculture, fishing, and commerce. The royal spirits, who were enshrined at the royal family mausoleum in Seoul, played a role in protecting kings and the royal family from evil powers of black magic and giving their descendents longevity, wealth, and wisdom. At the local level, on the other hand, the spirits of mountains, rivers, and trees controlled the destinies of local people and the results of the harvest. But these spirits, royal or local, were all under the control of *Hanamim*, who occupied the highest rank of *Mugyo*, which Westerners call Korean Shamanism.

The spirits of the Korean religious worldview were divided into six classes: the Supreme Being, the gods of the air, the gods of the land, the gods of the water, nameless lesser spirits, and the ancestral spirits.<sup>115</sup> *Hananim* as the Ruler of Heaven presided over the lives of the people, their harvest, and natural change, causing everything to happen. According the founding myth of *Gojoseon* (the first Korean nation), *Dangun*, the first Korean king, was the descendent of the son of the Lord of Heaven and a Bear woman.

In ancient times, Hwanung, the son of Hwanin desired to descend from Heaven and to live amongst men. His father, realising his son's intentions, chose among three great mountains to descend upon Taebaek-san and saw that mankind would greatly benefit [from such work]. He gave his son the Three Heavenly Treasures and commanded him to go and rule [over mankind]. Taking with him three thousand of his followers, Hwanung descended upon the peak of Taebaek-san beneath the Sacred Sandlewood Tree. That area was called the land of God and he was known as Hwangung Chonwang [Heavenly King]. Together with his ministers of wind, rain, and cloud, the curing of disease, punishments, the difference between right and wrong, in all some three hundred and sixty kinds of work.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 260-265.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-284.

The first part of the myth describes the divine intention to found a new nation. A benevolent ruler from Heaven brought with him higher techniques and moral standards than humans practiced on earth. Early Koreans also worshipped *Hananim* at annual festivals such as *Yeonggo*, *Dongmaeng*, and *Mucheon*, where they danced, drank, and prayed together for the harvest.<sup>117</sup>

There had been an indigenous high god before Christian missionaries came to Korea. This belief in the existence of *Hananim*, a central god, played a role as a contact point between missionaries and Koreans in mission work. The Biblical narratives about the creation and providence of God seem to have reminded Koreans of *Hananim*, who resides in Heaven and controls the universe and the destiny of nations and individuals. Every Korean was able to access this deity by offering a cup of clean water or/and a bowl of grains. This deity had been the object of fear as well as attraction, revered as the highest deity guiding other spirits under his direction.

In a Confucian worldview, only Chinese Emperor had a right and duty to sacrifice to the god of heaven, and Koreans were not allowed to do so. But it is interesting that most Koreans called on the name of *Hananim* and prayed to him, particularly in times of despair and suffering. It should be noted that Western missionaries and indigenous Christians adopted this indigenous term of the high god for the Christian God when they translated the Bible and hymns into Korean. For instance, Yun correlated the concept of *Hananim* with the Christian God when he wrote his hymnal, *Chanminga* (Song of Praise) in 1907.<sup>118</sup>

### 2.3.2. *The Social Hierarchy of the Joseon Dynasty*

The spiritual pantheon also reflects the hierarchical social structure and the justification of social classes in Joseon society. Koreans were divided into four status groups: *Yangban* (two groups or high-class people), *Jungin* (middle people), *Sangmin* (common people), *Cheonmin* (low-class people or despised people). These classes were decided by birth rather than by achievement, and inter-marriage

---

<sup>117</sup> I-Heum Yun, *Hyeonaeinui Samgwa Jonggyo (Life and Religion of Modern Person)* (Seoul: Hanrimwon, 1993), 38.

<sup>118</sup> See chapter 8.

between different classes was banned. Lower class people were despised and oppressed by higher class people. Educational and occupational opportunities were limited on the basis of this social class.<sup>119</sup>

First, *Yangbans* (which literally means “two groups”) consisted of two branches: *Munban* (civil officials) and *Muban* (military officials). This well educated high class studied and memorized the Confucian classics, learning ethical and political virtues of Confucianism. After passing the civil service examination, where their knowledge of Confucian classics and commentaries was tested, they applied Confucian teachings to areas of government administration such as politics, economics, education, and trade. *Yangbans* dominated central government and military offices. Therefore, the ideal of the high class was achieved by becoming a government officer who used Confucian virtue to assist the king in ruling the nation. In order to prepare for this civil examination, *Yangbans* spent most of their time studying classics and memorizing them, so they normally remained scholars afterwards.

Yun’s father was one of the high military officials, but he encouraged his son to become a civil, rather than a military, official. It is also important that Yun took his first political position as a civil official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs without any kind of civil examination. Learning foreign languages seems to have given Yun an unusual opportunity to join the reform-minded government. With his status as a *Yangban*, he later continued to associate himself with other high class Koreans, particularly leaders of the Independence Club and the YMCA movement. But, in spite of his belonging to the *Yangban* class, Yun strongly criticized the corruption of *Yangbans* and their immoral and luxurious way of life, as follows:

The aristocracy of Korea has been unmodified, unjustifiable, unpardonable evil to the race [Koreans]. Its sole legacy to the aristocracy-ruled and aristocracy-ruined Koreans is the habits of indolence, of inefficiency, [and] of parasitism. The love of fine dress, of high sounding phrases and of self-indulgence which is so distressingly characteristic of the average Korean is another gift of aristocracy. The Korean aristocrats [yangbans], who wasted five

---

<sup>119</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun – A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 51-57.

inglorious centuries in factional fights and butcheries in plots and conspiracies, are responsible for the notorious fact that where three Koreans are gathered there are four factions whispering and plotting against each other.<sup>120</sup>

Seeing the *Yangban* class as a social evil, Yun sought to reform Korean society with the Christian message and education, advocating equal opportunities to public education.

Secondly, there was a middle-class between *Yangban* and *Sangmin*, called the *Jungin*. They worked as technical and administrative officials. They included interpreters, physicians, professional military officers, artists, and astronomers. They played a role in ruling local regions and connected the high class and the common people. It is important to notice that the *Jungin* first introduced Roman Catholicism into Korea by contacting Jesuit missionaries in China.

Thirdly, there were the commoners, who were often called *Yangin*, *Pyeongmin*, or *Sangmin*. They normally were farmers, fishermen, businessmen, or manufacturers (farmers had higher prestige than merchants). The *Yangin* made up the majority of Joseon society, composed about seventy-five percent of the total population. As the main sources of taxation and military conscription, they were able to access educational opportunities to learn Confucian classics and even participate in the civil examination. In 1910, when he attended the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland, Yun noted that Christianity appealed to the common people because of its emphasis on equality and education.<sup>121</sup>

Fourthly, there was the lowest class, called *Cheonmin* (despised people). They included *Nobi* (slaves or servants), *Mudangs* (shamans), *Gisaeng* (female entertainers), *Baekjeong* (butchers), jail keepers, actors, dancers, singers, and Buddhist monks and nuns. They were forbidden access to education and occupations for commoners. Especially *Mudangs* and Buddhist monks and nuns were forbidden to enter the capital city. Even though Lee Seong-gye, the founder of the Joseon dynasty, was a Buddhist, his successors oppressed Buddhists severely. In 1660, becoming a Buddhist monk or nun was banned, and Buddhist temples in Seoul were

---

<sup>120</sup> *Yun Chi-ho's Diary*, 6 January 1929.

<sup>121</sup> See chapter 4.



destroyed.<sup>122</sup> In 1894, however, after a long history of Buddhist persecution, King Gojong finally allowed Buddhist monks and nuns to enter Seoul at the request of Sano, a Japanese Buddhist monk. In this sense, Japanese colonialism came to Korea as a liberator and reviver of Buddhism. It is also interesting that one of Yun's cousins became a Buddhist monk and he often asked Yun for advice and financial assistance.

#### 2.4. *Mugyo as a Korean Indigenous Religion*

Korean shamanism has been defined as “a system of ecstatic and therapeutic methods whose purpose is to obtain contact with the parallel yet invisible universe of the spirits and win its support in dealing with human affairs.”<sup>123</sup> *Musok* was the term used by Confucians when they categorized so-called Korean shamanism as an inferior custom to Confucianism. *Mu* literally means the shaman who accessed the spirits through the shamanic ritual or *gut*. *Mudangs*, normally female shamans, played the role of mediums in communicating with spirits and solving personal and national problems. In this sense, they have been regarded as religious specialists in Korea. Generally, a southern shaman learned skills or techniques to communicate with spirits from her parents, but a northern shaman was appointed or ‘captured’ by spirits through mysterious religious experience.

Despite ongoing persecution and oppression, shamans were patronized not only by the Korean masses but also by the royal family during the Joseon dynasty. This seems contradictory because shamans and Buddhist monks were forbidden to enter the capital city. As Yun's diary reveals, however, the Korean king and queen often ordered *Mudangs* to offer sacrifices to the mountain spirits in order to protect their country from the evil spiritual powers of foreign countries and to change the national destiny. When Yun's third wife was seriously ill, he allowed a *Mudang* to meet with her. Regardless of his Christian faith, Yun seems to have accepted the healing power of folk religions. In this sense, Confucianism was the formal religion of the elite, but *Mugyo* was also practiced. When Grayson calls this primal religion

---

<sup>122</sup> Jeong Byeong-jo and Lee Seok-ho, *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Buddhism and Taoism* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991), 156-157.

<sup>123</sup> See, Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (London : Arkana, 1989).

“Musok-kyo (shamanistic religion),” it is unfortunate that he doesn’t recognise the negative connotation of the term, “sok” (literally, profane or custom), which Confucians had used when they referred to *Mu*<sup>124</sup> in an inferior sense. Regarding *Mugyo* as a superstition, they oppressed *Mudangs* as one of the lowest class people. It is important that despite legal oppression, *Mugyo* was still generally popular among Koreans, and even high-class intellectuals and the royal family in Seoul.

In general, however, while Confucian tradition predominantly shaped the political and moral life of the higher class, *Mugyo* influenced lower class people and Korean women. *Mudangs* served the spiritual needs of those who had been marginalized or oppressed by a male-dominated and intellectual Confucian society. Under Confucian oppression, the dynamic of *Mugyo* survived in various syncretistic forms. In the late nineteenth century, when Protestant missionaries transmitted to Koreans the Christian message with its value for Western scientific knowledge, the traditional Korean worldview, which was mainly based on *Mugyo* and its pantheon, was challenged, attacked, and “demythologized.” In order to teach a new religion to “heathen” people, it seemed to be necessary for them to “demonise” *Mudangs* and criticise their teachings and rituals.

*Mugyo* had three characteristics during the late Joseon dynasty.<sup>125</sup> First of all, the belief in *Kwanje* was imported from China. *Kwanje* (in Chinese, *Kwankung*) was regarded as a military and war deity; he had been a famous war hero during the Han Dynasty. In the fifteenth century, he became the God of War and was described as a righteous and powerful warrior in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, (which Yun often read by himself and sometimes read for the royal family).<sup>126</sup> During the Japanese invasion in 1592, this belief seems to have been introduced into the Korean spiritual worldview, by Chinese auxiliary soldiers. With four main shrines – the East tomb, West tomb, South tomb, and North tomb in Seoul, other *Kwanje* shrines were

---

<sup>124</sup> Hong-cheol Kim, Sang-il Kim and Heung-yun Jo, *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Jeungsangyo, Won-Buddhism, and Shamanism* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1992), 223-225. Jo Heung-yun argues that *Mugyo* should be studied as a religious phenomenon, not a superstition.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 317-322. Also see, Jo Heung-yun, “The Characteristics of Korean Minjung Culture,” *Korea Journal*, vol. 27, no.11, 1987, 4-18.

<sup>126</sup> See, Tak Kim, *Hankukui Gwanjesinang* (Korean Gwanje Belief) (Seoul: Seonhaksa, 2004).

built around the country. *Kwanje* was worshipped as a god of wealth among the common people and occupied one of highest ranks among *Mugyo* deities.

Secondly, *Mugyo* influenced the formation of new nationalistic religions. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, many new religions, including *Donghak* (Eastern Learning or later *Cheondogyo*), the *Jeungsan* tradition, and *Deajonggyo*, appeared as a product of the synthesis of traditional Korean worldviews and anti-foreign religions (such as Christianity and Shinto) sentiments. By synthesizing various elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in an inclusive way of *Mugyo*, nationalist religions developed.

Thirdly, *Mugyo* was being abused as a method of overcoming political competitors. *Mudangs* were recruited to lay curses on rivalries, particularly in the royal family, so its moral integrity deteriorated. Animal bodies and human bones were used in the curses and for a while even a special “shrine of the curse” was set up in royal palace.

After Korea became Japan’s colony in 1910, the colonialists participated in oppressing *Mugyo* and tarnishing its image. As Jo Heung-yun points out, there was a religious war between Japanese Shinto and Korean *Mugyo*.<sup>127</sup> For example, *Guksadang* (the national *Mugyo* shrine), which had been located on South Mountain since the fifteen century, was forcibly moved outside Seoul to Inwang Mountain in 1925. In its place, they built a Shinto Shrine there in Seoul.

At the national shrine, the spirit of Lee Tae-jo (founder of Joseon dynasty), three main deities – *Sansin* (mountain deity), *Cheonsin* (river deity), and *Susin* (water deity), and other traditional deities had been revered as protective spirits of Korea. Colonialists controlled *Mudangs* and their rituals (*Guts*) by introducing a licence system and adding Shinto spirits to the spiritual pantheon of *Mugyo*. The sun goddess of Shinto, *Amaterasu*, was given a higher place in rituals than traditional *Mugyo* deities.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> Kim, Kim and Jo, *Korean Religious Thought*, 324.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*.

## ***2.5. Buddhism as a Missionary Religion and Taoism as a Mystical Religion***

Buddhism reached Korea via China during the Three Kingdoms period in the fourth and fifth centuries. Goguryeo was located in the north, Paekje in the southwest and Sinra in the southeast. A Chinese monk, Sundo, transmitted Buddhism to Goguryeo in 372 and an Indian monk, Malananada, to Baekje in 384. Buddhism was accepted to protect the nation against its enemies. The political and cultural prestige of China encouraged a strong reception of Buddhism among political leaders of the early Korean nations. Though Sinra as an isolated nation strongly resisted the introduction of Buddhism, it was eventually adopted as the state religion in the middle of the sixth century. Branches of Mahayana Buddhism have dominated Korean Buddhism and they were incorporated with existing religions. As Kim Kyoung-jae argues, Korean Buddhism never hesitated to fuse with the traditional religions of the land or other philosophers.<sup>129</sup>

Under Buddhist influence, an aristocratic civilization developed in Korea during the Three Kingdoms period, the Unified Sinra period, and the Goryeo dynasty. Korean monks were sent to Japan to disseminate Buddhist Scriptures and statues. During the sixth and seventh centuries, many Korean monks, including Ui-yeon and Seung-rang, went to China to study Buddhism and brought back Chinese forms of Buddhism with them. After the three kingdoms were unified under the powerful Sinra, Buddhism flourished under royal patronage and many grand monasteries were built. But, Buddhist monks, who had been respected during the Goryeo dynasty (935-1392), fell out of favour with the central government and were marginalized and oppressed by the Confucian-minded Joseon dynasty (1392-1910).

Unlike the Confucian emphasis on social, political, and moral ethics, Korean Buddhism renounced the world and concentrated on spiritual enlightenment. As I have already mentioned, Buddhist monks were not permitted to enter cities and were regarded as one of lowest classes. The government even abolished Buddhist religious orders. Those who had already become Buddhist monks and nuns were forced to return to secular life. Imposing a heavy tax on Buddhist temples around the country and confiscating their lands, Confucian politicians destroyed the economic

foundation of Korean Buddhism. As a result, many temples were closed and their monks forced into involuntary servitude.<sup>130</sup> Under such severe oppression, Korean Buddhism was not able to perform Buddhist rituals in public, so it paid more attention to anti-secular mystical areas.

In the early twentieth century, Japanese colonialism ended the Confucian persecution of Buddhism. Receiving support from Japanese Buddhism, Korean Buddhism was revived as a dynamic missionary religion. Branches of Japanese Buddhism set up mission stations in Korea and introduced a new trend of married clergy to the tradition of celibacy in Korean Buddhism. Korean branches came under the control of Japanese Buddhism in the “Joseon Buddhist Temple Order” in 1911. These changes hastened the decline of Buddhism in Korea and contributed to the growth of Christianity. Yun noted in his diary that Japanese Buddhist missionaries didn’t appeal to Koreans when they disseminated Buddhist teachings. He argues that ethnic and cultural chasms between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism retarded the growth of Japanese Buddhism in Korea.

In an attempt to gain knowledge for effective mission lectures, Yun studied the life of Buddha and the historical development of Buddhism. When he gave lectures in the United States, he would show his audience a Buddhist statue in order to arouse public concern about mission work in East Asia. His intense dialogues with a Buddhist were recorded in his diary, but remain unexamined by scholars.

While Confucianism offered Koreans ethical and political rules for the government of society, Taoism gave them the hope of longevity and immortality beyond this world. Western scholars such as Grayson overlooked the strong influence of Taoism on the Korean worldview,<sup>131</sup> but along with Confucianism and Buddhism, it was one of the three religions that formed the Korean religious heritage.

---

<sup>129</sup> Kyoung-jae Kim, *Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1994), 73-86.

<sup>130</sup> Jeong and Lee, *Korean Religious History – Buddhism and Taoism*, 156-160.

<sup>131</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 64-66. Due to his lack of religious sensitivity, Grayson overlooks the contribution of Taoism to the Korean religious worldview: “we may speak of Taoist philosophical or even religious influence from a very early period, but we may not speak of a Taoist religious tradition in Korea (p.66).”



Yun himself read Taoist classics, including *Chuang Tzu* (in Korean, Jang Ja) in his later life.

Lee Neung-hwa (1868-1945), one of the early pioneers of religious studies in Korea argues, in his work that was published posthumously, that Taoism strongly influenced Korean spiritual life at the national level as well as in private life. He even suggests that the founding myth of *Dangun*, which we already examined in the analysis of *Hananim*, contains a strong Taoist influence.<sup>132</sup> Lee, in the second part of the myth, points out Taoist elements such as a mountain god:

A son was born who was called Tangun wanggom. Tangun established a city at Pyeongyang and called the nation Choson. He later moved this city to Asadal on Paegak-san which was also known as Kunhol-san or as Asadal. He governed [the nation] for 1,500 years. ... Tangun then transferred to Chandanggyong. Later, he returned to Asadal and hid himself, becoming a mountain god. At this time, he was 1,908 years of age.<sup>133</sup>

According to Lee, the Chinese believed that the Immortals had lived at *Samsinsan* (mountain of three gods) and *Seondo* (mysterious island) in Korea. It was believed that the Chinese Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti (in Korean, Hwangjae) visited Korea to meet Master Jabu and learn Taoist teachings.

In the early seventh century, Kao-tsu, Chinese Emperor of Tang, sent a Taoist priest and Taoist scriptures to Goguryeo Kingdom (BCE 37- CE 668). Giving lectures on *Tao Te Ching*, this priest converted Korean political leaders, including Yeon Gaesomun, to Taoism. Yeon was so actively involved with the transmission of Taoism in Korea that Buddhist temples were transformed to Taoist temples. In the eighth century, Sinra Kingdom received Taoism from China and sent scholars to study Taoist scriptures. *Tao Te Ching* was adopted as one of scriptures for civil service examination. Regarding *Hwarang* as a national Taoist group, Lee argues that Taoism influenced the Korean tradition of meditation and the practice of self-disciple.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Neung-hwa Lee, *Hankukdogyosa* (A History of Korean Taoism), 1958, reprint. (Seoul: Boseongmunhwasa, 1996), 46.

<sup>133</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 282-283.

<sup>134</sup> Lee, *A History of Korean Taoism*, 53-87.

During the Goryeo dynasty period (935-1392), Taoism was popular among Koreans, particularly at the royal palace, even though Buddhism was considered to be the state religion and Confucianism was used as political ideology. China continued to send Taoist priests to Korea, but its effect did not lead to the creation of Taoist communities. A Taoist ritual, *Palkwanhoe*, was annually performed under the direction of national officials and for a while even of King Yejong. Buildings for Taoist rituals were constructed within the palace. As Taoism intermingled with folk beliefs, it garnered popular support. Geomancy, the so-called, *Pusujiriseol* (the theory of wind, water, and earth) and *Docham* (prophetic movements) were widely developed at the end of the Unified Silra and Goryeo dynasties. A prophet, Doseon, who predicted the advent of the Goryeo dynasty, was appointed as *Guksa* (national master). All Buddhist temples were located and built following his analysis of land power. Predicting the decline of dynasties due to the weakness of spiritual power in Gaeseung, other prophets called for the relocation of the capital to Pyeongyang, but their appeal failed to convince political leaders.<sup>135</sup>

As already noted, Taoism played an important role in building a new capital during the Joseon dynasty. Annual Taoist rituals continued to be practised. Contrary to the practices of the Goryeo dynasty, which allowed Taoism to be transmitted, the Confucians of Joseon society persecuted and oppressed Taoists and Buddhists, regarding their teachings as “heretical.” Lee Neung-hwa argues that there were Taoist groups for meditation and self-discipline, which he labels with the Korean term *Danhak* (studies to cultivate the elixir of life).<sup>136</sup> Connecting Taoism with blind diviners, literatures, folk customs, and syncretistic new religious movements such as *Seonumjeulgyo*, *Bocheongyo*, and *Baekbaekgyo*, Lee illustrates the historical influences of Taoism during the colonial period. It should also be noted that Yun mentions in his diary prophecies, religious mystics, and new religious movements that seem to have been related to Taoism.

---

<sup>135</sup> Jo and Lee, *Korean Religious History – Buddhism and Taoism*, 255-261.

<sup>136</sup> Lee, *A History of Korean Taoism*, 201-252. Lee examines characteristics of *danhak* school by analyzing historical texts and religious thoughts of main figures.

## 2.6. Confucianism as an Educational System and *Silhak* (Practical Learning)

I do not know how anyone could write a history of Western European thought without recourse to the interpretation of Christianity in all its multifarious guises. Nor can one study East Asian history without trying to place Confucianism in its diverse regional contexts.<sup>137</sup>

In order to understand Yun as a religious man, it is necessary to examine the historical development of Confucianism in Korea. The national and private academies educated the children of the ruling class about the five Confucian classics. In a later period, along with the classical writings of Confucius, the works of other Confucian scholars, including Chu His, were added and common people were permitted to have a Confucian education. During the Joseon dynasty, Confucian scriptures not only formed social structures, but also influenced individual and family life. Since the sixteenth century, Neo-Confucianism has transformed politics, economics, and culture through Confucian education.

Keum Jang-tae argues that Confucianism was “the first universal religion” which had been introduced into Korea, and believes that “primitive Confucian thought” already existed in Korea before Confucius revived its traditions.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, Confucius was not the founder of Confucianism but a transmitter of ancient traditions. In BCE 195, a Chinese exile, Wi Man, founded a nation in Korea, and in BCE 108, the Han Emperor of China made a colony called *Hansagun* in Korea. These invaders brought with them Chinese culture and classical Confucianism. As tribal nations developed into the ancient nations of Korea, ancient kings needed a governing ideology like Confucianism to train government officials and to edify laws and social structures.

Though Buddhism as the state religion gave Koreans an opportunity to access spiritual salvation after the Three Kingdoms period, Confucianism played an important role in offering moral standards for political order; it emphasized loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity as virtues of self-discipline. Contrary to Buddhism and Taoism, which emphasized the

---

<sup>137</sup> John H. Berthrong, *Transformations of the Confucian Way* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>138</sup> Jang-tae Keum and Yu Dong-sik, *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Confucianism and Christianity* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1986), 5.



transcendent spiritual world, Confucians attempted to realize Confucian virtues in this world through reforming social and political orders and educating elites. The Confucian education system supplied the necessary trained bureaucracy to make the king's decisions conform to Confucian ideals of the *Wangdo* (way of the king), but religious intolerance also gradually developed.

Confucian culture had been transmitted and developed through education.<sup>139</sup> Koreans of Goguryeo founded *Taehak*, the first national university, in 372 and *Gyeongdang* (private academies). Doctors of the five classics were appointed to teach Confucian classics: the *Book of Songs or Poetry*, the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Changes*, the *Book of Rites*, and *Spring and Autumn*. The Sinra Kingdom founded *Gukhak*, a national academy, in 682 (later *Taehakgam*) and set up *Dokseosampum*, a civil service examination, in 788. Keum Jang-tae argues that this systematic education based on Confucian scriptures influenced the changes in indigenous religious rituals and worldview, including nature worship, ancestor worship, and *Mugyo*.<sup>140</sup> *Jongmyo* (shrine of royal ancestors) and *Sajik* (alter of earth and grain) were both introduced in the Three Kingdoms period. Grayson points out the characteristics of Confucian education in Sinra Kingdom as follows:

It will be seen that the common element in the system of education was the study of the *Book of Filial Piety* and the *Analects of Confucius*. At this period, the core of Confucian learning was seen as knowledge of the stories and aphorisms of Confucius and the practice of filial piety. The examination results determined the level of placement in government service to which the examinee was entitled. Unlike previous eras, there was now an established system of Confucian study which was linked to the civil service.<sup>141</sup>

Separate from the examinees for the civil services, a class of Confucian scholars grew and formed a Korean school of Confucianism. It should be noted that Keum and Grayson approached Confucianism differently: the former regards it as a religion, whereas the latter saw it as a system of ethics.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-23.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>141</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 94.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

In the Goryeo dynasty, traditional Confucianism was strengthened, but it resisted intolerant attitudes towards Buddhism, Taoism, and other teachings. King Seongjong (960-997) made *Taemyo* (or *Jongmyo*, ancestral shrine) in 989 and *Sajik* (altar of earth and grain) in 991. Appointing doctors of Confucian classics for local Confucian education, he founded *Gukjagam*, a centre of Confucian education and national ritual and *Suseowon*, a library in Pyeongyang. Though most Confucian education and rituals came from China, Keum emphasized the autonomy of Korean Confucianism by enshrining Korean ancestors such as Seolchong and Gangsu at the *Munmyo* (Confucian shrine).<sup>143</sup> Private academies were developed while at the same time national academies were in decline during the late Goryeo dynasty. Confucian classics during this period were central in Confucian education, but the civil service examination also required candidates to compose their own works and use classics.

In the late thirteenth century, An Hyang (1243-1306) brought Chu Hsi's classical commentaries from Beijing and promoted Neo-Confucian education in Korea. The great synthesizer and organizer, Chu Hsi (1130-1200), explained "the world in terms of principles and insights taken from its reading of classical Confucianism and modified by its response to the Buddhist challenge,"<sup>144</sup> arguing that "humans could be brought to a better state of existence through education."<sup>145</sup> Grayson argues that Chu Hsi transformed classical Confucianism from "an ethical system" to "a religious system" by using metaphysics adopted from other religions, particularly, Buddhism.<sup>146</sup> Following the advice of An Hyang, the national Confucian college was revived and renamed *Seonggyungwan* in 1362.

The educated elite of the fourteenth century adopted Neo-Confucianism as the state religion and founded the Joseon dynasty. As a philosophical Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism sought for the study of human nature and universal principles. On the other hand, in its political ethics, it paid particular attention to social relationships between king and subject, parents and children, man and woman, elders and youth, and friends. Since Neo-Confucianism rejected all other teachings, Confucians

---

<sup>143</sup> Keum and Yu, *Korean Religious History – Confucianism and Christianity*, 30.

<sup>144</sup> Berthrong, *Transformations of the Confucian Way*, 86.

<sup>145</sup> Grayson, *Korea - A Religious History*, 129

persecuted Buddhist monks, Taoist priests, and oppressed *Mudangs*. They were all banned from entering major cities and forced to move to rural areas, to build their temples and shrines in the mountains.<sup>147</sup>

In the fifteenth century, Korean Confucians had great concern for social reformation.<sup>148</sup> Seeing Buddhism as “a worthless superstition,” Neo-Confucians suppressed Buddhists and rebuilt Korean society based on Neo-Confucianism. But there were conflicts between the two main Neo-Confucian schools, *Kwanhakpa* (school of administrative philosophy) and *Sarimpa* (school of scholars). While the former was moderate, the latter was more radical and led the sixteenth century Confucian reformation in Korea. Neo-Confucian ideals were publicly embraced to the extent that Buddhism has never revived in its influence on Korean society.

In the sixteenth century, which can be called “the golden age of Neo-Confucianism,” Confucianism flourished as a religious tradition as well as a philosophical system, transforming government, social institutions, and family rituals. As John Berthrong points out, “Korea became a model Confucian society.”<sup>149</sup> Neo-Confucianism convinced Korean society to change its patterns of birth, education, life, and death. *Seoweons* (regional Confucian academies) were developed and their founding scholars were enshrined and revered. The *Sarimpa* was divided into two distinctive schools of dualism: *Juripa* (principle first school) and *Jugipa* (matter first school). This separation created consequent factional conflicts in Confucian government, which later Yun criticized as one of weaknesses in Confucianism. In the late fifteenth century, distinct geographic factions first appeared between the Westerners and the Easterners. After defeating the Westerners, the Easterners split into Northerners and Southerners, of which the Northerners occupied political hegemony. The Northerners again divided into the Great Northerners and the Lesser Northerners. By the same token, the Southerners divided into two factions, Old Learning school and New Learning school. Divided as they

---

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>147</sup> Kim, *Christianity and the Encounters of Asian Religions*, 87-90.

<sup>148</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 141-2.

<sup>149</sup> Berthrong, *Transformations of the Confucian Way*, 146.

were, Korean Confucians were not prepared to defend against the sudden Japanese invasion in 1592.

The radical transformation based on Neo-Confucianism and its consequent factional conflicts seemed to Yun the start of an intellectual colonialism which overlooked and even abandoned Korean indigenous traditions in order fully to adopt Chinese traditions. Summarizing the Confucian emphasis on Chinese culture, Yun criticized the weakness of Neo-Confucian education system as follows:

Read nothing but Chinese histories and classics – Never show any interest in things Korean – that would be too vulgar. Don't show any inclination toward the studies of fine arts, or science such as mathematics or medicine. Write essays on filial piety, feminine charity and loyalty to Kings. Fill up the remaining hours by composing verses on Wind and Moon.<sup>150</sup>

Pointing out the indifference of the ruling class to Korean culture and science, Yun felt the need for educational reform. He claimed that the Korean aristocrats (*Yangbans*) had been “a curse” on the Koreans “without one single redeeming quality.”<sup>151</sup> Though he recognized the importance of Confucian virtues, Yun regarded the lack of concern over Korean traditions by Korean Confucians as a great problem of Confucian education.

After Japan invaded Korea in the 1590s, the Korean economic and political situation became desperate. In order to recover, the many branches of Confucians sought for the renewal of Neo-Confucianism. In the early seventeenth century, reform-minded Confucian scholars had begun to study Western knowledge, including Roman Catholicism, which they called “*Seohak*” (literally, it means “Western learning”). In the sixteen and seventeen centuries, Jesuit missionaries had gained access to China by introducing Western scientific knowledge to Chinese intellectuals and translating Western knowledge into Chinese.<sup>152</sup> The books of Western knowledge were introduced from China, but the Western emphases on

---

<sup>150</sup> YD, 24 January 1929.

<sup>151</sup> YD, 27 January 1929.

<sup>152</sup> See, Andrew Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

practical and scientific education were clearly different from the traditional Confucian worldview. When political factionalism became much worse, a new form of Neo-Confucianism was developed under Western influences, which had been introduced by Korean Confucians, who also influenced the early formation of Yun's thought concerning religious education.

Since the state religion of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) was Neo-Confucianism, Koreans were usually born Confucians.<sup>153</sup> As has been already mentioned, the Confucian education system shaped Korean life through the teachings of Confucius: "From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything beside."<sup>154</sup> Ascribing the decline of the Joseon dynasty to her corrupt government and rising factionalism, Confucian reformers criticized the social conflicts and formalism of Confucian ideals and formed a new school which advocated the utility and rationality of real life and sought to reform the crumbling foundation of the Joseon dynasty.<sup>155</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a small number of *Yangban*<sup>156</sup> houses held a political power monopoly in the Joseon dynasty. In the countryside, along with the emergence of a middle class who had grown rich through the practice of large-scale farming, poor peasants were being forced to abandon their farms, and the number of landless vagrants was increasing. In urban areas, merchants amassed wealth by their control of trade and handicraft production, while small merchants faced ruin due to soaring prices.<sup>157</sup> The educated *Yangban* class began to respond to these social ills by forming the school of thought known as *Silhak* (or practical

---

<sup>153</sup> There have been hot debates on the religiousness of Confucianism among the Korean scholars as well as Western scholars. Keum Jang-tae (1944-) of Seoul National University, and some religious studies scholars, argue that Confucianism is one of the world religions due to its emphasis on rituals of ancestors and spirits. In contrast, most philosophers and historians, including Grayson, have paid attention to philosophical, political, ethical, and cultural dimensions of Confucianism.

<sup>154</sup> *GL*, 1.5. in *The Four Books*, trans. by James Legge (Shanghai: The Chinese Book Company, 1930).

<sup>155</sup> Jang-tae Geum, *Yuhaksasangui Ihae* (Understanding of Confucian thought) (Seoul: Jipmundang, 1996), 282.

<sup>156</sup> Woo-keun Han, *The History of Korea*, trans. by Lee Kyung-shik (Seoul: The Eul-Yoo Publishing, 1970), 229-255.

<sup>157</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. by Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 232.

learning). Most *Silhak* reformers came from the Southerners, *Namins*, one of the groups that had been long excluded from central government positions.

While most *Silhak* scholars were Neo-Confucians, the emphasis of their inquiries was not on the philosophical theories of the primacy of the formative principle for energizing society, but on social science, natural science, and technology.<sup>158</sup> They were not very far out of this metaphysical loop, but they were more concerned with real-world problems and human suffering.

There were two main schools within *Silhak* Confucians in the eighteenth century.<sup>159</sup> First, *Silhak* thinkers like Yu Hyeong-won (1623-1673), I Ik (1681-1763), and Jeong Yak-yong (1762-1836)<sup>160</sup> formed an institutional approach to government by stressing reforms of land ownership, economic infrastructure, government administration, and military organization.<sup>161</sup> Paying more attention to the peasant class than to the landlord class, they sought to create a utopian state of independent, self-employed farmers. They tried to abolish social status distinctions, providing equal opportunities for education and selecting officials on the basis of merit. This new trend seems to have influenced Yun and his reforming thought to the extent that Yun regarded Jeong Yak-yong as “one of the greatest scholars who Yi [Joseon] dynasty has produced”<sup>162</sup> and emphasized the importance of agricultural and industrial education. In contrast to Confucian reformers, Yun later attempted to establish an “ideal city” in Song Do, based on Christian education.

Secondly, other *Silhak* thinkers of the “economic enrichment” school called *Bukhakpa* (school of northern learning) or *Iyonghusaenghakpa*, sought to bring about prosperity through commercial and manufacturing activities, instead of reforming

---

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>159</sup> Geum and Yu, *Korean Religious Thought -Confucianism and Christianity* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1994), 147-156. According to Geum, the term *Silhak* has two meanings. First, it means the restoration of practical Confucianism against theoretical Taoism and Buddhism. Secondly, it means a new school of Practical Learning emerging in the seventeenth century within Korean Neo-Confucian schools. In a wider sense, my usage of the term *Silhak* covers not only these meanings but also later developed similar trends to emphasize practical learning in the late Joseon period.

<sup>160</sup> Jeong was persecuted by Korean government due to his conversion to Roman Catholicism, but Yun admired Jeong’s works, particularly his works on practical learning.

<sup>161</sup> This *Silhak* school is called *Gyeongsechiyonghakpa*.

<sup>162</sup> *YD*, 17 July 1935.

land ownership. Pak Ji-won (1737-1805), the author of *Yeolha Diary* (in which described his journey to Beijing) wrote about contemporary Chinese life and compared poor conditions in Korea with those in Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Pak Jega, in his work *Beijing Diary*, addressed the importance of commerce and argued that consumption stimulates production. Advocating the superiority of Chinese civilization, they claimed that Koreans needed to understand the sources of China's achievements in order to reform Korean society. These Confucian reformers criticized the parasitic life of the *Yangbans*, who despised productive labour. By the same token, Yun Chi-ho contended that the parasitism of Confucian office seekers and the classism, which he called 'yangbanism,' made the Korean government more corrupt in morality, economics, and politics.

As Grayson points out, the *Silhak* scholars were part of "a unique trend" in East Asian Confucianism in that their precise practical concern was "in contrast to the strictly academic and antiquarian pursuits of their counterparts in Ch'ing [Qing] China."<sup>163</sup> After Yun converted to Christianity, this emphasis on practical learning and the criticism of parasitism continued to be one of his main concerns, strengthened by the Pauline teaching, "Anyone unwilling to work should not eat."<sup>164</sup>

## 2.7. Christianity as a Western Religion and Education

As a form of Western knowledge, Roman Catholicism was introduced into Korea in the early seventeenth century.<sup>165</sup> It was not Catholic missionaries but Koreans who first transmitted Roman Catholicism to Korea. These Koreans belonged to the middle class, *Jungin*. Among the *Jungin*, interpreters held the highest position, since they contacted foreigners and helped to negotiate important national affairs. They visited Beijing with the official Korean annual embassy and brought back the books on Western knowledge and Roman Catholicism, including Matteo Ricci's (1552-1610) *True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven*. Since *Jungins* were politically

---

<sup>163</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 169.

<sup>164</sup> 2 Thessalonians 3.6-10 NRSV.

<sup>165</sup> Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, 176-178.

deprived and socially discriminated against, the Christian idea of equality seems to have appealed to their needs.<sup>166</sup>

It was in the late eighteenth century that prominent Confucian scholars, including Gweon Cheol-sin (1736-1801) and Jeong Yak-jeon (1758-1816), studied the new doctrines and practised these teachings. Most Korean Catholics were dominated by the *Silhak* Confucian School, particularly, *Namin* (the Southern party), who were marginalized from political power. Lee Seug-hun (1756-1801) was baptised in Beijing, and returned to Korea. He preached on Christian doctrine, and converts were added in Seoul and the provinces. Bishop Alexandre de Govea in Beijing prohibited ancestral worship among Korean Catholics. The destruction of ancestral tablets resulted in systematic persecution by Confucian rulers. In 1791, Yun Ji-chung and Gweon Sang-yeon were both executed, because they refused to offer sacrifices to their ancestors.<sup>167</sup> Identifying Christianity as *Sagyo* (evil teaching), the Confucian government ordered new Catholic converts to abandon their new found faith, but the number of Catholic converts increased with the help of foreign missionary priests. Anti-Christian Confucians persecuted Catholics in the nineteenth century. The nation-wide persecution of Christians saw imprisonment, cruel torture, and merciless massacres perpetrated on a wide scale.<sup>168</sup>

It is important that Catholic missionaries paid less attention to Bible translation than to ecclesiastical institutions. From 1784 to 1866, “no attempt had been made to translate a single Gospel or any portion of the Bible.” Korean Catholics were not encouraged to read the Bible. As religious leaders, the Catholic missionaries maintained ecclesiastical authority by living with their converts. Like the case of Hwang Sa-yeong, which George Paik regarded “the most undesirable feature of the missionary proselyting methods of Roman Catholics,”<sup>169</sup> Korean Catholics even proposed that the Christian nations in Europe should invade Korea. By contrast, Protestant missionaries translated the Bible and distanced themselves

---

<sup>166</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity – The Problem of Identification with Tradition* (Seoul: Hollym Cooperations, 1967), 44-46.

<sup>167</sup> L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 33.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.



from political affairs. They trained indigenous Christians to lead the Korean Christians, living in separate areas.<sup>170</sup>

In the nineteenth century, there were early missionary efforts by Protestant missionaries such as Charles Gutzlaff (1803-1851) and Robert Thomas (1840-1866) to enter Korea and make Christian communities. Seo Sang-yun, who had helped John Ross (1842-1916), a Scottish missionary, to translate the New Testament into Korean, brought copies of the Bible back to Korea and founded the first indigenous church, Sorae Church, in 1898. Since the dialect of North-Western Korea had been used in the Bible translation, it is certain that the Korean Bible appealed to more Northern Koreans.<sup>171</sup>

Horace Allen (1858-1932), a Presbyterian medical missionary, opened the first Protestant mission in September, 1884, at a time when Yun worked as an interpreter of American Legation. Radical reformers such as Kim Ok-gyun, Seo Jaepil, and Hong Yeong-sik murdered conservative reformers who objected to the Japanese intervention. A nephew of Queen Min, Prince Min Yeong-ik (1860-1914),<sup>172</sup> who had been severely wounded by assassins, was under the care of Allen, who succeeded in a surgical operation. Min's recovery made the King appoint Allen as a court physician and build the first Western hospital, *Gwanghewon*, with Allen in full charge. The early medical mission covered the supervision of the Government Hospital, medical education, and practice among Koreans and foreign residents. While Yun was in exile in Shanghai, Allen informed Yun of the Korean political and religious situation. In 1895, when Yun returned to Korea, Allen played a role of adviser in collecting information on the political situation and advising him in political engagement.

---

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>171</sup> On the contrary, Southern Koreans seems to have had a difficulty in understanding the Bible due to a dialect problem. Therefore, later American missionaries started to translate the Bible in the Seoul dialect of Korea.

<sup>172</sup> After the American-Korean treaty (1882) was signed, Prince Min visited the United States to meet President Chester Arthur in 1883.

Hoping one day to be missionaries in Asia, both Horace Grant Underwood (1859-1916)<sup>173</sup> and Henry Appenzeller (1858-1902)<sup>174</sup> attended the Inter-Seminary Alliance at Hartford, Connecticut in 1883. Two years later, they became the first ordained missionaries of the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church respectively. Most Koreans were afraid to become Christians because of previous Catholic persecutions and the government law forbidding conversion to Christianity by penalty of death, so Underwood first helped Allen's medical mission for a while. Methodist missionaries initiated educational mission earlier than the Presbyterians. Mary Scranton, a missionary of Northern Episcopal Church, founded the first Methodist girls' school (later, Ewha Women's University) in 1886, arguing as follows:

They, the girls, are not being made over again after our foreign way of living, dress, and surroundings, because it occasionally appears from home and even in the field that we thought to make a change in all ways. We take pleasure in making Koreans better Koreans only. We want to Korea to be proud of Korean things, and more that it is a perfect Korea through Christ and his teachings.<sup>175</sup>

Appenzeller started the Baejae school, (now Baejae University), the first missionary schools for boys in 1885 and taught English. Following the Methodist model, Underwood opened an orphanage in 1886 first, and a school was later added. The orphanage became Chosen Christian College (now Yonsei University). Yun taught at Baejae School, and later became the first Korean President of Chosen Christian College. Early missionaries supported Yun's initiative in establishing the Southern Methodist Mission in Korea.

Missionaries translated the New Testament into Korean and wrote grammatical guides and dictionaries. The Bible translation rehabilitated the indigenous language, *Hangul*, as Wycliffe's translation of the Bible opened a new

---

<sup>173</sup> After he was born in London, Underwood with his parents came to the United States. He studied at New York University and the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Brunswick. He was funded by the Presbyterian Mission Board.

<sup>174</sup> Appenzeller studied at Franklin and Marshall College and Drew Theological Seminary. He and his wife were sent as missionaries under the care of the Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Church.

<sup>175</sup> Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 128.

for English. Itinerant missionaries influenced the spread of literary education, encouraging illiterate Koreans to read the Bible by learning their own language. Indigenous leaders held regular Bible classes in their districts, whereas missionaries on regular trips held large annual Bible classes in major mission stations, including Seoul and Pyeongyang. The women missionaries taught hygiene, sanitation, and childcare along with the Bible to Korean women. The Sunday schools, Bible Institutes, and Bible Schools contributed to the education of adults and children.<sup>176</sup>

During the colonial period, Koreans were segregated from the Japanese in elementary, secondary, and higher education. The Japanese, in Japan and Korea, studied at Primary School, Middle School, College, and University levels, but for Koreans in Korea, there were no opportunities to be at a university or university preparatory school. Korean schools were given different names and offered modified courses to students. The period of education in Korean schools was much shorter than that in Japanese schools. The elementary and secondary schools were called the “Common School,” and the “Higher Common School.” Though Korean colleges used the same name in Japan, they were lower in grade than the Japanese colleges.<sup>177</sup> For example, the Anglo-Korean School, which Yun founded in 1906, was forced to change its name to the Songdo Higher Common School in 1917 and Songdo Middle School in 1938. The Chosen Christian College, which Underwood founded in 1915 and where Yun worked as board member and as the first Korean President, changed its name into Yeonhi Special School in 1923.

Despite rapid increase in church membership and flourishing of Christian education, Christianity remained a Western religion. Western missionaries controlled mission policies and occupied the main leading positions of Christian mission and education until they were forced to leave Korea in the 1940s.

---

<sup>176</sup> The Bible Class was a brief gathering from four days to two weeks. The Bible Institute lasted at least one month and has the more advanced classes. The Bible School, a higher educational institution, operated three months or more each year.

<sup>177</sup> Horace H. Underwood, *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: International Press, 1926), 39-43.

## 2.8. Conclusion

In summary, Korean traditional religions were at least as syncretistic as they were conservative, because they were all interconnected and intermingled with one another in Korean society. Embracing various elements of *Mugyo*, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, Koreans consecrated their society as the centre of the world under the protection of *Hananim*, an indigenous god. The continual introduction of new religions from abroad fostered a continuous change in the Korean religious consciousness. In this sense, Korean Confucians can be characterized as having a multi-religious belonging, though they later oppressed the followers of *Mugyo*, Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity severely during the Joseon dynasty.

Early Christian missionaries from the West encountered many different East Asian religious traditions in Korea, which I have examined in this chapter. It is important that Christianity first reached the hearts of Koreans both as a Western religion and as an educational system. Experiencing the corruption of Confucian morality, education, and politics, reform-minded Confucians, including Yun, recognized the urgent need of social reformation. They chose to renew religious foundations and morality among the Koreans through Christian education.

It should be noted that early Korean Christians didn't accept Western Christianity without criticism or resistance. Recognizing their needs and harmonizing this new religion with existing traditional religion, they attempted to create their own version of Christianity. These attempts manifested various patterns in Korean history, which will be revealed in my analysis of Yun's life in the following chapters.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**A FUSION OF HORIZONS BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST**  
**1865-1895**

**3.1. Introduction**

[T]he horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence *the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past*. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. Rather, *understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*. We are familiar with the naivete about themselves and their heritage. In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other.<sup>178</sup>

As Hans-Georg Gadamer argues, understanding is a “fusion of horizons” between the past and present, subjective and objective. By the same token, early Korean Christians, including Yun Chi-ho, were not born in a religious vacuum, as so often claimed by Western missionaries. As I examined in previous chapter, late nineteenth century Korea was a multi-religious society. As the state religion, Confucianism shaped the social structure of Joseon<sup>179</sup> dynasty and the ethical code of Koreans, whereas Buddhism and indigenous religions were spread mainly into the lower class of Koreans, especially giving hope and consolation to Korean women.

Contrary to the Western concept of religious membership, the Koreans might belong to different religious traditions at the same time.<sup>180</sup> For instance, Confucians often visited Buddhist temples of their own free will, and consulted *Mudangs* for exorcising spirits in the moment of life crises. Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism were not separated as three different religions. Indeed, as three sides of one synthetic

---

<sup>178</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1999), 306, my italics.

<sup>179</sup> Instead of “Chosen” or “Chosun,” I use the term “Joseon,” following the Revised Romanization System of Korean, which was made by Korean Government in July 2000.

<sup>180</sup> The syncretistic fusion of religious horizons is still one of the main characteristics in Korean religions.

religion or a way of life they complemented one another. They were both intermingled and interconnected. Royal families appointed various religious practitioners as their counselors for divination and prophecy, while they respected Confucian ethics and practiced Confucian rituals. One may call this phenomenon “multi-religious belonging.”

In this chapter, I will examine Yun’s religious formation, particularly his reform-oriented characteristics in a Confucian context. Then, I will explore how Yun experienced Christian conversion and developed his religious belief through theological training in China and the United States. His failed attempts at organizing political independence movements will be dealt with as the turning points in religious commitment. My focus will remain on the religious dimension of Yun’s life and thought, particularly the religious significance of the historical events around him that influenced the formation and development of his religious thought.

It should be noted that Yun was a devout Confucian who had studied Confucian classics, accepted Confucian virtues as the criteria of ethical life, and prayed to Heaven. Among the various schools of Neo-Confucianism, Yun was most influenced by the *Silhak* (Practical Learning) School, which emphasized the practical application of knowledge to daily life. Emphasizing the continuity between Confucianism and Christianity, I will argue that Yun’s prior understanding of Confucian tradition played an important role in his accepting Christianity as a new religion.

### ***3.2. New Confucian Reformers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century***

Yun’s ancestors had lived at Suwon near to Seoul in Central Providence (or Gyeonggi Providence). When the government occupied the land to build a summer palace, his grandfather, Yun Chi-dong moved down to Southern Chungcheong Providence, where Yun Chi-ho was born in January 1865.<sup>181</sup> His father, Yun Ung-

---

<sup>181</sup> On the issue of the birthday of Yun Chi-ho, there have been four theories: first, 26 December 1864 (Y. H. Kim, 1935); secondly, 26 December 1865 (National History Compilation Committee, 1971); thirdly, 26 January 1865 (National History Compilation Committee, 1989); and fourth, 23 January 1865 (Yu young-yeol, 1985). According to the genealogy of Yun’s family (1969 and 1983), Yun was born on 23 January 1865 on the solar calendar (26 December Kapja on the Lunar calendar). Therefore, I will accept the fourth theory. Yun Chi-ho was born at New Village of the Asan district, Southern Chungcheong Province. It was a fertile farm, which the government demanded for a summer palace.

ryeol (1840-1911),<sup>182</sup> had passed the civil service examination to become a military official. But, he seems to have wanted his son to become a civil official, not a military official, for military officials had been discriminated against or despised under the Confucian tradition to emphasize literary education and respect for scholarly classes.

While his father served as a military official at Gongju in Southern Chungcheong Province and later in Seoul, Yun was left behind at Asan until the age of eight. He studied Chinese classics at *Seodang* under a tutor. *Seodang* was a traditional Korean primary school, where Chinese characters as well as Chinese classics were taught. As Confucius pointed out the importance of ancient knowledge,<sup>183</sup> so Korean Confucians believed that “to learn with a constant perseverance and application”<sup>184</sup> was one of virtues which Confucians should seek throughout life. In 1873, Yun Chi-ho came up to Seoul and was taught under Kim Jeong-eon<sup>185</sup>, one of the most learned tutors in the capital city. When he was fourteen years old, Yun began to study under Eo Yun-jung (1848-1896), one of reform-minded officials. Yun followed the steps of his father by joining *Sinsayuramdan* (the fact-finding mission) to Japan as one of Eo’s assistants.<sup>186</sup> His father influenced the development of Yun’s personality, teaching his son to recognize the necessity of the military and the importance of the martial spirit in the reformation of Korea. His father encouraged his young son Yun to open his eyes to practical education, from which a *Yangban* was barred at that time.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>182</sup> Yun Ung-reol belonged to the scholar-gentry called *yangban*. During the Joseon period, this class controlled politics, sustained social morality and ethics, and nurtured what became known as *yangban* culture. *Yangban* means literally “two branches” – the civil and military branches of the bureaucracy. Yun Ung-ryeol was not literary aristocrat *Munkwan* but military aristocrat *Mukwan*. Yun Ung-reol passed the Civil Examination to become high military official when he was seventeen years old.

<sup>183</sup> CA, 7:19

<sup>184</sup> CA, 1:1

<sup>185</sup> Yun’s tutor Kim was a relative of Seo Gwang-beom (1859-1897), a Confucian reformer. During his life, Yun supported Kim and his descendents (eg. son and grandson) financially.

<sup>186</sup> Y. H. Kim (Yeong-hi Kim), “A Short Sketch of Dr. T. H. Yun’s Life,” *The Korea Mission Field*, vol. 31, no. 3 (March 1935): 45-46.

<sup>187</sup> In the Joseon dynasty, language specialists belonged to *Jungin* class, the second class, but Yun Chi-ho devoted himself to learning foreign languages such as Chinese, Japanese, English and French.

In February 1876, Korea and Japan signed the Ganghwa Treaty, the first modern “unequal” treaty, in which Japan recognized the sovereignty of Korea as an independent nation. Japan established her legation in Seoul, and the Korean fact-finding mission under the head of Kim Hong-jip (1842-1896), a Confucian reformer, visited Japan to examine Japanese political and economic situations in 1880. A high military official, Yun Ung-yeol accompanied Kim. When Kim with his mission returned to Korea, King Gojong (1852-1919) was given a booklet entitled *Joseonchaekryak* (Korean Strategy) written by Huang Tsun-hein, Chinese Counselor of the Chinese legation in Japan. Huang advised, “Korea should maintain a pro-Chinese policy, but should cultivate friendly relations with Japan, open her doors to the West, and import advanced culture and technology.”<sup>188</sup> Under the King’s order, copies of Huang’s book were printed and distributed to Confucian scholars and officials. A majority of Confucian scholars were antagonized, but Yun Ung-yeol and some reform-minded *Yangbans* seemed to have great sympathy with Huang’s advice.

In February 1881, when King Gojong dispatched another fact-finding mission to Japan, Yun Chi-ho was appointed to accompany Eo Yun-jung, his tutor. This mission conducted a detailed and careful investigation of Japan and studied government and administration in Japan, including her economic and military strength and foreign policy. After the mission was complete and its other members withdrew, young Confucians, including Yun, decided to stay for further study, mastering the Japanese language. For two years from 1881 to 1883, Yun studied Japanese at Dojinsha College, founded by Nakamura Masanao (1832-1891)<sup>189</sup> in 1875 for the purpose of advocating Christian ideas in Japan.<sup>190</sup> Yun seems to have been impressed by the great progress that Japan had made since the Meiji Restoration

---

<sup>188</sup> Andrew C. Nam, *Korea, Tradition & Transformation – A History of the Korean People* (Seoul: Hollym, 1988), 152. This work has a more objective and balanced view than previous works on Korean history in the sense that it considers “the internal and external forces which shaped and colored Korean society and effected the psychological and social development of the Korean people” (Ibid.,12).

<sup>189</sup> Nakamura was one of the Confucian reformers in the late nineteenth century Japan. Spending three years (1866-1868) in London, he translated John Mill’s *On Liberty* and Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help*. He failed to persuade Emperor Mutsuhito to accept Christianity, but he himself was baptized in 1868. Founding Tokyo Women’s Normal College and Dojinsha College, he taught at Tokyo University.

<sup>190</sup> Sukehiro Hirakawa, “Return to Japan or Return to the West?,” *Comparative Literature Studies*, 37.2 (2000), 196-211.



of 1868. He realized that Japan was advancing because she adopted Western knowledge and science. And so, following the advice of Kim Ok-gyun (1851-1894), he studied English from a secretary in the Dutch Consulate in Yokohama.<sup>191</sup>

While his son stayed in Japan, Yun Ung-ryeol was placed in charge of *Byeolgigun*, the modern troops of the Special Skill Force, established in 1881. The modernization of the military system, however, created resentment among the members of the old military units. In July 1882, these soldiers rioted in Seoul, *Imogunran* (Military Incident of the Year of Imo). These rioting troops infiltrated a palace killing many progressive officials and several Japanese. This palace coup led to Chinese military intervention and Yun Ung-ryeol took refuge in Japan, where his son studied.

When Chinese control over Korea was greatly strengthened in 1882 and 1883, a group of young reform advocates, who were influenced by the writings of the *Silhak* scholars, formed a political party known as *Dongriptang* (The Independence Party) or *Gaehwadang* (The Progressive Party).<sup>192</sup> Its leaders Pak Yeong-hyo (1861-1939) and Kim Ok-gyun visited Japan and developed strong desires to make their country both a modern and an independent nation. At the same time, Hong Yeong-sik and Seo Kwang-beom visited the United States in 1883 as members of the first Korean diplomatic mission, and were impressed by the economic and military strengths of the United States. They, along with other progressive officials, became even more eager to implement reform measures, to transform Korea into a modern state and to establish Korea's independence from China.

Hong Yeong-sik and Seo Kwang-beom returned to Korea with new ideas and knowledge about agriculture, commerce, and industry, as well as modern culture and military affairs. In cooperation with Pak Yeong-hyo and Kim Ok-gyun, they urged King Gojong to reform Korea. Contrary to moderate reformers such as Kim Hong-jip and Eo Yun-jung, who attempted to integrate Western technology into a Confucian mindset, this radical group intended also to accept Western ideas. They advocated

---

<sup>191</sup> Sang-tae Kim, "Iljeha Yunchihoui Naemyeonsaegewa Hankuk Geundaesa (Yun Chi-ho's Inner World and Modern Korean History)," *Yunchiho Ilgi* (Yun Chi-ho's diary) (Seoul: Yeoksabipyongsa, 2001), 26-54.

<sup>192</sup> Nam, *Korea, Tradition & Transformation*, 156-157.

the complete independence of Korea from China with political, educational, and social reforms, including social equality and tax reform. However, the harder the progressives pushed their reform programmes, the stronger the opposition of the conservatives grew.<sup>193</sup> As the conflict and tension of the two political parties became serious, Yun returned to Korea as the interpreter of American legation in Seoul.

After Korea signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States in May 1882, General Lucius H. Foote, who was on his way to Korea, needed to find an interpreter. Inoue, the Japanese Foreign Minister, recommended that General Foote hire Yun to be the official interpreter of the first American Minister to Korea and Yun accepted.

Yun arrived at Jemulpo (now Incheon) with General and Mrs. Foote in May 1883 and met King Gojong in Seoul.<sup>194</sup> His study of English in Japan gave Yun his first opportunity to work in Korean politics. Without any formal civil service examination, Yun was appointed as an official of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Korean Government. At the same time, as the interpreter of the American Legation, Yun encountered the Korean King and Queen face to face at the palace. Yun was a successful Confucian in that he was thoroughly educated by the Confucian classics and was given a high position in the government (even without any examination) within Seoul, the sacred city of Korea. Seoul was the centre of Korea in every respect. At least at its beginning Yun's career pleased his father, though this experience exposed Yun to the weaknesses and problems of the Korean government from within. For the sake of his country, Korea, Yun had to stand between the Korean King and the American Minister, between Korea and the United States, and between the East and the West. In addition to internal tensions and conflicts in Korean politics, Yun realized that stronger nations oppressed the weaker nations, often violently.

In 1884, the conflicts between the progressives and their opponents increased in intensity, forcing moderates such as Kim Hong-jip and Eo Yun-jung to mediate between the two opposing parties in the hopes of effecting a peaceful transformation

---

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>194</sup> *YD*, 22 January 1919. After he heard of the death of Emperor Gojong, Yun reflected on the first meeting with him in 1883: "[Emperor Gojong] is like Charles I in England in a sense he did not receive respect from his subjects in spite of his attractive personality."

of Korea into a modern nation. However, the gap between the two groups was so wide that the progressives resorted to a bloody palace coup, *Gapsinjeongbyeon* (Political Incident of the year *Gapsin*) in December 1884, with the support of Japanese legation guards. The progressives assassinated conservative officials during a dedication banquet for a new post office building. They established a new reform government, in which Yun Ung-ryeol was appointed as Minister of Law and Yun as an official of Foreign Affairs Ministry. Only two days after the reform government was established, however, Chinese troops attacked the palace and the new government fell. The majority of progressives were killed and Yun Ung-ryeol was exiled to Neungju, a small village in Jeonra Province (of Southern Korea). Such leaders, as Kim Ok-gyun, Park Yeong-hyo, and Seo Jae-pil, fled to Japan. Yun and his father were not directly involved in planning and preparing this political incident. Their appointment, however, to the new government was enough for pro-Chinese politicians to suspect them as pro-Japanese, so Yun felt insecure and uncertain for his life and future.<sup>195</sup>

When two bloody coups occurred in 1882 and 1884, Chinese intervention in Korean affairs forced Yun Ung-ryeol into exile twice within two years. This experience seems to have had a great impact on his son, Yun Chi-ho's anti-Chinese position. Therefore, the independence which Yun sought for, meant both religious and political independence from China. In his letter, comparing China to "an old foolish man" who lived in an old house and drank filthy water, Yun wrote: "Corea will never be civilized and prosperous as long as China interferes with her affairs – even indirectly. And more than that, Corea will soon fall into a deplorable condition...unless her government shall get rid of Chinese interference, and devote itself to renovating its old, ignorant politics and take up a civilization after the model of enlightened nations."<sup>196</sup>

According to a Confucian worldview, China was the centre of the world and Korea was one of the servant countries next to China. Korea had been regarded as a nation existing on the margin. As the Son of Heaven, only the Chinese Emperor was

---

<sup>195</sup> *YD*, 30 December 1884.

<sup>196</sup> *YL* to an anonymous friend, 5 June 1885, Special Collection, Yonsei University, South Korea.

able to offer sacrifices to Heaven and govern the kings of neighboring countries including Korean Gojong, if they were given the home rule. This situation seems to Yun to have meant slavery under China, so he was convinced that this old worldview should be replaced by a new way similar to the one that Japan had used for her modernization and social reformation. Yun decided to use Western knowledge to help the Korean King and his government to reform Korean society and people without any intervention of foreign powers.

### ***3.3. Conversion through Christian Education***

Yun took the first step of his long political exile in Shanghai. In the end, his exile would last a full ten years until 1895, when he would return to Korea as Secretary of the Korean Government. During this period, he exposed himself fully to Western knowledge and learned from Western democracy as seen in the United States.

While studying in Shanghai from 1885 to 1888, Yun didn't expect that his original plan to study in the United States would come true.<sup>197</sup> The secondary education<sup>198</sup> he had received from Methodist missionaries was his first encounter with Christianity. Impressed by missionaries and their moral life, Yun converted to Christianity and received baptism. It should be noted that as a Confucian, Yun had prayed to Heaven for his parents and his king as Confucius mentioned, "My praying has been for a long time."<sup>199</sup> Therefore, at conversion Yun began to pray to the Christian God rather than to Heaven, and this did not represent an abandonment of his religious lifestyle. Western education and Christianity offered Yun the authority to change his own life from despair to hope.

Because of his feelings of fear and despair, it was important that Yun went into exile in China. In January 1885, Yun accompanied General Foote, who was leaving Korea for the United States. Shortly after they arrived at Nagasaki in 1885,

---

<sup>197</sup> When he left Korea in 1885, Yun planned to go to the United States with General Foote. Due to financial shortage, however, he went to China.

<sup>198</sup> Yun had a chance to complete his secondary education in Japan, but his study was interrupted by his unexpected employment by the American Legation in Seoul.

<sup>199</sup> CA, 7.34, Confucius seems to have prayed to the spirits of the upper and lower worlds.

Yun cut off his topknot and put on a foreign suit of clothes. Binding one's topknot was a symbol of family connection and community solidarity in the traditional Korean society. Therefore, cutting off his topknot was more than changing hairstyle. Concerning the meaning of the topknot in Korean society, an American missionary L. H. Underwood states:

No matter how old one is, without a top-knot he is never considered a man, addressed with high endings, or treated with respect. After assuming the top-knot, no matter how young, he is vested with the dignities and duties of a man of family, takes his share in making the offerings and prayers at the ancestral shrines, and is recognized by his ancestor's spirits as one of the family who is to do them honor, and whom they are to protect and bless. And right here, to digress a little, it is interesting to note that so intimately is this custom concerned with their religion that many of the Christian converts are now cutting off their top-knots when they become converted, regarding that as the one step (after destroying their idols) which most effectually cuts off the old life and its superstitions, and marks them as having come out from their family and acquaintances as men set apart.<sup>200</sup>

In the event of cutting his topknot, did Yun disconnect himself completely from his Confucian identity, for example, from King, parents, family, and land? This change helped Yun to accept Christianity as a new religious identity, but practical more than doctrinal, reasoning seems to have been important in this decision.

Though he wanted to go to America for further studies, Yun could not find enough financial resource. He wrote to his friend: "I found that it would cost me ten times as much money to go to the United States and live there, as it would in Japan or China. Owing to such large expense which was beyond my power to afford and to some other reasons, I changed my mind."<sup>201</sup> It is not clear why Yun chose to study in China instead of Japan. The recommendation of General Foote seems to have made Yun sail across to Shanghai. As soon as he reached China, Yun registered at the Anglo-Chinese College through the help of General Stahl, an American General Consul in Shanghai.

---

<sup>200</sup> Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots – Life in Korea*, 168.

<sup>201</sup> YL to an anonymous friend, 5 June 1885.

The Anglo-Chinese College was a Methodist mission school operated under the direction of Young John Allen (1836-1907),<sup>202</sup> a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Seeing Allen as a “fatherly figure,”<sup>203</sup> Yun respected him to the extent that his eldest son was named “Allen” in 1896. In order to understand Yun Chi-ho’s early religious formation, it is necessary to examine Allen’s missionary works in China.<sup>204</sup> Particularly, it should be noted that, in his Christian mission, Allen devoted himself not only to religious work, but also to his secular career. Allen taught Yun to realize the importance of Christian education and its social engagement. With the help of Allen, the boundary of Christian mission in Shanghai was extended to the whole society beyond the church. Yun was convinced that Allen was a typical missionary in physical and mental vigor, revering him for his sacrificial missionary work of self-denial.<sup>205</sup>

According to Yun, Allen was converted in a gospel tent of Warm Spring, Georgia.<sup>206</sup> When he was a high school student, Allen decided to be a China missionary. He arrived with his family in China in July 1860. His initial missionary activity was to preach in Shanghai and nearby villages. But the financial straits of his mission during the American Civil War (1861-1865) forced him to combine his Christian ministry with secular employment in a government school in a Shanghai, where he taught English and science. Indeed, this unexpected experience helped Allen see that preaching alone would not meet China’s needs. In this respect, Yun seems to have learned the importance of Christian education in the mission field beyond exclusive evangelism.

On the other hand, Allen was involved with several newspapers. He established the first Chinese newspaper the *Wankwohkgungbao* (Review of the Times)

---

<sup>202</sup> A Methodist missionary in Shanghai, Young J. Allen was a different figure from Horace Newton Allen (1858-1932), an American Presbyterian Missionary in Korea, whom Yun met in 1884 before he left Korea.

<sup>203</sup> *YL* to Young John Allen, 18 December 1893, Yonsei University, Yun called himself “as a son in the Gospel” and looked up to, loved and revered Y. J. Allen “as [his] father in the Gospel.”

<sup>204</sup> Ralph R. Covell, “Young John Allen,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. G. H. Anderson (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 13.

<sup>205</sup> *YD*, 27 January 1890 and 26 November 1892. Yun presented a life-size photo of Y.J.Allen to the Few Society, Emory University. See also, *YL* to Young Allen, 18 January 1889.

<sup>206</sup> *YD*, 5 September 1892.

in 1868, editing *Shanghai Exinbao* (Shanghai Daily News). He also founded *Jiaohui Xinbao* (Church News) and later changed its name to *Weonguo Gongbao* (Global Magazine). Allen served as superintendent (1881-1886) of the Southern Methodist China Mission and as President (1885-1895) of the Anglo-Chinese College (later Soochow University). He also helped Laura Askew Haygood to found the McTyeire Home and School for Girls in 1892. It is clear that he influenced Yun Chi-ho's later career in *the Independent*, a Korean newspaper and the Anglo-Korean School. Allen had a creative mind to combine both religious and secular activity to bring the Christian faith to the Chinese. He died in 1907 after he attended the China Centenary Missionary Conference to celebrate the beginning of Protestant missions in China by Robert Morrison. Allen played an important role in guiding young Yun Chi-ho to prepare himself for the future Christian mission in Korea.

Yun's desire was to set up *Taepyeong* (great peace) and modernize his country. He might have known the Taiping Rebellions (1851-1864) in China, but he didn't mention this historic movement in his diary. Rather his term of *Taepyeong* should be understood in a general Confucian worldview, which will be analyzed in the chapter eight. Yun was not able to accomplish Confucian ideas within the old system of the Korean Government, so he decided to study new Western knowledge in the United States of America. Revering Confucian virtues such as *Chunghyo* (loyalty and filial piety), Yun carried the picture of the Korean King with him and prayed for blessing on his King and Queen. Yun wrote, "After completing my study, I will go back to Korea in order to serve my parents and help my *Seonggun* (sacred master or king)."<sup>207</sup>

Concerning the issue of loyalty, Yun even criticized the radical reformers of the 1884 Incident because they were ignorant of the royalty and righteousness of the Korean King and betrayed their country with the help of Japan. In Shanghai, Yun resolved that everyday he would pray to Heaven for the blessing and protection of his parents, king, family, relatives, and nation.<sup>208</sup> In August, he visited the tomb of Confucius and was shocked by the fact that it had been deserted and neglected.

---

<sup>207</sup> YD, 14 February 1885.

<sup>208</sup> YD, 15 February 1885.

While Yun studied with Allen, he “for the first time came face to face with the Christian ideas revealed in the words and actions.”<sup>209</sup> The political turmoil of 1884 and his consequent exile in a quiet devotional environment might invite Yun to find a new way of life and belonging. From September 1885 he started to study the Bible every Saturday morning, abstaining from drinking and sexual intercourse, and mourned for his previous intemperance:

Keep your vow or else you will be a sinner to God... You drink so much wine, because it seems to be a very pleasure, but sharp remorse smites you inwardly while your physical strength decays away, then what is the good of that apparent pleasure? What is the whole world to him who loses his soul? O God forgive me this time, I shall never commit such miserable sin I did last night again. O God forgive me [my sin] and help me to love Bible as the nutritious food of my soul. O God forgive [me my sin] now.<sup>210</sup>

Yun’s academic achievement was excellent, but he was still addicted to drinking and adultery. Because he felt guilty for his intemperate behaviour, Yun frequently made moral rules to control his body and mind. The following is the one of his resolutions called *Simyak*, “promise in heart.”

Desiring to conduct myself nobly, virtuously and wisely to preserve my health from being injured; to prevent my gold and silver from useless expense; to devote myself more to useful and Godly knowledge, I have determined, not to have any adulterous intercourse with the “Night Selling” girls, to whatever nation they may belong, at least during my stay in Shanghai. May God encourage and help me to be perseverant and successful in carrying out this or any other virtuous determination, under all circumstances, at all times, and in any place I may live! Witness by conscience the Holy Image of God’s doctrine.<sup>211</sup>

Yun attempted to live his life according to a strict moral code while in a mission college his mentors taught him to do so. He seems to have started a process of conversion sometime in late 1886: “From the early part of 1886 to the close of the

---

<sup>209</sup> Kim, “A Short Sketch of Dr. T. H. Yun’s life,” 47.

<sup>210</sup> *YD*, 4 April 1886.

<sup>211</sup> *YD*, 14 August 1886.



same year I found myself walking in a different path from that which I had pursued.”<sup>212</sup> But just as the educated Korean Confucians did, so Yun experienced a gradual process of conversion from his old Confucian worldview to a Christian worldview by reviewing the Confucian Scriptures and understanding their weaknesses in the practice of daily life.

Yun read over the four principal Confucian books<sup>213</sup> before he decided to be baptized. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith points out, scripture was a human activity.<sup>214</sup> Before encountering Christianity, the Confucian scriptures helped Yun to interpret the political situation and guide his life, but Yun realized that Confucian ideas didn't have enough power to change his desperate life in Shanghai. He argued that there was no authority to force believers to follow the moral truth written in Confucian classics. Therefore, Yun's conversion to Christianity meant that he accepted the authority of the Bible over that of the Confucian classics: "I attempted to shake off many evil practices, and in some measure succeeded in doing away with some of the leading sin which I loved like honey. This effort was helped by the Bible."<sup>215</sup> In April 1887, Yun was the first Southern Methodist Korean to be baptized, confessing that "God is love; Jesus is the Savior." It seems to have taken more than two years for Yun to accept Christianity after he began to know what Christianity is.

It should be noted that Yun's conversion was mainly based on his desire to lead an ascetic life by accepting the authority of the Bible. To him, the Confucian classics gave no authority to practice his resolutions before Heaven. Unlike the Christian God, Confucian Heaven was a withdrawn god, who did not intervene in human affairs after creation. Since he was aware of his own inability to practice his decisions, Yun decided to "love the Bible" as "the nutritious food to [his] soul" and accepted Jesus Christ as his "Lord." This conversion was the total transformation of

---

<sup>212</sup> *The Gospel in All Lands* (June 1887): 274, quoted in Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 166.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>214</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture? – A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 183. According to Smith, "what makes any of the world's scriptures scripture" is the role that they have played in personal and social life. Smith's study of religions focuses on the personal dimension of believers.

<sup>215</sup> *Gospel in All Lands* (June 1887): 274. quoted in Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 166.

his physical and spiritual life, in that he stopped drinking and having sexual intercourse with prostitutes.

After his conversion, Yun started to be more concerned about other religions and missionary activities in China and Japan. While in Shanghai, Yun kept in contact with the American missionaries in Korea such as Horace N. Allen and Henry G. Appenzeller. Therefore, Yun managed to stay acquainted with the political situation and mission activities in Korea. Visiting Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian temples, Yun read and discussed with his friends major works on world religions like Botany Astro's *Ten Religions*, and in particular, about Confucian-Christian relation. Yun was convinced that Christianity was "superior" to any other religion in terms of its practicability to moral life.

### ***3.4. Racial Discrimination in the American South***

In September 1888, after finishing his secondary education, Yun applied to ✓ the Doshisha College, a Christian College in Japan, for further studies, but he was rejected due to his political status as an exile. Doshisha's admission committee decided not to accept Korean exiles and they suspected that Yun was "pro-Japanese traitor" involved in the 1884 Incident. Following the advice of Young Allen, Yun went to study theology first at Vanderbilt University and then conducted postgraduate research at Emory College. When Yun arrived at Nashville, he commented on its magnificence as follows:

[Nashville], now noted for the number and excellence of its schools, colleges and universities, was a hundred years ago, inhabited by a race who had no characters to represent their thoughts, Their superstition, rude law, and cruel practices disgraced the land they unworthily possessed. Christianity, good government, and an enlightened people have turned a wild forest into the "Athens of the South."<sup>216</sup>

Seeing Nashville as a model of future Korea, Yun believed that Christian education and Western government would accomplish the same transformation in Korea. Christianity seemed to destroy the superstitions of Native Americans, with the

---

<sup>216</sup> YD, 7 March 1890.

transmission of justice through good government and the cultivation of wilderness through education. He was convinced that reason and common sense could change a “heathen” world into a civilized nation in the United States, and thus thought that Christianity would transform his beloved country, which had lost its ability to reform under the yoke of Confucianism.

Though the American Civil War was over in 1865, the racial prejudice of the whites against the blacks was so strong that some argued that the blacks should be deported to Africa.<sup>217</sup> Yun was confronted with the suffering of African Americans and deeply disappointed by such strong white racial bias. He described the level of racial discrimination like this:

On the way home from the Public Square the car was crowded. A colored woman came in; but no body gave her a seat. I waited long enough to see how an American would practice his bragged about the doctrine of “woman’s right.” I vacated my seat for the black lady. A smile went around among the passengers. Thus I found that it is color and not women, race, and not right that American respect.<sup>218</sup>

Moreover, Yun himself experienced racial discrimination from the white community when a fellow student insulted him in public. Even his teacher’s children humiliated him. In Kansas City, Yun had to stay up all night at a station, for no hotels offered him any room. Like other Asian races, being Korean in the USA, particularly the South, meant suffering, humiliation, and isolation; the racial prejudice against the colored people manifested itself in the social customs of the south. Being shocked at the discriminating remark of a young man, Yun questioned the legitimacy of the moral claims of the Christian Church,

I heard a young man say that he would sooner pull down his church than to admit a colored member to the congregation. Now is this prejudice compatible with the boasted civilization, philanthropy, religion of this people?<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> *YD*, 17 November 1888. When Yun attended the debating society about “the Deportation of Negro to Africa,” it was heard that the education of the blacks was needed for their welfare.

<sup>218</sup> *YD*, 19 April 1891.

<sup>219</sup> *YD*, 9 December 1889.

Yun kept silent despite being humiliated, having his doubts about the nature of American church. But his loneliness and despair made Yun feel more wretched and sick inside.

Yun wondered why the white Americans discriminated against other races. Why did Christians hate other people? He sought to answer these questions and to understand the inconsistency between Christian ideals and reality in America.

In practice, the Americans have shown that their doctrine of equality... is only skin deep. That is if you want to enjoy the so-called inalienable right of man in this "Land of Freedom" you must be white. The persecution of the Chinese in the West, the treatment of the Negro in the South, and the dealing with the Indian by the whole nation are fair commentaries on the bragged about "American doctrine" of the "inalienable right of man."<sup>220</sup>

Yun argued that this was not only a problem of the white people, but also a universal sin, the central theme of Pauline teaching: "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin. As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one."<sup>221</sup> Yun explained racial injustice by the sinfulness of humanity. Under the Providence of God, who had withdrawn from the world, the principle of the survival of the fittest works among sinful human beings, individual or collective. On the international level, neither the stronger nation nor the weaker one can blame the other, for each has its own responsibility in this conflict. The only way to overcome such suffering was to have a hope in education and religion. Praying to God for the sake of his own country, Yun clearly indicated a mission to be fulfilled, with his religious experience as follows:

Everything considered, even such Polarization may be better, or at least, not worse than the stinking stagnation in which the whole nation now stands or rather sleeps. I am desperate in making such remarks! Who can even faintly realize my indignation at the insult offered to, and any despair of any regeneration of my nation? The sourness and bitterness of my feeling to which this indignation and despair give rise,

---

<sup>220</sup> *YD*, 14 February 1890. See also, *YL* to Young Allen, 1 April 1890.

<sup>221</sup> Romans 3.9-10, KJV.

are simply insufferable. But be patient! What I can not help I must bear. Let my life, then O God, be some help to the nation. This morning a thought flashed into my mind in the shape of this questions: "Could it be merely a chance or blind accident or succession of chances and blind accident that have guided me through "many dangers, toils and snares" to this day?" No! It is neither chance nor designless accident. This God and his Providence that has had protected and guided me. I have a mission to fulfil; and my life will be either a failure or a success according as how well or ill I may discharge my duties. What is this mission? It is this: preaching the Gospel, and giving education to my people.<sup>222</sup>

Experiencing the Providence of God in the midst of the racially prejudiced American society, Yun began to understand how the black community had suffered greatly and endured much oppression. Yun attended worship services in Black churches, where he witnessed the black Christians crying, singing, and smiling in spite of suffering and racial discrimination.<sup>223</sup>

Yun was convinced that the black education played an important role of overcoming this prejudice. In Nashville, he visited the Fisk University,<sup>224</sup> the first African American College. Yun was inspired by the so-called "Black Demosthenes" Joseph Charles Price (1854-1893), an African American Christian educator. After hearing his lecture on "The Future of the Negro," Yun digested Dr. Price's arguments in his personal notes:

The greatest thing in the world is mind. The Negro must prove that he [or she] had mind like other people before he [or she] can hope for the future. Now during the past 25 years, the progress of the Negro in material possessions, in moral qualities, in intellectual achievements, has sufficiently proved that he [or she] has mind power like others... Change poverty into wealth, vice into virtue, ignorance into intelligence – in short, *change condition, the prejudice will disappear...* America is the home of the Negro. Here he [or she] must work out his [or her] destiny. *Emigration is nonsense. Amalgamation is a dream.* The great race problem can never be settled by a nonsense

---

<sup>222</sup> YD, 14 December 1889. See also YL to Young Allen, 16 March 1893.

<sup>223</sup> YD, 2 December 1888 and 10 November 1889.

<sup>224</sup> Fisk University was founded in Nashville, Tennessee in 1866 for the former slaves by the American Missionary Association. In 1872, it became the first African American College to receive class A rating by the Southern Association of College and Secondary Schools.

or a dream. *The elevation of the condition – moral, mental, and material – this and this only can settle the question.*<sup>225</sup>

It should be noted that Price influenced Yun's vision to improve the moral, mental, and material conditions of the Korean people during the Japanese colonial period.

On one hand, Yun experienced racial discrimination in the USA. On the other hand, he realized the role of religion and education to overcome such suffering. This conviction seems to have been strengthened by a successful transformation of the United States and his theological training, particularly in Methodist concepts of Christian perfection and sanctification.

In the 1870s and 1880s, American Methodists joined the organized national holiness movement under the mission, "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands."<sup>226</sup> In the United States, holiness associations were active in the South and the Southwest, but some holiness supporters criticized existing churches and advocated the organization of a distinct holiness church. An adverse reaction was inevitable. Professor Wilbur F. Tillett at Vanderbilt University rejected instantaneous sanctification. His students, including Yun, must "have received the impression that any instantaneous sanctification had been essentially repudiated by Wesley and was, in fact, unsupported by sound scriptural exegesis or representative Christian experience."<sup>227</sup> Yun was convinced that Christians were able to grow in the process of sanctification through the grace of God, but not rapidly. While Yun prepared himself for fulfilling the mission of preaching the Gospel and giving education to his people, Yun's Methodist theological education and his encounter with the black community seems to have influenced the formation of his concept of gradual transformation.

---

<sup>225</sup> YD, 16 January 1891, my italics.

<sup>226</sup> John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 133.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-168. See also YL to Young Allen, 13 November 1889.

### 3.5. *Constructing a Korean Theology of Spirituality*

In the Reformation, Martin Luther criticized scholastic theology for its high confidence in human reason.<sup>228</sup> Likewise, Yun pointed out similar problems with the Western systematic theology; the task of Western theology seemed to him “the hopeless struggle of feeble human intellect to know what is unknowable and to logically solve what is insolvable.”<sup>229</sup> Yun felt that the Westerners should accept the mysteries of the world, arguing that theology was not the subject of teaching, but of doing. Yun claimed that, when theology is taught, it becomes “a cold and heartless and uninspiring affair.”<sup>230</sup> Therefore, he contended that Christians should accept all mysteries by faith alone not by reason, rejecting the rationalistic and philosophical efforts of Western theology.

In April 1891, Professor Tillet<sup>231</sup> and the students in his class supported the making of a new American Methodist Confession of Faith. However, Yun objected to this motion and instead emphasized that the revival of faith and spirituality was more important. According to Yun, what the Christian Church should offer to the world was “a living religion,” not dogmas. He claimed as follows:

Men are tired of barren dogmas, confessions, [and] fossilized theology. What we want is not more formulae but faith; not more standards but spirituality; not more catechisms but character. With the Bible, life and experience but no Confession, Methodist church has in a century outrun, in the spiritual race, all other denominations. When Methodism decays, it will be due to the absence of life and never to the need of Confession... The church or system that has not power, life, and truth enough to stand but by artificial supports is not worth keeping. Outsiders in this age of common sense will gladly join the Methodist church as long as she has a living religion to offer. It is the consistent life and not the sound creed of a church that draws men to Christ.<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>228</sup> Timothy F. Lull, ed. *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 13-20. In 1517, Luther wrote “Disputation against Scholastic Theology,” where he criticized the scholastic theology of his own time and emphasized the grace of God.

<sup>229</sup> *YD*, 5 May, 1890.

<sup>230</sup> *YD*, 13 April, 1891 and *YL* to Young Allen, 20 December 1891.

<sup>231</sup> See 18 December, 1889. It seems according to my own examination that Tillet didn't believe in the doctrine of sudden sanctification. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 13 November 1889.

<sup>232</sup> *YD*, 30 April, 1891.

Yun argued that only the Bible is the standard of doctrines although he did not accept the infallibility of the Bible. Rather, he was convinced that the Bible had the essential truth of Christianity. The belief of divine presence, supported by the Gospel of Matthew<sup>233</sup> and the Book of Revelation,<sup>234</sup> was especially strong in his theology. He believed that God was always with him. Defining the term religion as “to have God in our hearts,” Yun emphasized religious experience over theological dogmas.

I had a most sweet experience of God’s love. My soul, all this day, has really enjoyed religion. True religion is simply this – to have God in our hearts. Isn’t religion any easy thing to get? Give me this experience of thy love of thy presence always and I am satisfied. My soul which had for the few days past been tossed about on the gloomy sea of doubts in regard to the complicated problems of life and death, found today rest and conscious joy never-before-known. God be thanked for this.<sup>235</sup>

Yun’s faith in divine presence was not limited to personal life and theological reflection. While studying theology at Vanderbilt, Yun committed himself to the prison ministry, which he regarded as the “charity of Christianity.” He was convinced that faith had no choice but to lose its life and power without the ministry of God and Christ. Therefore, he taught the Bible to prisoners every Sunday for around one and half years. After moving to Emory College, Yun visited the so-called “poor farm,” the facility that the State of Georgia had built for the poor black people. He seems to have practiced the teachings of Christ: “I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.”<sup>236</sup>

---

<sup>233</sup> Matthew 28:20, NRSV, “And teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded to you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

<sup>234</sup> Revelation 3:20, NRSV, “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”

<sup>235</sup> *YD*, 19 November 1890. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 24 January 1891.

<sup>236</sup> Matthew 25:35-36, NRSV. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 16 June 1889.



The Christian churches, in spite of their inconsistencies, were “the only asylums where the weak, the wronged, and the poor now find protection, help and support.” Yun was convinced that earnest preachers and missionaries should play the role of defeating and fighting against the social evils “done by adventurous, greedy merchants, corrupt politicians, and unscrupulous demagogues.” Therefore, Christians should devote their lives not only to prayer and the Bible reading, but also to “more religious conversation with both Christians, and non-Christians” and personal works to the world.<sup>237</sup>

It should be noted that Yun was espousing his own “theology of suffering” to the black people and prisoners, who had been oppressed and segregated in American society. Beyond what Yun perceived an abstract and dry western theology, he intended to reconstruct the theological and spiritual foundation for Korean Christianity. With the growth of spirituality by devotional life, Yun emphasized the importance of Christian dialogue with other Christians and even with believers of other faiths. Prayer occupied his life in loneliness and homesickness. Comparing the laudable situation in Japan with the misery of Korea, what he did was to pray for himself and his country: “God, help my weakness and lead my life to be helpful to Christendom and my country.”<sup>238</sup> For Yun, Jesus and Paul in the Bible were the models of Christian mission.

I love and admire Paul’s character. He is so strong yet so gentle; so proud, yet so meek; so zealous yet so wise; so learned yet so humble. He is a “perfect gentleman.”<sup>239</sup>

Reading the Acts of the Apostles, Yun identified Koreans with the Jews. Paul, who proclaimed the Gospel, belonged to a nation then poor and despised. The Jewish identity of Paul encouraged Yun to have the hope that Koreans would preach the Gospel to the world. According to Yun, “[Paul] has no weapon except the sword of the spirit, Gold and silver he had none, except the unsearchable riches of Christ,

---

<sup>237</sup> YD, 23 December 1889.

<sup>238</sup> YD, 29 December 1888. See also YL to Young Allen, 7 November 1888.

<sup>239</sup> YD, 13 May 1891. *Gunja*, the virtuous man who cultivates his qualities, is often translated as “gentleman.” Yun seemed to have equated Paul as one of *Gunjas*.

Science, art, eloquence, philosophy, literature, wealth, power, glory and dominion were on the side of the heathen. Yet Paul never despaired and he conquered [the world].”<sup>240</sup> Yun had great sympathy with Paul and his ministry, for the Japanese oppressed the Koreans as the Roman Empire persecuted Paul and his fellow Jews. Yun contended that the Christians life was like that of a soldier. All that this soldier needed was for the evangelism of “Christ-like manhood.” He argued that it was only those who had the personality of Christ and wanted to live Christ-like lives that should be sent to the mission field. He was convinced that missionary works were not human efforts but God’s work.

✓ In October 1891, when the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance was held in Nashville,<sup>241</sup> Yun was invited to give a lecture on the mission of Korea, with Robert Speer, Harlan Beach<sup>242</sup>, and Horace Underwood. Asian mission and home evangelism were the main subjects. Following Beach, who was a returned missionary from China and talked about the China mission, Yun criticized his lack of sympathy: “[Beach] had been disgusted at the dirty Coreans.” Deeply disappointed by Beech’s negative comments on Koreans, Yun described his feeling of humiliation:

This attack on the Coreans was altogether uncalled for. Nor was he just for he never saw any Corean except the coolies. Necessary or unnecessary, just or unjust, this remark instantly focalized all eyes on my involuntarily crimsoned face. O, the exquisite torture my whole soul then experienced! This Reverend Doctor of Divinity seems to be one of those who go to a mission field for no other purpose than for having a little “fun” and adventure among the poorer classes and coming home to brag on who heroic and devoted they are. Miserable, lonely, and unhappy all the rest of the day.<sup>243</sup>

Encountering Beach’s remark, Yun realized that Western missionaries had serious misconceptions, especially of indigenous people. In the speech on the Korean mission field, Yun suggested that Western missionaries should realize that they have

---

<sup>240</sup> *YD*, 4 January 1890.

<sup>241</sup> According to Yun’s diary, this conference lasted for four days 22 – 25, October, 1891.

<sup>242</sup> Harlan Beach studied at Yale University (B.A. 1878) and Andover Theological Seminary (B.D. 1883). He worked as China missionary (1883-1890), Completing a master degree in 1901, he became the first Professor of the Theory and Practice of Mission (1905-1921) of Yale University.

<sup>243</sup> *YD*, 23 October 1891.

a distorted view of indigenous Koreans and suggested a new perspective on three specific points of general missionary misconception.<sup>244</sup>

First, there are 12 perishing millions in Korea.  
Secondly, the Koreans hunger and thirst for the gospel.  
Thirdly, the Koreans beg the Western missionaries to come over and help them.

✓ First, Yun argued that the indigenous Koreans were not “perishing” but “living.” The Koreans were living, for the missionary works would last with the new generation of Korea. The services and works of missionaries would not be forgotten by the Koreans. Yun was convinced that there was precisely a revival among the Koreans. The Koreans were also living, for “their hearts [might] be touched, their intellect enlightened, their emotions appealed to.” Yun claimed that Koreans were human beings like Westerners because they were “capable of doing boundless good or boundless evil.” The racial prejudice of the whites against the colored people had distorted the image of the non-white people in the USA, so the missionaries from the United States should have to change their negative views of other races. The Koreans are not ‘savages’ or ‘primitive people’; they have the same hearts, intellect, and emotions that the missionaries have, so they can be educated and trained by the Gospel, claimed Yun.

Secondly, the Koreans “did not hunger and thirst after the gospel” in a religious sense. Buddhism and Confucianism as state religions had dominated Korean society, so the Koreans were born as Confucians or Buddhists. These religions were inseparable parts of their lives. Therefore, it is certain that they would not know what the Christian message is without missionary works. The Korean people did not want to receive the Gospel, because they had no chance to know it. In this sense, Yun criticized the “sanguine expectation” or the optimistic view of the Western missionaries. Yun asked missionaries to “be prepared for the worst.” Even if the Koreans did not want to receive Christianity, the Western missionaries should not be disappointed at the hardship of the mission field. The pre-existence of other religions didn’t support the argument that “the heathen need no Gospel because he

---

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 18 December 1892.

[or she] has a religion as old and good as Christianity.”<sup>245</sup> Yun refuted this view from his personal experience. Seeing the gospel as the medicine that a mother gives her children for their benefit, Yun was convinced that the Gospel has the spiritual power to heal the wounds of the Korean people. In this comparison, it should be remembered that Yun emphasized the ‘benefit’ of the indigenous Koreans more than their immaturity. Yun expected the Western missionary to have the same affection for Koreans that mothers have for their children.<sup>246</sup> Yun asserted that the Korean missions would help the expansion of home missions in the West just as five loaves and two fishes were multiplied when they were distributed to the multitude.

Thirdly, as an indigenous Korean, Yun didn’t ask Western missionaries to come and help Koreans. Rather, he made it clear that it is not human persuasion but God’s calling that would make the Korean mission possible. He commented:

If...you are convinced that Corea is embraced in our common Savior’s order of march; if you realize the fact that your light will shine brighter in Corea because of the heathen darkness; that your work which may be a brick in the temple of God here will be a cornerstone of the church of Christ in Corea; if you prefer the most useful and Christ-like life to the enjoyment of comforts for a season; if the Spirit of God tells you go there because of the great need and few laborers – if these are appeals, if these are calls, let them appeal to you and let them call you to the field.<sup>247</sup>

While studying in Nashville, Yun received invitations from churches and mission societies, where he gave series of lectures on Mission in East Asia. His main topic was about the China Mission, but his concern moved to his own country. In these lectures, Yun gave his testimony about his own conversion, his time at the Anglo-Chinese College, and the successful works of American missionaries in Far East.<sup>248</sup> He compared the differences in the situations of China, Japan, and Korea. However, his emphasis remained on China and Korea rather than on Japan, so the supporters of missions to Japan seemed to have shown discontent with Yun’s lectures.

---

<sup>245</sup> *YD*, 5 January 1890.

<sup>246</sup> This issue will be dealt with chapter eight, when I analyze Confucian influence on Yun about “benevolent paternalism.”

<sup>247</sup> *YD*, 5 January 1890.

<sup>248</sup> *YD*, 2 December 1888. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 1 December 1889.

Regardless of his preference, China was the place where Yun experienced his own conversion and learned the Christian gospel for the first time. He was convinced that Christian missions in Japan would be helpful to the Korean missions, so he believed that they were not only necessary but important. Experiencing the competition between mission-supporting groups, especially factional tension between supporters of Chinese missions and those of Japanese missions, Yun realized that cooperation in the mission fields was necessary for the sake of heaven.<sup>249</sup> According to Yun, the mission was not human work but God's work. In 1889, when he received the mission report that there were about one hundred Protestants in Seoul, Yun expected that Korea would someday be a *Seonggyoguk* (sacred teaching nation or Christendom) as a result of missionary works.<sup>250</sup>

In his mission lectures, Yun would show the audience pictures of Buddhist deity such as *Kwanum* and Confucian classics, including *Analects of Confucius*. Yun attended weekly and monthly mission meetings to witness the confirmation of missionary candidates for China, Japan, and Brazil, as well as to hear the reports of missionaries from India and Brazil.<sup>251</sup> These encounters helped him to realize the necessity of education on the mission field and exposed him to the oppression of Catholic Church over Protestant missionaries, which influenced his later anti-Catholic attitude.

---

<sup>249</sup> *YD*, 7 May 1889. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 24 January 1891.

<sup>250</sup> *YD*, 30 March 1889.

<sup>251</sup> According to Yun's diary of 21 June 1890, Vanderbilt University sent four missionaries, two to Brazil and two to China.

### 3.6. *Christian Mission and World Religions*

Yun crossed the boundaries of traditional denominational churches by transcending his own Methodist identity. Embracing different Protestant churches, regardless of traditions and ethnic backgrounds,<sup>252</sup> he also had great concern for other World religions, which was mainly motivated by missionary desire rather than by academic curiosity. Yun compared Christianity with other religions and promoted the dialogue with believers of other faiths for the sake of advocacy and mission. Facing the emergence and renewal of other religions, especially Buddhism and Shinto, Yun realized the necessity of the ecumenical cooperation in the Asian mission field.

In the spring of 1889, Yun addressed Presbyterian and other churches about the missionary work in China with hopes of increasing “missionary interest in the people.”<sup>253</sup> His mission lectures were supported by Protestant denominations beyond Southern Methodism. During the winter recess of 1889, Yun visited a Catholic Church and a Jewish synagogue. It should be noted that Yun often compared Catholicism to Buddhism. Seeing the rituals of the Catholic Church as similar to “the heathen rites,” Yun commented as follows:

The candles, pictures, images, rosary, holy water, ringing of bells, chanting in an unknown tongue [Latin] ... interest me chiefly from the fact that they give me some idea of the way in which the Greeks and Romans worshiped their gods.<sup>254</sup>

In contrast, Yun recognized the similarity between the Jewish synagogue and the Protestant sanctuary in the light of the services. When he studied at Nashville in the late 1880s, there were two Jewish synagogues: Vine Street Temple of Reform Judaism (the first synagogue in the State of Tennessee) and Congregation Assembly of Israel of Conservative Judaism. In the USA, a radical tendency predominated in

---

<sup>252</sup> But Yun disagreed with Unitarianism, Universalism, and Catholicism in terms of Christian mission and theology.

<sup>253</sup> *YL* to Young Allen, 8 April 1889.

<sup>254</sup> *YL* to Young Allen, 28 December 1889.

Reform Judaism from the 1880s.<sup>255</sup> Yun seems to have attended the service at Vine Street Temple, which was built in 1876, where the sermon was delivered in English and was closer to the Protestant mood. Hearing the sermon of the Rabbi on the parable of the talents,<sup>256</sup> Yun claimed that the expressions of Christian Scriptures might have been derived from Jewish tradition. He had sympathy with Judaism and even identified the oppression of Koreans with the persecution of the Jews by foreign powers.

[T]he synagogue, with its Rabbi in common dress, its quire, (choir) its prayer and instruction in popular language [English] – all this simplicity and common sense displayed in the synagogue made me doubt, at the first sight, if I were more worshipping in a Protestant sanctuary.<sup>257</sup>

These encounters influenced Yun's later open attitude to other Christian traditions and other faiths. In contrast, his participation in the Chicago Parliament of Religions assured him of the emergency of Christian mission and ecumenical movement.

Bishop Attieus G. Haygood (1839-1896) was one of the Methodist preachers who most influenced Yun's life. Before going to the United States, Yun had already met Haygood's sister, a Methodist missionary in Shanghai. Bishop Haygood taught Yun how to preach, convincing him that it was God, rather than human effort, who decided the result.<sup>258</sup> Concerning the Parliament of Religions, however, Yun had different opinion with Haygood, who criticized the Parliament with "unreserved blows."<sup>259</sup> A. T. Pierson (1837-1911), a leading promoter of Christian missions, also pointed out its danger, a shift away from evangelicalism to a form of syncretism.<sup>260</sup>

Yun was invited to make an address the Parliament, but he declined. Indeed, Yun wanted to expose himself to other faiths in various ways, which he believed was

---

<sup>255</sup> Alan Unterman, "Judaism," ed. by John Hinnells, *The New Penguin Handbook of Living Religions* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 37-44.

<sup>256</sup> Matthew 25: 14-30 and Luke 19: 11-27.

<sup>257</sup> YL to Young Allen, 28 December 1889.

<sup>258</sup> YD, 6 December 1891.

<sup>259</sup> YD, 16 December 1892.

<sup>260</sup> Richard Hughes Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: the East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 137-139.

more important than giving his own testimony to non-Christians. Since people compared religions in writing and in thought, an inter-religious meeting “in the form of a general representative congress” seemed to him reasonable.

In September 1893, Yun went to Chicago where the Columbian World Fair was held.<sup>261</sup> He attended the Parliament of Religions, which he evaluated as “a better affair” than he had feared.<sup>262</sup> Out of “the wise sayings,” which he had heard, Yun recorded the speech of Bishop Arnett about the “Negro Christianity” as follows:

[T]he Negro Christianity needs no defender; it will take care of itself if let alone. The Negro needs no defender; he will take care of himself [or herself] if let alone. Neither needs me; but *I need both. I need be a Negro to be on earth; I need Christianity to go to Heaven on.* We have come here to study the great problem of God and religion from the West, from the North, from the East and – a few from the South. We Negroes don't mind be judged but we hate to be hung and then be judged. We shall all meet in Heaven with men from Ceylon's spicy isle, from India's coral strand (pointing to a Hindu in scarlet robe) and those from America who may repent of their sins...(The Hall shook with cheers and applause).<sup>263</sup>

Though he found wisdom and lessons in the speeches of the Religious Parliament, Yun also pointed out the weakness of its theological position.

[I] heard so much of liberal-mindedness; broadness; universal faith; humanity, fraternity; brotherhood of men; fatherhood of God; truth etc. etc. that I am tired of these terms. The one trouble in the Parliament is that it is so “broad” that it is too thin.... Broadness is good enough; but too much of it is a curse to a soul. Steam, electricity, heat, magnetism and other forces never accomplish a blessed thing until they are confined to a narrow space. I would rather be narrow and be earnest than be broad and be indifferent.

According to Yun, Christianity was the only hope to help the education of whole country and to recover the spirit of people.<sup>264</sup> The Religious Parliament, however,

---

<sup>261</sup> Yun Chi-ho stayed in Chicago from 17 September 1893 to 9 October 1893.

<sup>262</sup> See, John Henry Barrow, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions* (London : Review of Reviews Office, 1893).

<sup>263</sup> YD, 24 September 1893, my italics.

<sup>264</sup> YD, 30 March 1889.



shook the foundation of the Christian faith. For instance, a lady said to Yun, “if Buddhism is so good there was no use of sending missionaries.”

As a Divinity student of Vanderbilt, he had already experienced the shock of the controversies of Unitarianism in New England. Seeking refuge in trust in God and Christ, Yun distinguished the Unitarian church from mainline Protestant churches in terms of its mission policy, with which he could not compromise. He believed that the Unitarian church hindered Christian mission.<sup>265</sup> The lack of missionary work by the Unitarian church seemed to Yun to be due to the indifference and “the elevation of the degraded humanity.” In contrast, Trinitarian belief formed the foundation of Christian mission and ecumenical movements.<sup>266</sup> Yun even argued that the rationalistic doctrine of Unitarianism failed to explain all the mysteries of Christianity, including Trinity. Pointing out the similarity between Confucianism and Unitarianism, Yun argued that it was a new spiritual power, not a new rationality, that was needed in East Asia.

[W]hat we, Koreans or Japanese or Chinese, want is not positive philosophy or altogether knowable religion. We have this in Confucianism. In fact we do not want – we are tired of – doctrines, philosophies and religions. We want a living moral or rather a spiritual power to enable us to do what we know to be right and true. If Trinitarianism has this power let us have it. Its unsearchable and unknowable. Nay, if everything of the religion were knowable and mathematically demonstrable what should we need faith for?<sup>267</sup>

Yun was convinced that living a moral life required spiritual power which offered the ability to reform the mind and heart of the Koreans. Along with these criticisms of its weakness, Yun addressed the strengths and contributions of the Parliament of Religions to American church and society.

Y First, the Parliament of Religions seems to have helped to reduce the racial prejudice from the American public. Yun claimed that people had a chance to learn

---

<sup>265</sup> *YD*, 17 and 22 March 1891.

<sup>266</sup> *YD*, 4 January 1891. On the Trinity, Yun preferred the Trinitarian view of Christ to the Unitarian view. It was not because the former was more convincing but because the latter was less satisfactory. He regarded the Trinitarian doctrine as “the doctrine of church universal.”

<sup>267</sup> *YD*, 18 May 1890.

that “the Oriental can and do think, reason, argue and write.” Hoping that Western Christians would be respectful to Asians and study their thoughts with more empathy, Yun suggested that, when Western churches sent their missionaries to Asia, indigenous people must be taught “in its simplicity unclogged by [Western] traditions and unstained by abuses.” What Yun wanted to transmit to Korea was not Western Christianity, but Korean Christianity, based on the simple message of Gospel and the religious frameworks of Asian cultures.<sup>268</sup>

Secondly, the Christian churches must be united in Christ, not separated. Yun asserted the unity of church, for denominational competition seemed to him “one of the greatest hindrances to missionary work.” Claiming that the Parliament was the declaration of spiritual warfare between Christianity and other religions, between Christianity and universal faith, Yun said, “To all thinkers as to Max Müller it must have been shown that Christianity is after all superior to any.”<sup>269</sup> When Müller’s paper, “Greek Philosophy and the Christian Religion,” was read by Dr. Barrows in his absence,<sup>270</sup> Yun seems to have been convinced that Müller of Oxford University was propagating a new form of Christianity, a so-called “ante-Nicene Christianity.” These new ideas destroyed the doctrine of the Trinity in the Nicene Creed, which Yun strongly believed in, and harmed the unique experience of the Christian life.

It is important to notice that Yun didn’t have any chance to dialogue with Buddhists before the World’s Parliament of Religion in 1893. In the United States Yun studied the life and thought of Buddha by himself<sup>271</sup> and with a mind to missions. In 1896, Yun visited Southeast Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and Singapore, but was not at that time sympathetic to Buddhism. His general attitude to Buddhism was negative and critical. Concerning the doctrine of Buddhism, he noted its logical contradictions, especially its doctrine of Nirvana. Yun wondered how human beings could be born into “a heavenly being” after death. He had his doubts

---

<sup>268</sup> Yun believed that Asian religions had truths which cannot be disputed.

<sup>269</sup> *YD*, 24 September 1893.

<sup>270</sup> F. Max Müller, “Greek Philosophy and the Christian Religion,” ed. Barrows, *The World’s Parliament of Religions*, 935-936. Müller’s paper was read by Chairman Dr Barrows on the ninth day (Tuesday, 19 September, 1893).

<sup>271</sup> *YD*, 29 December 1892.

about Buddhism, but Yun could not find any Buddhist willing to dialogue with him in the late nineteenth-century USA.

During the weeks of the Parliament of Religions (from 11 September to 29 September), many papers on the religions of Japan and the life and work of Buddha were presented.<sup>272</sup> Yun heard the speech of Hirai, a Japanese Buddhist thinker, who advocated a “synthetic religion.” Comparing all religions to trains running toward the same destination, Hirai condemned Jesus and the Bible: “Christ is only a brakeman. Don’t mind him. Tear up the Bible. God is not in it. You are in God.”<sup>273</sup> He was shocked at this public Buddhist attack on Christianity.

Swami Vivekananda of India also attacked Christian conversion, saying: “Do I wish the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid! Do I wish the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid!”<sup>274</sup> Yun thought that Vivekananda forbade the freedom of choice in the name of liberty and toleration. Seeing Christian conversion as an individual freedom, Yun argued that the Koreans would not have the freedom to choose among the world religions if Christian missionaries were not sent to East Asia.

Attending in the Parliament of Religions gave Yun a much stronger confidence in Christian mission and fear of a revival of Buddhism. After the Chicago Parliament, Yun left the USA by way of Canada and arrived in Japan in October 1893. On a voyage, he witnessed Japanese Buddhists bragging about the Buddhist triumphs in the Parliaments of Religions and saying that Buddhism was the only thing that drew the audience. Though his knowledge about Buddhism was limited at that time, Yun criticized the obscurity of the Buddhist scriptures as follows:

For almost every questions of religious nature the priest would spin out along argument or discussion from some passage or passages in his scriptures... This argumentative nature or defense of Buddhism is its strong point as well as its weakness. Many minds may relish in subtle and curious arguments and speculations; more are especially in this practical age, concerned to know the truths of everything in

---

<sup>272</sup> Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

<sup>273</sup> *YD*, 26 September 1893.

<sup>274</sup> Yun mistook Swami Vivekananda for Virchand Gandhi of Bombay in his diary.

concise and pointed statements. But the misery about Buddhism, at least as it is in Japan, is incapable of setting forth its doctrines in pointed and intelligible and telling statement. If I had ever thought of preaching the Gospel of Christ with subtler arguments and lengthy discussions, I was persuaded out of the notion by the everlasting arguments of the Buddhist which can never make men better though sharper.<sup>275</sup>

Yun argued that what the Asian nations really needed was “not vain words but work” because it was “by power, not by philosophy” that the Christians should evangelize the Asian nations. He suggested that “simplicity, sincerity, and silence” ought to be used as the methods of Christian mission in Asia. Yun’s pragmatic view of religion convinced him that Buddhism was inferior to Christianity. For Yun, religion was responsible for not only personal evils but also social evils; believers should remove evils. In the case of Korea, Buddhists frequently failed to take responsibility for improving the moral and social order.

While staying in Japan, Yun visited prominent Japanese Christian colleges such as Doshisha, a school founded by a congregational minister, Joseph Hardy Neesima in 1875, Meiji Gakuin, a Presbyterian school founded in 1886, and Kwansei Gakuin, a Methodist school founded in 1889. He reported to Christian leaders and missionaries on the Chicago Parliament and gave mission lectures to Japanese students. Inspiring the Japanese students to realize the urgency of Christian mission against the revival of Buddhism, Yun retained an apologetic attitude to Buddhism.

Yun had the opportunity to have more intensive dialogues at Shanghai, when he taught English at the Anglo-Chinese College. In December 1893 and January 1894, he had a series of discussions with Chi Oon Young [Ji Ung-yeong],<sup>276</sup> which he later regarded as useful for further Christian-Buddhist dialogue. First, Ji questioned the existence of the Christian God, while Yun tackled the doctrine of transmigration. About Ji’s belief of ghosts, Yun commented:

---

<sup>275</sup> YD, 29 October 1893.

<sup>276</sup> Ji Ung-yeong (1852-1935) was a politician, religious seeker, and painter. In 1886, Ji failed to assassinate ‘pro-Japanese’ Korean exiles such as Kim Ok-gyun and Park Yeong-hyo in Japan and was banished until 1889. After release, Ji devoted himself to a religious quest, meditating on Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions. He was regarded one of three genius painters in the late Joseon dynasty. When Yun met Ji at Shanghai, Ji seemed to be a religious pilgrim, who Yun called a “Buddho-Confucian” in that as a Confucian Ji was in Buddhist meditation. According to Yun, Ji believed in the art of divination, fortune telling, and the practice of Taoist strength-borrowing.

If you say you believe in such stories on positive proofs I will not contradict your words or disturb your faith. But as for me I am not going to believe in spirits and ghosts, the belief in which has made Korea, Japan and China miserable and weak while the nations who don't believe in them are the most enlightened such as America and England.<sup>277</sup>

While this dialogue lasted, Yun and Chi respected each other's religious differences. Yun had a good chance to learn the doctrines of Buddhism in detail. Their dialogue was not intended to convert their dialogue partner. Rather, keeping his own faith, Ji recognized that Yun had "a definite belief" which Ji claimed was "far better than a vague belief." On the other hand, Yun also gave his testimony to Ji: "I believe in Christianity because its teachings are clear, positive, simple, and elevating."

Concerning Yun's pragmatic understanding of Christianity, Ji argued that Confucianism had played the similar role of "a thoroughly practical system of teaching" that encouraged believers to live a good life in this world and criticized the introduction of Buddhist concept of *li* into Neo-Confucianism. Even though he embraced Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism personally, Ji seems to have believed that Buddhist concepts made Confucian ideals "spoiled and corrupt."

This dialogue encouraged Yun to have confidence that "Christianity must be preached in life and not in words." As a religion, Christianity should accomplish its proposed aims by the "life (or works)" of its believers. Concerning the pragmatic nature of his religious commitment, Yun commented:

In all religions I prefer Christianity [to other religions] because it works; in the divisions of Christianity I prefer Protestantism because it works; in the branches of Protestantism I prefer Trinitarianism because it works; in the schools of Trinitarianism I prefer Methodism because it works; in the diversified church politics of Methodism I prefer episcopacy because it works.<sup>278</sup>

---

<sup>277</sup> YD, 17 December 1893.

<sup>278</sup> YD, 1 January 1894. In terms of church membership, he belonged to Methodist Episcopal Church the South.

On the basis of such pragmatic criteria, Yun didn't criticize other religions in themselves. Rather, he criticized what he believed to be the discord between doctrinal belief systems and the moral life of their believers. When a religion doesn't have the authority to lead its believers to comply with its ethical modes, these believers have no choice but to become corrupt themselves. Therefore, Yun criticized both Buddhism and Confucianism in that they both failed to reform Korean society and improve intellectual and moral life.

Then, how did Yun understand Confucianism after committing to the Christian faith? Like Buddhism, Yun pointed to the failures of Confucianism to realize its religious ideas in the daily life of its believers.

The maxims of Confucianism are simply beautiful. But what is the use of them? A system that has no power to make its believer practice its maxims is as bad as a Chinese proclamation full of fine things never intended to be carried out. A rule can't work without someone to work it. Confucianism is powerless and therefore useless because its foundation is no higher than filial piety. It contains the seeds of corruption in its doctrine of inferiority of women, of the absolute submission to kings, of its everlasting "go-back-ism."<sup>279</sup>

The criteria Yun used to evaluate religions were practical and pragmatic. As a result, Yun didn't criticize the whole system of Confucianism, but its lack of power to realize Confucian ideals in a particular society and in a particular time. Soon after returning to Korea, Yun presented his criticism against Confucianism in seven respects.<sup>280</sup> This article revealed his main points of criticism against Neo-Confucianism after his theological studies in the USA. I will explain Yun's arguments against certain Confucian references, particularly Confucian classics, in order to fully locate them in a Confucian context.

✓ First, Yun argued that Confucianism would destroy a belief in personal God. Seeing Confucianism as "an agnostic system," he criticized its overemphasis on

---

<sup>279</sup> YD, 12 December 1893.

<sup>280</sup> Yun Chi-ho, "Confucianism in Korea," *Korean Repository Magazine* (November 1895): 400-404.

rationalistic explanation of the world. For example, Confucius stated, “The doings of the supreme Heaven have neither sound nor smell.”<sup>281</sup>

Secondly, distinguishing the Confucian doctrine of human goodness from the Christian doctrine of human depravity, Yun criticized the lack of recognition of sinfulness in human nature. For Yun, Confucians seem to have been so positive and optimistic about human ability that they might not seek the divine grace. The Confucian worldview didn’t assume the existence of the transcendent or spiritual world, so Confucians seemed to him to have overlooked the distinction between sacred and secular, “moral and mental.” He attributed the corruption of the Confucian Korean government to an extremely optimistic view of humanity.

Thirdly, therefore, Yun re-defined Confucianism as a kind of humanism without room for God and spirituality. Morality should be based on spirituality, and spirituality should express its concrete power through moral agents. The authority of spiritual beings was regarded as a catalyst to motivate believers to conform to ethical codes of religions. Seeing spirituality as the most foundational element of life, Yun claimed that Confucians might be “moral, but never spiritual.” Yun’s criticism is supported by the *Confucian Analects*: “The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were – extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings.”<sup>282</sup> Confucian ethics paid attention to the moral codes of human behaviours in society. Due to the lack of any concept of spiritual beings, Yun asserted that the Confucian authority was unable to educate human beings to become “godly” people.

Fourthly, Yun claimed that Confucianism was lacking in altruism because Korean Confucians viewed the training as the preparation for civil service examination and part of seeking a position in government. For Yun, the Confucian educational system seems to have wasted too much time with no other object but to “learn.” In contrast, Christianity encouraged believers to go into the world and teach the ideas of Jesus. As a missionary movement, Yun was convinced that Christianity was superior to Confucianism. He was impressed that Western missionaries reached

---

<sup>281</sup> *DM*, 33: 6, Confucius cites this from the Book of Poetry.

<sup>282</sup> *CA*, 7: 20.

the Non-Western world of different cultures and religions in order to spread the Christian message.

Fifthly, Yun criticized Confucian ageism and sexism. Though he respected Confucian virtues such as royalty and filial piety, Yun claimed that filial piety could not justify the slavery of women and children. Seeing Korean women as “slaves” under the yoke of Confucian virtues, Yun pointed out that Confucianism inadvertently motivated social evils, particularly discrimination against women in education and social status.

Sixthly, Yun pointed out the distortion of Confucian ideals in Korea. Confucius himself made it clear that the government should be ruled by virtues, not by regulations, saying: “If the people be led by law and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid to punishment, but have no sense of shame.”<sup>283</sup> However, Yun found a different reality in Korean Confucianism and argued that Korean Confucianism attempted to make people better “through legislation.” For Yun, therefore, Neo-Confucianism failed to achieve Confucian ideals in a Korean context. In so doing, Yun criticized the distortion of Confucian ideals not the ideals themselves.

Seventhly, and finally, Yun denounced the overheated office-seeking among Confucians. Since many Koreans competed for just a few positions, political factionalism and moral corruption emerged. He advocated public education open to women and children, regardless of sex and class, and industrial education to educate youth according to their gifts.

All considered, Yun’s criticism of Confucianism didn’t categorically reject its ideals. Rather, claiming that the particular form of Confucianism that Yun himself had experienced in Korea exhibited serious problems, he thus challenged existing institutionalized state religion to reform itself. He was convinced that Christian missions would improve intellectual and moral standards among Koreans, giving oppressed Koreans, particular women, a chance for education. On the other hand, his criticism resisted the dominance of Chinese worldview. As a result of the fact that Confucianism controlled all levels of education and politics, Korea became more

---

<sup>283</sup> CA, 2: 1.



dependent upon China in politics, culture, economy, and religion. In this sense, Yun seemed to believe that Christian mission would emancipate Korea by destroying intellectual and religious colonialism among Korean elites.

The status of women in society also declined with the establishment of Confucian social order. Under the strict moral code of so-called *Samjong* principle, a woman should follow her parents before marriage, then her husband, and after her husband's death her first son. Women were not given an equal chance in education, inheritance, and public life. A Korean wife was the "nameless person given to the husband's family."<sup>284</sup> Widowed women were never supposed to marry again. Ewha Women's College founded by American Methodist missionaries in 1886 became Korea's first educational institution for women. Subsequently other girls' schools were established and performed a vital role in freeing Korean women from their subservient position in traditional patriarchal society.<sup>285</sup>

During the Joseon dynasty, the civil service examination as a means of recruiting officials was the gateway to success. Though in theory any commoner could take this examination, the high-class *Yanbans* held a monopoly on the examinations leading to appointment to the civil service. The abolishment of the Civil Service Examinations in 1895 caused Confucianism to decline rapidly, for the substance of the examination was mastery of Confucian classics. As Clark discovered, "[t]he study of the [Confucian] Classics began ... back in the little village where in tens of thousands of little schools, one aged literati for teacher and five to twenty pupils sat on the floor rocking back and forth, singing the characters at the top of their voices from six A.M. till sundown; where each pupil got his quite literal *baptism* of indelible ink as he learned to manipulate the ink stone and handle the horsehair brush."<sup>286</sup>

In brief, Yun made a clear distinction between Christianity and Confucianism for the sake of Christian mission. It is important that Yun himself didn't deny the whole system of Confucianism. Rather, he claimed that the ideals and truths of Neo-

---

<sup>284</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 61

<sup>285</sup> Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 332.

<sup>286</sup> Charles Allen Clark, *Religions of Old Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1961), 105. my italics.

Confucianism had not been practiced by individual Confucians due to the lack of the authority which Yun believed Christianity had.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

In 1865, Yun Chi-ho was born as a Korean Confucian. From youth, he was deeply influenced by Confucian reformers, including his father and other tutors. He believed that the Neo-Confucianism of his day was not able to reform Korean society. In the midst of political turmoil, Yun was baptized as the first Korean Southern Methodist in China.

Yun developed his vision of Christian mission in the United States, studying Methodist theology and giving mission lectures to American audiences. He attended various Christian and Jewish services, doing prison ministry and teaching at poor farms for the ex-slave African Americans, struggling to realize their newly granted freedom. Feeling severe loneliness and segregation from the dominant white culture, Yun experienced the racial discrimination common to the black population.

Pointing out the limitations of Western theology, Yun emphasized the importance of the Bible, spirituality, and religious commitment, rather than of dogmas, philosophy, and words. Criticizing the arrogant attitudes of Western missionaries to indigenous people, Yun suggested that missionaries should approach indigenous people with respect and sympathy. He also created a mission fund in order to build a Christian school in Korea.

In the 1890s, Yun's encounter with non-Christians, especially Buddhists, at the Chicago Parliament of Religion and in Shanghai, convinced Yun of the necessity of Christian missions. Witnessing the resurgence of Asian religions in the world, social injustice, and moral corruption in Korean society, Yun was convinced that it was Christianity that was able to revive Koreans. Rather than direct commitment to Christian mission, however, Yun supported Christian missionaries and promoted Christian education through government administration.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**POLITICS, MISSION, AND EDUCATION**  
**1895-1920**

**4.1. Introduction**

[The Koreans] eat, sleep, dream, and talk politics and revenge. Such are Koreans, high and low, young and old. After all, it will be the best possible thing under the circumstances that Japan should take the entire control of Korean affairs and manage them. You can no more expect independence and good government from the present generation of Koreans than Moses could have expected from the generation of slaves whom he led into the wilderness.<sup>287</sup>

This chapter will deal with Yun's 'paradigm shift,' from politics to religion, from government education to Christian education, from passive administrative support of Western missionaries and finally to direct commitment to Korean home mission. Recognizing the power of Christianity to reconcile Japanese expansionism and Korean nationalism, he advocated Christian education. While Korean officials and Japanese colonialists oppressed Korean masses, Western missionaries seemed to Yun to have offered Koreans opportunity to improve their moral and intellectual standards, which he believed were the foundation of ultimate political independence from foreign powers. It should be also noted that Yun had many of his own ideas on Christian mission, which he presented to the EWMC in 1910, emphasizing cooperation between missionaries and indigenous leaders.

During the first ten years (1895 to 1905), Yun was mainly involved in modern reform movements, mainly focusing on political activities rather than on religious commitment. Yun served successively as Government Secretary, Vice Minister of Education, and then Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. Recognizing that an individual could not change the direction of declining Korea rife with its internal corruption, Yun lost self-confidence in his ability to improve Korea on his own. In the midst of such political confusion and turmoil, Yun assisted Southern Methodist missionaries in finding the location of the first mission station in Songdo. Shortly after, he was commissioned to accompany the special envoy to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II. Subsequently, Yun experienced a second religious renewal while in

---

<sup>287</sup> YD, 2 November 1905 and YL to Young Allen, 13 March 1895.

Paris, where he was studying French. On his return to Korea, Yun declined a government post, started to commit himself to the Independence Club and organized mass movements to protest the corruption of the government and promote democracy among Koreans. As Editor of *The Independent*, he published an alternative-day paper that was soon popular enough to publish daily. In 1899, the government disbanded the Independence Club and many of its leaders were imprisoned. But Yun was appointed as Superintendent of Deokwon in North East Korea. It seems that he made a narrow escape from being arrested due to the intervention of his father. After frequent transfers to various local cities, Yun was promoted to be Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1904 soon after pro-Japanese politicians seized central power.

In spite of his high position in the government, Yun was totally isolated from the process of decision-making, including the negotiations of the Korea-Japan Treaty. Rather, he was sent to Hawaii and investigated the Korean immigration situations. Yun resigned his government post in 1905 and initiated cultural movement of self-strengthening. It is important that Japanese colonialism seems to Yun to have destroyed the “sacred” of Korean society. Using a religious term, Yun argued,

[T]here is nothing sacred in the eyes of Japanese in Korea. The lower Japanese behave exactly like so many wolves among sheep.<sup>288</sup>

Distancing himself from both Korean officials and Japanese colonialists, Yun devoted himself to cultural renewal movements through educational work. Emphasizing the importance of industrial and agricultural education rather than literary education and evangelism, Yun even attempted to build an ideal village in Gaeseong. There, he founded the Anglo-Korean School, the first school of the Southern Methodist Mission, and became the first principal until he was prosecuted on suspicion of plotting to assassinate Governor-General Terauchi in 1912.

As President of the Korean Society of Self-Strengthening (founded in 1906), Yun advocated the spread of basic education and the development of agriculture and industry. When its leaders were opposed to the resignation of the Korean King that

---

<sup>288</sup> YD, 12 January 1905. See also YL to Young Allen, 5 August 1904.

was forced by Japanese colonialists, the Society was banned. Yun argued that colonialists exploited divisions of Koreans for their own advantage, saying:

The Japanese are keeping up, through their advisors and connivance, the unspeakable corruption in the Palace; through unprincipled ministers, the imbecility and rottenness in the government; through the Il-Chins [pro-Japanese groups] and the Tong-Haks [believers of Eastern Learning, a new religious group], the disturbance and wretchedness in the country. I have no doubt that the Japanese are secretly and viperously preparing a grand attack, through the Tong-Haks, upon the missionaries and Christianity.<sup>289</sup>

✓ In 1910, Yun attended major international Christian events in the USA and Scotland, making international religious networks with world Christians. Leading annual summer conferences,<sup>290</sup> he inspired young Korean Christian leaders and stimulated the formation of local YMCA branches in Korea. However, he was imprisoned for three years due to his alleged involvement in the conspiracy to assassinate the Governor-General. During this period, Yun had another religious experience, which after his release, caused him to commit himself to the Korean YMCA as its General Secretary, advocating industrial education among Koreans. Instead of joining in the MFIM, however, Yun attempted to prevent colonialists' political persecution of Korean YMCA and churches.

---

<sup>289</sup> *YD*, 15 June 1906. This appreciation later caused Yun not to participate in the MFIM in 1919. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 19 February 1895.

<sup>290</sup> The first conference was held in Seoul in June 1910. Forty-six students attended and sixteen speakers of six denominations and four nations were invited. In June 1911, the second conference was held in Gaeseong, where ninety-three students attended. These first two conferences were presided by Yun, but the third conference, which was held in Seoul again, proceeded in Yun's absence and under surveillance of the colonial authority.

#### 4.2. *Government Education Reform and Religious Renewal*

Philanthropy, self-denial, rectitude of motives, integrity of character, nobility of aim which I have learned to love during my absence of ten years amount to nothing in the estimation of my father. He thinks it is no use to learn anything that does not help one to “haingsei” [conduct or behave] well. He taxed me for not having learned practical things – such as grain-growing... I felt so lonesome that I cried like a baby in my bed. My own father does not understand me.<sup>291</sup>

Yun was reunited with his family after ten years of exile, but his relation with his father grew worse due to their differences in personality and political leanings. Though he did not receive family support in matters of religion, Yun was embraced by the Christian community and was often invited to preach at churches and give lectures at Christian mission schools, making friendships with missionaries. Yun was convinced that it was the Korean government itself that would decide the final destiny of Korea, regardless of Japanese aggressive presence, saying:

I am perfectly sure that Japan will help Corea as long as there is any hope for its regeneration. Whether Japan’s interference will prove a blessing or a curse to Corea the question depends chiefly on the wisdom and patriotism or the folly and selfishness of the Corean government. Corea has now a fine opportunity for improving her condition.<sup>292</sup>

In March 1895, when Yun and his father were both promoted, respectively to Government Secretary and Chief Commander of Ulsan, South-East Korea, Yun gave thanks to God by reading Psalm 23 5: “He indeed has spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” It is important to notice that Yun seemed to have associated the Christian God with the Confucian Lord of Heaven, to which his parents prayed for peace.<sup>293</sup> In June, he was once again promoted to Vice Minister of

---

<sup>291</sup> *YD*, 23 February 1895.

<sup>292</sup> *YD*, 12 January 1895.

<sup>293</sup> *YD*, 1 March 1895.

Education, but in spite of his hope to stay at the Ministry of Education longer, he was soon transferred to the Foreign Office as its Vice Minister.<sup>294</sup>

Facing moral, mental, and political degradation in Korea, Yun argued that the Korean government lacked the will to reform society in the same way that Japanese sought for their interest. He said: “Why I am tired of the Japanese professing to be the only friend of Korea, in all matters of interest, the Japanese ministers and consuls here always sacrifice the good of Korea to the selfish demands of Japan.”<sup>295</sup> Therefore, his rule of life was to be silent, steady, and straight, leaving the rest to God.<sup>296</sup>

Then, what did Yun achieve as Vice-Minister at Korean Government during such a short tenure? Seeing the education of youths as the only hope for Korea, Yun built primary and language schools, transforming the structure and finance of the Ministry of Education.<sup>297</sup> Though he supported Southern Methodist Mission mainly in terms of finance and administration, Yun seems to have hesitated to make a decision between government job and missionary commitment, deciding in the end to remain in the government post.

It was the Japanese assassination of the Korean Queen that put an end to Yun’s political career in October 1895. The Japanese mob entered the palace under the protection of the Japanese soldiers and seized the Prince and Princess. They murdered Queen Min and set fire to her body. This horrible memory continued to remind Yun of the desperate situation of Korea and its hostile relationship with Japan: “Is this the flower of the reformation and civilization which Japan came forward to introduce Korea with drums beating and colors flying?”<sup>298</sup> Degrading the murdered Queen, pro-Japanese Koreans occupied the central government and proceeded to the reformation, such as cutting topknot.

---

<sup>294</sup> In February 1896, Yun became Vice Minister of Education soon after the King moved to Russian Legation.

See also *YL* to Young Allen, 13 March 1895.

<sup>295</sup> *YD*, 7 September 1895.

<sup>296</sup> *YD*, 16 July and 22 September 1895.

<sup>297</sup> *YD*, 5 August 1895 and 31 March 1896. See also *YL* to Warren Candler, 27 March 1895.

<sup>298</sup> *YD*, 17 November 1895 and *YL* to Young Allen, 21 October 1895. See also F. A. McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co. 1920), 42-59.

Yun was suspected of being pro-Queen and pro-foreign. After Royalists, including Yun and his father, failed to rescue the King from the palace, where he was held by the Japanese and pro-Japanese Koreans, Yun was dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For two months, Yun hid himself at the house of Horace Underwood, a Presbyterian missionary, who had supported the Royalist plan, and his father was under the care of Drs. Allen and Reid in Shanghai. Even after receiving the guarantee of his safety from the pro-Japanese cabinet in January 1896, Yun was under police surveillance. In February, when the King succeeded in escaping from the palace to a Russian Embassy, a new Cabinet was appointed and the pro-Japanese politicians of the old Cabinet were executed. Yun was more convinced that any resort to violence would not succeed after experiencing the 1884 revolution and the 1895 reform.

In March 1896, a new appointment of a special envoy to Russia changed Yun's direction once again. After eliminating the influence of Japan, the Korean King believed he would receive further support and protection from Russia. Min Yeong-hwan<sup>299</sup> was appointed as the Minister of Russia and Yun as the first Secretary. In April, they left Korea via China (Shanghai) and Japan (Nagasaki, Yokohama and Tokyo) to Canada (Vancouver and Montreal). Dropping into the USA (New York), where Yun met to discuss the YMCA with Brockman, they crossed the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in England (Liverpool and London). Via Germany (Berlin) and Poland (Warsaw), they reached Moscow on 20 May. Yun and Min called on the Russian Emperor and Empress, at the Kremlin Palace and talked with Prince Lobanov, the Minister of the Foreign Office, about several propositions, including the requests for advisors and military and financial aid.

When the coronation was performed, Min decided not to enter the Cathedral because the requirement of taking off one's hat was against the law and custom of Korea. In spite of Yun's persuasion, Min went to the outside platforms for diplomatic and other invited guests. Witnessing the coronation ceremony at a Christian church, Yun claimed the superiority of the mind over force: "The Autocrat of all Russias, with unlimited wealth and power, knelt meekly before the image of a humble



Galilean who dies on the cross 20 centuries ago!”<sup>300</sup> While staying in Russia, Yun reconsidered resigning from government,

I should resign my connection with the Government service and lead a private life, devoting my time to some literary work for the good of my country.... If I give up my government service, I would have to work in a mission for a living. That I do not like. A missionary's [support] would be humiliating to me, as its recipient is often suspected of a mercenary spirit. I am willing to serve my church which has done so much for me. But I want to serve her without being chargeable to her. But I must do something for support of myself and family. Hence [this is] my reason of the government service.<sup>301</sup>

In Petersburg, Yun investigated the public institutions, including the penitentiary and the hospital. He was even offered a lectureship to teach the Korean language at the Imperial University of St. Petersburg, but did not accept this post due to the pressure of supporting his family in Shanghai. Yun spent time reflecting on his faith in relation to his physical life. Comparing two contrasting images of the past and the present: “an enthusiastic inquirer after truth” and a deceitful politician, he felt guilty of hypocrisy, to himself and his friends, and confessed a sin as follows:

What a different being I am now! The experience I have acquired during the past ten years in different climes and under varied circumstances has made me wiser in the worldly sense of it but by no means better or happier. How often I have to fight against the bitterest thoughts of pessimism and skepticism and of discontent under the cover of the fairest smiles! Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner. God bless W. B. Bonnell, the loving friend of my lasting gratitude!<sup>302</sup>

Yun continued to seek a spiritual quest in the midst of discrepancy between realities and ideals,

The further I drift away from the Gospel line of life, the fiercer diverse passions burn in me; the weaker I find my reason, so called, and

---

<sup>299</sup> Min Yeong-hwan (1861-1905) was a Korean politician, who supported modern reform. He committed suicide after he failed to cancel the Korea-Japan Treaty.

<sup>300</sup> *YD*, 26 May 1896.

<sup>301</sup> *YD*, 4 June 1896. See also *YL* to Warren Candler, 27 March 1895.

<sup>302</sup> *YD*, 11 July 1896 and see also chapter 3.

experience to subdue my unruly spirit; the bitter the cup tastes, the feebler my faith grows in a benevolent providence; the longer I see rascality, craft and falsehood triumph over honesty, sincerity, and truth; the more discontented I become with myself and other, the stronger I feel convinced that Christianity is the sublimest philosophy that a man may possess for his consolation and wisdom. Why can't I believe and be saved from the hell of my wickedness?<sup>303</sup>

Though he saw Christianity as a resource of wisdom and morality, Yun witnessed the failures of Orthodox Church to remove social evils such as poverty and prostitution in Russia. The Orthodox Church seemed to him to exploit and oppress people politically. Concerning the existence and nature of God, he didn't accept the theological positions of atheist, Unitarians, and legalists.<sup>304</sup> Rather, his perspective seems to have been closer to a deistic view that, after creation of the universe, God did not intervene in its affairs. Yun stayed behind to study French in Paris, while Min and other envoy members left for Korea. Pointing out the problem of the language barrier, Yun regarded Catholic services as part of "childish ritualism." He seems to have had strong antipathy to both the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church, whereas he saw Methodist service as "a benediction to [his] sinful soul."

It is important to notice that Yun's religious experience in Paris influenced his later theological position.<sup>305</sup> Recognizing that he reached the lowest point of religion, what he called "irreligion," Yun confessed his sinfulness as follows: "By the mercy of God may I not become a better Christian than I have ever been? O Jesus, thou who gave the world the beautiful story of the prodigal son, do thou forgive my unbelief and sins and take me into thy favor and grace!"<sup>306</sup> In the midst of such spiritual depression, Yun made a decision to begin anew, saying:

---

<sup>303</sup> *YD*, 7 August, 1896.

<sup>304</sup> *YD*, 16 August, 1896. Yun addressed four possible ways to interpret the existence of God and the scope of salvation. First, there is no God (atheism). Secondly, God is so merciful that every sinner shall be saved (Universal salvation). Thirdly, God is so just that no one may be saved but he who keeps the divine laws (Legalism). Fourthly, there is God who runs the universe, but he has nothing to do with human life and morality (Humanism).

<sup>305</sup> See, chapter 8.

<sup>306</sup> *YD*, 23 August, 1896.

By the help of God, I shall turn a new leaf in my life – for the better. Christ who gave the sinful world the parable of the prodigal son will not cast me away if I return to Him in sincere repentance.<sup>307</sup>

With this conviction, Yun sent his Christian friends a confidential letter, in which he considered his previous political endeavors as failures and confessed his spiritual hypocrisy to them.<sup>308</sup> Experiencing a spiritual renewal, he tested his faith once again and recovered a spiritual insight for his journey. Recalling the legend of King Robert the Bruce and even finding moral encouragement in the struggles of a spider, Yun was resolved to overcome his spiritual crisis.

It is regrettable that I ever assumed Christian vows. But, having once assumed honestly, no doubt, those holy vows, it is still more regrettable that I should have failed to keep them. It would be most regrettable, however, if I were to give them up because of a failure. A spider, which succeeded in climbing up a smooth pillar at its 13<sup>th</sup> effort after 12 failures, taught Robert [the] Bruce the lesson of perseverance – a lesson that King Bruce turned to a good account. May I not learn from the insect the same lesson and in the name of the merciful God, press forward to the attainment of a noble life? Yes I will.<sup>309</sup>

Yun was convinced that the ancients practiced religious values or virtues much better than the moderns did. Pointing out fewer temptations and simple wants in the ancient society, Yun argued that the ancients were able to concentrate on meditating on and practising virtues more than the moderns: “Their heart, warm and fresh, had neither the intellectual icebergs to freeze it nor refined sins to harden it. No dusts of maxims were thrown into their moral eyes and no labyrinth of systems of religion bewildered their sleeps.”<sup>310</sup> Emphasizing such simplicity and sincerity of faith, Yun criticized the surplus of theological doctrines like this:

---

<sup>307</sup> *YD*, 3 September, 1896.

<sup>308</sup> *YL* to Friends, 25 October 1896, Yun indicated that he himself consecrated to God the trinity of simplicity, sincerity, and sweetness in Paris.

<sup>309</sup> *YD*, 22 September 1896.

<sup>310</sup> *YD*, 20 October 1896.

Not only in temperance, by the way, but also in religion men and women otherwise sensible let their zeal degenerate into fanaticism which distorts plain facts of history to fit their cranky theories, setting up, for eternal truths of inspiration, the ephemeral phantoms of an over stretched imagination.<sup>311</sup>

With a plainly critical view on dogma, Yun's religious experience in Paris gave him a new confidence born of divine grace: "As long as I shall, by the help of God, keep my sacred vows made within thy arms, I shall entertain nothing but the sweetest recollection of thee!"<sup>312</sup> Though recognizing the difficulty of living a Christian life, he didn't give up his vows to Christian commitment. After he reached Shanghai, Yun prayed once again that he might overcome the expected dangers: "Through the darkness, which veils the future from me, may I feel thy fatherly hand leading and directing me. I ask not any miraculous disappearance of the storms to which I seem to have been born; but, O Christ, only give me the courage to weather them manfully, sheltering my dear ones from fears and dangers!"<sup>313</sup> Finding conflicts between missionaries within the Southern Methodist Mission, however, Yun argued that even Christian missionaries were influenced by human sinfulness. Western missionaries seemed to fail to practise Christian teachings though they strongly advocated them. Seeing preaching without action as a danger, Yun became convinced that Christian missions would be his principal work.<sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> *YD*, 11 November 1896.

<sup>312</sup> *YD*, 22 November 1896, Yun returned to Korea through Marseille, Port Said, Djibouti, Colombo, Singapore, Saigon, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

<sup>313</sup> *YD*, 27 December 1896.

<sup>314</sup> *YD*, 23 January 1897 and *YL* to Warren Candler, 25 February 1897.

### 4.3. *The Independence Club and the Waves of Democracy*

The uncertainties of the future, the failures of the past three years in my moral and temporal affairs, the present suspense I am now under, have of late made me very disheartened. If I could only trust in God, if I could possess the spirit of Christ, if I could give up the world and its temptations and pride, I should be happy.<sup>315</sup>

It should be noted that after his return home in 1897, Yun had been uncertain of his government career as well as the Christian mission. Though Y. Allen, his mentor, advised Yun to hold the government post again for the interest of Christian missions, Yun refused a new government appointment. Indeed, he seems to have followed the advice of Mrs. Haygood, a Methodist missionary who said: "... you needn't be a great official to do good in the kingdom of God. Christ Himself, who is equal with God, came to minister and not to be ministered unto. Moses could never have become the leader of the nation had he preferred the riches and honors of the court of Pharaoh to the reproaches with the people of God."<sup>316</sup>

Yun embarked on an itinerant evangelical trip with Reid, the first Southern Methodist missionary in Korea, and searched for possible sites for a mission station and an agricultural/industrial school. Though other mission societies decided against building their mission stations in Songdo, Yun succeeded in purchasing the land with the help of his uncle. Songdo was the ancient capital city of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). Therefore, Koreans in Songdo had a great pride on their city and culture. Songdo traders were also famous among Koreans to the extent that Yun even called them the 'Jews in Korea.'

Yun was not involved in the government or a Mission. He already experienced the failures of one person to reform government. The "arrogance" and "bossism" of Western missionaries with denominational division of mission societies prevented him from engaging fully in home missions.<sup>317</sup> Instead, Yun joined in the Independence Club, the first modern political society in Korea, making friends with

---

<sup>315</sup> *YD*, 3 May 1897.

<sup>316</sup> *YD*, 9 January 1897. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 24 January 1891.

<sup>317</sup> *YD*, 23 April, 1 June, and 20 June 1897. To become an indigenous preacher meant to Yun to surrender to Western missionaries his "freedom of opinion and of conscience."

its founder, Seo Jaisohn.<sup>318</sup> The club advocated internal reformation of government and political and economic independence from foreign powers by building a symbolic icon (the Independence Gate), criticizing the corruption of the government, and opposing the exploitation of foreign nations. Yun took part in the debating society in the club and planned to add a series of lectures, a library, a recreation room, and a museum to the club. In October 1897, the Korean King changed his title into Emperor and built a Temple of Heaven. Such symbolic efforts seemed to Yun a waste of time and finance. Yun commented on the real problems in Korea,

For the past three years [1895-1897], Corea has been nominally independent. But can we name anything that has been done to set forth before the people the unmistakable advantages of independence and of reformation? Bribery, illegal taxes, capricious changes in the government, oppression, eunuchs, royal inspectors, intrigues, conspiracies, from one end of the year to the other. The people are in so miserable a condition of poverty and of slavery that they are willing to serve any master, be he Russian or Japanese or Hottentot who would give them security of life and property.<sup>319</sup>

After Seo returned to the United States, Yun took charge of editing *The Independent*, the organ of the Independence Club, which was the first Korean-English newspaper.<sup>320</sup> Harmonizing the radical views of its members, Yun first pointed out the necessity of internal reformation as follows:

I noticed that one spirit, one desire animates all, namely that our country and our sovereign shall be equal to all and inferior to none. Now, from what I have heard today, all here assembled regard the present condition of our country as being very critical. People are oppressed, yet His Majesty hears nothing of the fact. But let a foreign man of war appear on our waters. His Majesty is scared by interested persons. We, as the Club, should inform His Majesty that it is the misadministration of internal affairs and not the presence of foreign

---

<sup>318</sup> Seo Jaisohn was the first Korean who obtained the citizenship of the USA. In spite of their friendship, Yun didn't agree to Seo's radical view on individual rights. For example, Seo even argued that one might kill his king or his father for the maintenance of his rights. See, *YD*, 30 November 1897 and McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 60-78.

<sup>319</sup> *YD*, 11 November 1897, Yun often compared the Korean situation to African cases in terms of poverty and economic straggling.

<sup>320</sup> *YD*, 18 December 1897, Yun first said that he would take up *the Independent* if Seo should leave Korea. Also, see *YD*, 27 March and 6 May 1898.

gunboats that threatens the safety of the Kingdom. Why shouldn't we send up a memorial to this effect to the Throne?<sup>321</sup>

Under the leadership of Yun as Vice President (from February to May) and later President (from May to October), the club criticized the government for dealing with Russia, giving natural resources in exchange for military and financial assistance. When the government hired assassins to murder leaders of the club, the missionaries persuaded Yun to hide himself in Songdo. The club, however, continued to protest the injustices perpetrated by the government, including the punishment of criminals without trials. The ultimate concern of the club was to replace absolute monarchy with constitutional monarchy, so its members petitioned the King to enforce the laws, to dismiss corrupt government officials, and to reflect public opinion in the government. The mass demonstration of civilians and government officials, which Yun called "Assembly of all Castes," was convened to petition the King to accept their reform schemes. In order to mitigate their revolutionary request, the King offered Yun the post of Mayor of Seoul. Some radical members even considered Yun as a future political leader of a new republic or as a modern sage. As Yun expected, this mass meeting created a grave danger for the club because it gave them the appearance of being revolutionaries.<sup>322</sup>

Seeing this civil movement as a direct attack on absolute monarchy, the King dismissed the club and arrested its leaders.<sup>323</sup> Yun distrusted Catholic priests, so he hid himself at the houses of Protestant missionaries, Appenzeller and Reid. Organizing resistance against the government, Yun objected to Japanese intervention and the use of violence, which some members advocated. In the midst of political confusion, Yun asserted the importance of moral education through Christian mission as follows:

---

<sup>321</sup> YD, 13 February 1898.

<sup>322</sup> Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation – Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 56-61. See also YD, 4 November 1898.

<sup>323</sup> YD, 5 November 1898. They were later released for a short while, and arrested once again.

If I had religious zeal that will make me delighted in missionary work, I shall be happy to devote my time and ability, be it what it may, to the moral elevation – the only proper elevation – of my country.<sup>324</sup>

Experiencing the oppression by the government and losing the sympathy of the public, Yun's vision of independence was broken into pieces. He attempted to reconcile the leaders of popular demonstrations and government officials, saying:

I am ready to be reconciled. We have called each other traitors – so in that particular we are even. We are here not to recount our past wrongs and injuries but to talk about the best means of pacifying the people. To be brief, will you exert your influence with His Majesty to expel peddlers now in the city and to appoint to the posts of war and police such men in whom the people confide? If this be done, the people will be relieved of their fear and suspicion, and a better understanding may soon be established between the Government and the people.<sup>325</sup>

In spite of all his efforts, Yun failed to harmonize the opinions of radical members, including Rhee Sung-man, and raise enough financial support to keep People's Meeting going. Though other main leaders of the club were arrested, Yun seems to have been spared imprisonment because of the influence of his father, who was in the government.<sup>326</sup> Instead, in January 1899, he was appointed as *Gamri*, a local government superintendent of Deokweon, which was near Weonsan, an important trade harbour in North East Korea. Realizing the moral limitations of the club itself, Yun argued that “the blood of the race has to be changed by a new education, a new government, and a new religion.”<sup>327</sup> After refusing the post several times initially, Yun finally decided to go to Weonsan, dedicating himself to God: “None of us is a prophet and I have to take the course that seems to be more straight and honorable than another, leaving all the rest to God.”<sup>328</sup> Yun contributed one thousand dollars to

---

<sup>324</sup> *YD*, 15 November 1898.

<sup>325</sup> *YD*, 27 December 1898, to make peace with government, Yun played a role of peacemaker between Ko Yuong Kun, the President of the People's Meeting and Min Yong Ki, a government representative.

<sup>326</sup> *YD*, 5 December 1898, Yun's parents disagreed with Yun strongly in that the public demonstrations endangered not only himself but also his family.

<sup>327</sup> *YD*, 1 February 1899.

<sup>328</sup> *YD*, 3 February 1899. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 5 August 1899.



the Southern Methodist Mission in order to establish an industrial school. Though he had frequently preached to the Methodist congregation for the past one and half years, Yun was experiencing desperate spiritual depression inside. He said,

A religious talk ought to come from the heart and love the work to do any good. My talks may have had something in them intellectually good; but head religion never affects men's heart. I have done so from sense of duty and not at all from love of the work. That is a pity, but I cannot lie.<sup>329</sup>

Yun didn't see himself as a preacher, even though his speeches were about religious or spiritual life. But, it is important to note that when he decided to serve at the local government, he believed it was the Providence of God.

#### ***4.4. Mokmingwan (Governor of People) and Christian Mission***

The five years' appointment (1899-1904) as a local superintendent or later as the mayor of small towns was certainly a disgrace to Yun, who had previously served as a vice-minister of the central government. Therefore, he continued to hesitate to accept the post despite the king's order. Political opponents at the central government transferred him three times<sup>330</sup> in order to weaken his influence on local governments until he returned to Seoul as Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs once again. This experience as a magistrate influenced Yun's later vision of building an ideal village in Songdo, which failed to be accomplished due to the interference of the colonialists and the indifference of missionaries.

Regarding this desperate situation as an opportunity to realize his own political ideals in a local context, Yun reformed local political systems,<sup>331</sup> governed his people benevolently, and protected their interests from the exploitation of local officials and foreign powers, including missionaries. Seeing Western missionaries as *Yangdaein* (Western giant), Korean Christians appealed not to Korean local officials

---

<sup>329</sup> YD, 12 February 1899.

<sup>330</sup> Deonweon and Weonsan (February 1899 – June 1900), Samhwa and Jinnampo (June 1900 – July 1901), Deonweon and Weonsan (July 1901 – July 1903) and, Cheonan and Jiksan (July 1903 – March 1904).

<sup>331</sup> Yun saw the government as “a miserable system of government by thieves, for thieves, [and] of thieves.”

but to missionaries when they had conflicts with non-Christians. As Yun mentioned, Catholic priests played the “notorious” role of judge or magistrate of Confucian Koreans, and even arrested non-Christians in the name of protecting their Christian converts.<sup>332</sup> Therefore, Yun suspected political and economic protections had been the main reasons for new Korean converts to join the Christian community, not religious conviction.

Yun made a clear distinction between his own personal faith, Christianity, and the state religion, Confucianism. As a magistrate, he decided not to engage in missionary work since the Confucian government paid his salary. Furthermore, he argued that a local magistrate should have nothing to do with “affecting the prejudices of the state religion.”<sup>333</sup> Therefore, despite the request of Fenwick, a Baptist missionary, Yun did not preach during the period of his local administration. Rather, in an attempt to maintain good relationships with Confucians, he paid an official visit to the Confucian temple and persuaded residents to build a common school.

As a local magistrate, Yun noticed conflicts between the Japanese and Koreans in trading. Finding that the Japanese settlers dominated industry because of their access to boats, Yun suggested that Koreans should “fight” against the Japanese for justice, which he termed “an eye-for-eye [and] tooth-for-tooth policy.” Some of residents declared a boycott of the Japanese settlement and this action lasted for ten days. As Yun expected, the Japanese Consul intervened and an agreement between the Koreans and the Japanese was reached. From this strike, Yun learned the invaluable lesson: “If Koreans will stick together, the Japanese will be more cautious. Hence, I say, if Koreans were no sheep, Japanese or any other [foreigners] could never be wolves.”<sup>334</sup> At the same time, witnessing relatively passive responses of Westerners to dominant Japanese settlers, Yun was convinced that might is right

---

<sup>332</sup> *YD*, 15 January 1898, 22 November and 8 December 1902, In order to protect their converts, Catholic missionaries often seems to have violated Korean laws, which Yun blamed strongly. Therefore, Yun regarded Catholic mission as a kind of proselytism, not as a sincere conversion.

<sup>333</sup> *YD*, 12 February 1899 and Letter from Yun Chi-ho to Young Allen, 5 August 1899.

<sup>334</sup> *YD*, 31 December 1899.

everywhere and always. It should be noted that for Yun the might was not only physical and economic but also moral and spiritual.

Due to the demands of official work, Yun didn't keep his diary regularly in 1899 and 1900. His conflicts with peddlers and a royal inspector need to be mentioned here. First, these peddlers, who occasionally visited Yun's district, were not a new annoyance to Yun. Indeed, they had played an important role in oppressing the Independence Club by forming the Imperial Club (This was when Yun led the Independence Club). Succeeding in getting the Independence Club dismissed, peddlers received political and economic privileges from the government. They continued to levy taxes from local Koreans, particularly farmers. Therefore, Yun as a magistrate made every effort to protect his people from the exploitation of peddlers, saying,

Peddlers, the favorites of His Majesty and the curse of the country, tried to organize their hellish association in [Weonsan] in order to collect illegal taxes etc. Armed, as they were, with the edicts of the Palace and the official sanctions of the Peddlers Society, I had not right to prohibit them from coming to [Weonsan]. Yet I did everything that I could legally to check their unlawful practices. For instance, I would not allow them to sell their certificates of membership to anybody who was unwilling to join the association, or to sell them at the street corners or the market places; or to collect taxes from villagers coming to the fairs, or to exercise any judicial functions.<sup>335</sup>

Despite such protection against external exploitation, corrupt officials in Yun's district oppressed and exploited the people. When a mob attacked the police station and its chief fled, the central government sent a loyal inspector to investigate the accident. Concerning Yun's countermeasure, the inspector reported to the central government: "To love the people too much is worse than tormenting them too much."<sup>336</sup>

---

<sup>335</sup> *YD*, 14 December 1900. Yun indicated that the fight with peddlers happened in February and March.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, The inspector visited Deonweon on 18 April. See also letter from Yun Chi-ho to Young Allen, 28 March 1902.

Yun saw his influence on the renewal of popular rights and public spirit as positive, responding to the report,

Can an official be disgraced on a better ground than that of loving the people too much? By my over-loving, have the people become unruly and obedient? No! True they have smashed up the police station. But it is my principle that, as police station and officials are made for the people and not vice versa, when officials are corrupt and cruel and treacherous, the people ought to ... smash up anything and everything to teach wholesome lessons to the infernal officials... My integrity and kindness inspired their confidence and love. At the risk of losing my position, I protected with resolute hand the people from the extortion of various government agents who made havoc in the neighboring districts.<sup>337</sup>

Though the residents of Deonweon petitioned the government to retain Yun as their magistrate, he was finally transferred to Jinnampo (or Samhwa), the harbour of North West Korea, where Japanese settlers and Chinese workers dominated its local trade and employment. At that time, Korean residents were addicted to the lottery, which caused social problems such as gambling, robbery, murders, bankruptcies, and suicides. Aware of the seriousness of gambling, Yun prohibited the lottery association in his district. During this period, Yun left his family in Seoul, causing him mental depression, loneliness and insomnia.

Seeing the overemphasis of Chinese education in local schools as a cultural colonialism, Yun advocated the necessity of teaching Korean culture. Only Chinese classics and histories seemed to be taught and nothing about Korean literature and histories. Yun commented on the lack of Korean identity: "We are more Chinese than Koreans because we have been taught from childhood Chinese books and Chinese books only. We read like Chinese, write like Chinese, think like Chinese, worship like Chinese, govern like Chinese, and we are undone like Chinese – thanks to Confucius and its blooming flowers."<sup>338</sup> He argued that even binding the top-knot

---

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, See chapter 8, similar rhetoric was used in his *Old-Man's Ruminations* (1945).

<sup>338</sup> *YD*, 14 and 18 December 1900 and 22 November 1902, Yun equated China with Korea in that they were both under the strong influence of Confucianism.

was “a token of slavery” to China and Confucianism, regarding Confucianism as the main source of such identity crisis.<sup>339</sup>

Concerning the negative role of religion in society, Yun considered a general pattern of religion beyond the boundary of Confucianism. Indeed, he was convinced that the relationship between religion and society should be one of critical tension between each other, saying as follows:

It is not fair to make Confucius responsible for all the evils and ills of Korea. Any religion, Christianity not excepted, will first elevate then invariably degrade and oppress any people, if it be given an undisputed or un-protested sway in a state. Look at what Confucianism had done for China, Korea, and Annam, Brahmanism in Hindoostan, Mohammendanism in Turkey, [and] Buddhism in Burma, [which] only strengthens my conviction. The Greek Church of Russia,<sup>340</sup> the Catholicism in the Latin nations of Southern Europe and in South America further illustrate that even a religion of the highest type ought not to be given a supreme reign in a state.<sup>341</sup>

Based on his personal experience and the Boxer Rebellion in 1900,<sup>342</sup> Yun argued that religion should receive criticism from the society and vice versa. Criticizing the dominant status of one state religion in one society, he took Japan as a model of multi-religious society with this comment:

Happy Japan! Her feudal competition and sword kept her religions, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism from turning the fair islands into little China or India; while her religions so tempered her warlike as to prevent her children from becoming merely the red-Indians of Far East.<sup>343</sup>

---

<sup>339</sup> *YD*, 11 September and 25 December 1902.

<sup>340</sup> Yun seems to have talked about the Eastern Orthodox Church in Russia, which he criticized on his visit to Russia, 1896.

<sup>341</sup> *YD*, 18 December 1900, Yun had a great concern about religions in the world, mainly in a Christian apologetic way. However, he sometimes showed more objective and dialogical reflections on the general concept of religion, including Christianity and other religions.

<sup>342</sup> The Righteous Harmony Society organized an unsuccessful series of anti-foreign rebellions with the support of Qing palace from November 1899 to September 1901. Over two hundreds of foreigners and thousands of Chinese Christians were killed.

<sup>343</sup> *YD*, 18 December 1900, Yun seems to have had the prejudice of Africans and Native Americans as inferior races, which his contemporary missionaries transmitted to indigenous Christians in East Asia.

Yun's pragmatic view of religion strengthened not only his criticism of theological dogma, but also questions about the existence of God. Raising the further questions about the powerless and indifference of an omnipotent and omniscient God, who witnessed social evils and personal sufferings and apparently did nothing, Yun continued to touch the issues of theodicy. He wrote, "The wickedness that has triumphed and is triumphing in Korea particularly and in the world generally drives me more and more to doubt the Fatherhood of God, unless He be an unnatural Father, devoid of love and pity."<sup>344</sup> Prioritizing the particularity of religion over its universality, he argued that "each system has its laws and precepts coupled with punishments for their violation and rewards for their obedience."<sup>345</sup> For Yun, there was no universal law governing all different human societies.

Seeing Moses in the wilderness as a Biblical model of future education reforms, Yun equated the Chinese influence on Koreans with the slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt.<sup>346</sup> He argued that the abolishment of Chinese books on the level of primary education would help the Koreans of a new generation to form a Korean identity. Emphasizing the necessity of reforms in the government, he kept a hope of transformation of Korea in the future.<sup>347</sup> In contrast, Yun's negative view of humanity made him believe that there had been conflicts of two contradictory selves within himself, a wicked self and a better self. On the basis of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, he saw himself as a sinner before God and confessed, "God knows I have my own Hyde – not so wicked and murderous and base as the one in the novel but bad enough to make me ashamed of him. Yet how unequal often the fight between him and my better self!"<sup>348</sup>

While in the midst of such spiritual struggle, Reid, a Southern Methodist missionary, invited Yun to join the Methodist Mission, saying, "You never will be quite happy until you settle down to Mission work, and then you will find that the

---

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, see also YD, 6 and 19 May 1897. Though Yun confessed that he believed in God, he continued to question the nature of God, particularly in the midst of sufferings and evils.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, see, Chapter 3. This trend already manifested itself from Yun's opinions on Chicago World Parliament of Religions of 1896.

<sup>346</sup> YD, 28 December 1900 and YL to Young Allen, 28 March 1902.

<sup>347</sup> YD, 30 December 1900.

<sup>348</sup> YD, 22 January 1901 and YL to Young Allen, 17 June 1902.

schoolroom offers a better field for serving your country than office-holding under the present circumstances.”<sup>349</sup> But Yun saw himself unfit for both mission work and parish ministry. Moreover, careless remarks of Western missionaries in delicate political situation of Korea gave Yun an anti-missionary prejudice. For instance, Miller, a missionary, whom Yun met at the house of Dr. Drew, stated, “The bad government is helpful to the mission work.”<sup>350</sup> In retort, Yun asserted that Western missionaries should have a more polite and courteous attitude towards indigenous Koreans.

Encountering the failures of Japanese Buddhist missionaries, Yun was more convinced that Christianity as a religion and morality had the living force to reform Korean society instead of Confucianism, which he believed was oriented towards materialism and individual egoism due to the lack of public spirit. When Yun was transferred from Samhwa to Weonsan once again in May 1901, the people in Samhwa protested the transfer by sending petitions to the government, and residents in Wonsan welcomed Yun as their magistrate.

It should be noted that the idea of uniting Asian races against the dominance of White races, which Yun later advocated in the 1930s and 1940s, was formed during his political service among local Koreans. Experiencing economic and cultural invasion of foreign powers, in spite of conflicts with Japanese settlers, Yun found the common identity between East Asian countries as follows:

Between a Japanese and a Korean, there is community of sentiment and of interest, based on the identity of race, of religion, and of written characters. Japan, China, and Korea must have one common aim, one common policy, one common ideal – to keep the Far East the permanent home of the yellow race, and to make that home as beautiful and happy as nature has meant it to be. White Australia! White Philippines! White America! What an amount of arrogance, of unfairness, of downright injustice in these words! The white race forces itself into the land of other races, enslaves them or exterminates them or robs them of their homes. Then turns around and says, “This shall be white country; all other races keep hands off!”<sup>351</sup>

---

<sup>349</sup> *YD*, 24 March 1901.

<sup>350</sup> *YD*, 14 May 1901 and 7 September 1902 and *YL* to Young Allen, 21 October 1902.

<sup>351</sup> *YD*, 7 May 1902. See also 15 January 1903.

Recognizing the “irreconcilable” difference between the Asian and the Westerner,<sup>352</sup> Yun argued that education was the primary task to rebuild his country. Just emotional hatred seemed not to be an effective escape route from the conquest of the West: “Seek to be mighty first, then all other things, right, justice, and property shall be added unto us.”<sup>353</sup> Yun claimed that Koreans should change their abuse of the land that God gave them. Otherwise, the God of justice would give the land to another race who has more qualification to preserve and develop the land, like the cases of Hong Kong, India, Australasia, and Americas.<sup>354</sup>

Seeing the traditional class system not only as an obstacle to reforming the society but also as a system to hand over the land to foreign powers, Yun criticized ruling *yangban* class as “the bloodsuckers of the country.” *Yangbans* oppressed the lower classes by exploiting their economic foundations through illegal taxes. What was more important to Yun was that they represented Confucian and Chinese dominance upon Korea through their education and behaviors. Such political and economic oppression from high class and government officials influenced the pattern of Korean conversion to Christianity. Many Koreans sought the shelter of the Catholic Church, even though some did not fear God and follow Christian principles. Witnessing the ongoing crimes of Catholic converts in his district, Yun argued that Catholic missionaries should not protect criminals against law even if these criminals were Catholics.<sup>355</sup> Therefore, it was not only religious renewal through missionary work but also social transformation that would improve the desperate Korean situation as Yun quoted from the Bible: “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also.”<sup>356</sup>

---

<sup>352</sup> *YD*, 15 January 1903, Yun asserted that there was a real separateness between the Asian and the American in physical, economic, social, and personal respects.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.* See also 3 January 1903.

<sup>354</sup> *YL* to Young Allen, 16 June 1904, and *YD*, 2 December 1896.

<sup>355</sup> *YD*, 1 October 1902, Yun seems to have had strong prejudice of Catholicism, which he formed from his overseas studies, travels, encounters with foreigners and reading books.

<sup>356</sup> Matthew 23: 26, KJV.



#### 4.5. *Strengthening Self-Reliance in the Midst of Evils*

The choice is not between no evil and an evil but between a [lesser] and a greater evil.<sup>357</sup>

After having served for five years in local governments, Yun was finally promoted to be Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. His concern moved from local administration to national political issues, particularly of foreign powers. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, Japan succeeded in their expansionist policy in East Asia. According to the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, Japan gained the territories of Liaotung Peninsula and half of Sakhalin Island. Russia restored southern Manchuria to China and recognized Japan's political control of Korea. Experiencing such competition over the dominance of Korea, Yun claimed that Koreans were surrounded by "evils," among which they should choose the least evil. Yun argued that Japan's colonial rule might give Koreans an opportunity to prove their fitness to exist.<sup>358</sup> For him, Japanese seemed to have virtues which Koreans should learn. Therefore, identifying the Koreans with other Asian races, Yun praised the victory of Japanese colonialism against Russia.

What a glorious campaign this has been to Japan! As a Korean, I have no special reasons for rejoicing over the uninterrupted successes of Japan. Every victory is a nail in the coffin of the Korean independence. The means which the Japanese have been using to chain Korea hard and fast to the wheel of the Japanese domination are mean indeed. Yet as a member of the Yellow Race, Korea – or rather I – fell proud of the glorious successes of Japan. She has vindicated the honor of our race.<sup>359</sup>

I love and honor Japan as a member of the Yellow race; but hate her as a Korean from whom she is taking away everything independence itself.<sup>360</sup>

---

<sup>357</sup> YD, 23 April and 10 May 1905. See also, McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 79-103.

<sup>358</sup> YD, 16 October 1905.

<sup>359</sup> YD, 2 June 1905.

<sup>360</sup> YD, 7 September 1905 and YL to Young Allen, 5 August 1904.

With such dubious feeling, Yun saw Japan not only as an “evil” invader but also as an exemplary victor. Korea was “a rotten carcass upon which vultures of every nationality [were] busy feasting.”<sup>361</sup> Yun identified the corruption of government and the inability of its ministers as the root causes of numerous “evils.” Central officials traded offices by giving and receiving bribes and local officials forced heavy taxes upon farmers. Yun was convinced that the Japanese fostered such political confusion in order to occupy Korea.

Regarding the Japanese colonialists as wolves among sheep,<sup>362</sup> Yun predicted that Korea would be a Japanese colony in the near future.<sup>363</sup> Concerning the internal corruption of the Korean government, he criticized Korean rulers and high government administrators, particularly from 1896 to 1904, as “the greatest criminals and traitors” because they seemed to fail to utilize opportunities to prosper Korea as an independent state.<sup>364</sup> He seems to have excused himself of this blame, recognizing that he was completely marginalized from the central power of government during this period. Even after he returned to the central government, Yun couldn’t persuade the government leaders to keep political sovereignty from foreign powers in order to rescue Korea from declining into being a colony of Japan.

In addition to such political turmoil, Yun himself suffered a personal tragedy, the early death of his Chinese wife, Maebang, whom he had married in Shanghai when teaching in his alma mater, the Anglo-Chinese College. As a graduate at a Christian mission school, Ma taught students at Korean Women’s mission school in Seoul, bringing up Yun’s four children. In February 1905, however, she died suddenly of a pregnancy outside of the womb, and was buried at the Cemetery of

---

<sup>361</sup> *YD*, 4 July 1905.

<sup>362</sup> Matthew 10:16, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (King James Version)”; Luke 10: 3, “Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.” See also *YL* to Young Allen, 25 December 1906.

<sup>363</sup> *YD*, 12 January 1905, “Japanese are trying to take over this control of the Korean postal and telegraph system. When all the mechanisms of internal administration shall have been seized, Japanese will openly ask the Foreign Powers represented here to withdraw their diplomatic representatives from Seoul. Korea then will be, both internally and externally, the dependency of Japan.”

<sup>364</sup> *YD*, 20 June 1905. See also *YL* to Young Allen, 21 October 1902.

Foreigners in Seoul.<sup>365</sup> Concerning the sorrow and grief of this great and sudden loss, Yun wrote as follows:

No desire – indifference to everything – This world with all its changing phenomena [is] an empty shell. The invisible world to which my Darling has gone is real and near to me. I can not think and feel any otherwise than that my love is there smiling in her beautiful smiles to me. I can take her to my bosom – now. If there is a realm where the pure, the brave, [and] the sweet must go, my Love is there. Whenever I leave this world, so full of sin and sorrow, the greatest pleasure of my future life will be to meet her there.<sup>366</sup>

Not only mentally but also physically Yun experienced recurring bouts of depression.

Of late I have often been seized, in the still hours of midnight as well as in the perplexities of the day, with an unutterable sadness for the tragedy of your life and an unspeakable longing for your loving companionship.<sup>367</sup>

In the five months following his wife's death, Yun wrote seven long letters to Maebang, identifying her as "My Sainted Darling in Heaven" or "Guardian Angel."<sup>368</sup> He was convinced that two different worlds exist between the dead and the living. Paradise as a spiritual world had no evils or sorrows and did not share the concerns of this world. Yun later remarried a Korean woman, Paik Mae-ryeo, chosen by his mother according to Korean tradition. "[A]s choice is between a peculiar bachelor'evil and matriomonial cure to say nothing about family and domestic considerations," argued Yun, "I have to choose the cure."<sup>369</sup> Continuing to use the term "evil," Yun argued that evils were scattered on the common ground of "human wickedness," regardless of democratic or autocratic nations.

---

<sup>365</sup> The Cemetery of Foreigners was located in Seoul, near to Han River and about four hundred foreigners, including missionaries, were buried. As a government minister, Yun helped missionaries to have this cemetery, where Ma's body was buried. Her body was later moved to Yun's family cemetery.

<sup>366</sup> *YD*, 15 February 1905.

<sup>367</sup> *YD*, 14 June 1905.

<sup>368</sup> See, 10 and 21 March, 20 April, 10 May, 2, 14, and 20 June, and 4 July 1905. In the style of letter, Yun continued to keep diaries once or twice a month.

<sup>369</sup> *YD*, 20 April 1905.

Yun was not a religious fatalist. Criticizing Confucian failures in the Korean society, he argued that Koreans should reform the society by their own hands. After he resigned his post in 1905, Yun actively committed himself to a movement of self-strengthening. England and the USA, however, seemed to him not only good examples of modernization and progress, but also economic powers that were exploiting natural and human resources by winning concessions at the expense of Korean businesses.

I like the Americans. I loved Dr. Allen [Horace Allen]. But that doesn't blind me to the fact that it was, and is, all nonsense that the investment of the American capital in Korea will secure for us the support of America. Look at the American gold mine concession; the Seoul-Chemulpo Railroad concession; the Seoul Electric Railroad concession; the waterworks concession; the number and influence of the American missionaries through the peninsula. For a country of its size, Korea, certainly has given more concessions to the Americans than to any other single European Power. But which of the countries first recognized the protectorate treaty [in 1905]? Which of the Governments represented in Korea withdrew her minister first? The American! Next to America, England had more concessions in Korea than others. Did England raise a finger to keep Korea from falling into the clutch of Japan? Yet every time the American or the English Legation pressed for a concession, sugar-coated their bait with the plausible but now unmasked lie that the more American or English capital is invested in Korea, the more sympathetic and helpful American or England would be in turn with Korea's misfortunes.<sup>370</sup>

As Yun points out, Western missionaries were deeply involved in assisting the political and economic benefits of foreign powers. For example, Horace Allen (1858-1932) the first Presbyterian medical missionary, who arrived at Seoul in 1884, became an active political figure. Allen later worked as Secretary of the USA Legation from 1890 to 1897 and then became its Minister in 1897.<sup>371</sup>

In May 1906, Yun became President of the Self-Strengthening Society, *Jaganghoe*. The society was intended to (1) to consider and discuss the best means of

---

<sup>370</sup> YD, 15 June 1906. See also YL to Young Allen, 21 October 1902.

<sup>371</sup> Underwood criticized Allen for his active political involvement after abandoning missionary work. The USA government recalled Allen to the USA because of his strong support for the political independence of Korea.

spreading education and of ameliorating the economic conditions of the people; (2) to direct and develop the sentiment and desire for self-reliance; and (3) to train decent men who may gradually replace the unworthy men in the present Cabinet. Regarding the formation of this society, Yun claimed that it was an unconscious response to the popular longing for checking the tyranny of the *Iljinhoe*, a pro-Japanese party. In 1904, *Iljinhoe* was established by Yun Si-byeong, a former member of the Independence Club, whose goals were the reformation of government and the introduction of civilization. With the support of the Japanese army, they often attacked Korean nationalists and coerced the Korean government to accept the annexation by Japan. In this situation, *Uibyeong*, the Righteous Army called for military resistance against colonialists, whereas *Jaganghoe* used educational methods to improve the economic and intellectual strengths in preparation of independence.

Yun's conviction that Koreans should enhance intellectual and moral virtues was confirmed by his visit to the plantations of Hawaii. In September and October of 1905, as Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yun visited thirty two plantations and made forty-one speeches to some five hundred Koreans. Witnessing the divisions among Koreans, and conflicts among Christian denominations, he recognized the importance of public welfare and the ecumenical spirit.<sup>372</sup> Recognizing that the indigenous Hawaiians or Kanakas were declining rapidly, Yun saw moral deficiency and intermarriage as the main internal causes of the decline. Alcoholism, vices, and diseases, which Westerners introduced to the islands, he thought, might be another possible explanation.

The theory of "the survival of the fittest" was helpful for Yun to understand the situation of the Koreans in Hawaii. Yun claimed that in order to survive in the struggle of life, Koreans should teach one another such virtues as industriousness, thriftiness, cleanliness, and steadiness. Along with overcoming political and religious divisions, they also should prove higher moral and intellectual abilities in order to survive amongst their competitions. In spite of the pressures of racial discrimination, however, Yun was convinced that missionaries and immigrant churches would play an important role in educating the Koreans. Though his political vision was shattered,

---

<sup>372</sup> YD, 18 September and 3 October 1905.

Yun made the decision to strengthen moral and economic self-reliance of Koreans through Christian education.

#### *4.5.1. Korean Christian Education: Shakespeare or Strawberries?*

Industrial education is the only kind of education the Mission should undertake. Literary education is good in its place, but the Mission has neither money nor constituency for it. The greatest need of Korea is to teach the people the honorableness of work. A Korean youth who knows how to handle tools and to handle them well is a more desirable citizen than one who may quote Shakespeare or Spencer.<sup>373</sup>

When Reid, the first Southern Methodist missionary, arrived in 1896, Yun had a clear vision to initiate an industrial school, where vocational knowledge and skills might be transmitted to young Korean students. The government service, however, postponed his active commitment to Christian mission for ten years. Instead of regretting his decision, Yun was convinced that his position at the Ministry of Education would be useful to the introduction of Christian mission by promoting modern education at the government level. Though he himself was not a missionary in a strict sense, Yun regarded his political career as an extended mission work. When he visited Songdo with Reid to investigate the site of mission station in 1897, he planned to establish a vocational school along with a mission station.

Yun had different ideas of Christian mission than American Methodist missionaries in two respects. First, he advocated the focusing of Christian mission and rejected the Methodist practice of itinerancy as follows:

If I had my way, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South Mission in Korea should bend all her energies to the creation of one or two centres of work, with homes, schools, hospitals, etc. Like a hundred rills, too weak in itself to separately accomplish any work, may, by concentration into a common reservoir, develop power enough to turn a mill, so ten missionaries, scattered and wasted, may convert a province by wise centralization and distribution of their combined energies. Under centralization no branch of the work need suffer from the temporary absence of a missionary, as his place can be filled by

---

<sup>373</sup> *YD*, 31 October 1902. See also *YL* to Warren Candler, 25 February 1897.

another without hitch. Having a plenty of helping hands, a missionary would not have to work until his health breaks down.<sup>374</sup>

Songdo was the capital city of the Goryeo Dynasty<sup>375</sup> (918 to 1391), where the international trade flourished. Therefore, Songdo's merchants had been famous for their international commercial networks and trade skills to the extent that Yun called them "the Jews of Korea." Foreign merchants from China, Arabia, India, and Vietnam visited to import Korean goods such as gold, jinsang, and silk. Therefore, the strong solidarity of Songdo's merchants prevented Western missionaries from extending their mission stations to Songdo. Yun believed that Songdo was the best place to initiate the Southern Methodist mission, particularly its industrial education. Concerning its importance, Yun commented,

We must remember that the industrial training is more useful to a Korean today than mere literary education. To be able to read a play in Shakespeare would be a good thing; but to know how to raise a patch of strawberries would be better, though one may do both. But if our boys have to choose one of the two, let them take the strawberries. Shakespeare can wait, but the land, under our present regime, may be seized, by the military necessity that knows no law and laws that have no necessity.<sup>376</sup>

As shown in his first report to mission, Yun advocated that Southern Methodist missions should be focused on industrial or vocational education rather than on mere evangelism or literary education, which other Christian missionaries, particularly Presbyterian missionaries, had paid more attention for past three decades. But this report doesn't mean that he overlooked the importance of evangelism and literary education. Rather he was criticizing what he perceived to be unbalanced mission strategies and advocated a shift to more practical areas. As Japanese colonialists and foreign powers attempted to occupy the deserted land and exploit natural resources, Yun gave high priority to vocational and technical education, through which young

---

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*. See also *YL* to Warren Candler, 17 October 1906.

<sup>375</sup> Arab traders transmitted the name of Korea to the West. The name *Corea* or *Korea* was derived from *Goryeo* of the Goryeo Dynasty.

<sup>376</sup> Chi-ho Yun, "The School at Songdo," Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, 1906.

Koreans could learn the particular skills to till land and utilize natural resources against the danger of the intense exploitation of foreign powers.

Yun claimed that what Koreans really needed was the ability to raise strawberries not to read Shakespeare's work. His proposal was based on a symbolic resistance against the traditional worldview. In the Confucian worldview, an overemphasis on literary education and bias against the value of manual labours meant that industry, fishing, and farming had been long despised or ignored. Literary skills of writing poems and memorizing classics and history were necessary for high class Koreans to become government officials through the civil service examination. His concern was not only industrial education but also its value.

Yun criticized both the limitations of Western missionaries and the failures of Confucian education by pointing out a new direction for Korean Christianity:

An industrial school in Songdo will prove a success beyond doubt. I don't advocate any other sort of educational work in Korea than that of an industrial school. The Mission which teaches Coreans not only to believe in God but to use the senses and talents which He has given them for honest living – that Mission will be the greatest blessing.<sup>377</sup>

In order to revive the spirit of the honest life, Yun wanted to utilize the talents of Koreans, which he believed God had given them. When the Southern Methodist Mission entered Korea, Yun and his father donated one thousand dollars to the establishment of an industrial school in Songdo. Inspiring young Koreans to respect the value of manual work and recognize the importance of service to others, he invested finance and facilities to make the school fit to the new conditions in Korea.

In the autumn of 1906, with fourteen students, the Anglo-Korean School was opened at Songdo with Yun as the first Principal.<sup>378</sup> From the beginning, an industrial education was the strong feature of the school. Recognizing the needs of the Korean people, Yun made the first conscious effort in a mission school to give industrial education to the Korean youth as an end in itself. This vision had an impact

---

<sup>377</sup> YL to W. A. Candler, 25 February 1897.

<sup>378</sup> Chi-ho Yun, "The Anglo-Korean School, Songdo," *The Korea Mission Field*, vol.4, no.9 (Sep., 1907): 142.

See also YL to Young Allen, 25 December 1906.



on the mission policy of Southern Methodism. In 1907, W. G. Cram, the superintendent of the mission, declared that “a liberal policy, coupled with an adoption of the best methods of institutional work looking to a betterment of the social and economic condition, as well as the spiritual improvement to the life, should not be foreign to our purpose.”<sup>379</sup> Yun’s social engagement was his greatest legacy to Korean Christianity.

Schools in Seoul were unpopular among Koreans as well as colonialists because of their emphasis on evangelism. As Yun expected, the Anglo-Korean School grew rapidly without any of the struggles, which other schools had experienced.<sup>380</sup> In 1908, there was a reported enrollment of two hundred and twenty five. In that year the school was separated into three departments, a high school course covering four years, a primary department, and a sub-primary class. A new school building of stone was erected in that year and A. W. Wasson was added to the faculty. Yun’s connection with the school made it conspicuous throughout the country and drew a large number of students. In 1910, there were three hundred and twenty nine students in the student body, of whom fifty-four were high school students. Yun continued to serve as Principal of Anglo-Korean School until he was arrested in connection with the so-called “Conspiracy Case,” which I will explore later.

Yun’s dream of Christian education didn’t remain only within Korea. Encouraging his students to study overseas, especially in Japan, Yun continued to make international relations with world Christians through the YMCA movements. As Vice-President, Yun represented the Korean YMCA at the International YMCA Convention held in Shanghai in 1907.<sup>381</sup> The YMCA movements played an important role in organizing the Conference of the World’s Student Christian Federation in Tokyo and China Centenary Missionary Conference in Shanghai.<sup>382</sup>

---

<sup>379</sup> W. G. Cram, “Songdo North Circuit,” *The Korea Mission Field*, vol.4, no.9 (Sep.,1907): 141.

<sup>380</sup> Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 395-396.

<sup>381</sup> YL to Warren Candler, 16 April 1907.

<sup>382</sup> Tokyo Conference was held from 3 March to 7 April, and Shanghai Conference from 25 April to 7 May.

✓ John R. Mott, on his way to the Tokyo Conference, visited to meet Korean Christians and predicted that Korea would be the first nation in the non-Christian world to become a Christian nation.<sup>383</sup> The Tokyo Conference was the first international religious gathering to take place in Asia. The theme was “*Unum in Christo* (One in Christ)” and many students from Korea and China attended. As Ruth Rouse indicates, the Conference faced a dilemma, religious as well as political. Japan was the nation which defeated China and Russia, and used totalitarian methods in Korea. For instance, Count Okuma, a Japanese leader, distorted the image of this student meeting by connecting Christian mission with Japanese colonialism as follows:

The Atonement of a world civilization is being wrought out under our eyes, and the fact that the Japanese people have risen to power in connection with this process of intermingling is a subject of the greatest interest and significance... For I firmly believe that the people of Japan have been raised up to be the point of the unification of the civilization of the world, and that they are destined to exert a tremendous influence upon that consummation... Christianity also has come to Japan. What will be its future? If you wish Christianity to dominate the thought and life of the whole Orient it is indispensable that it should be done by the might of the Japanese people.<sup>384</sup>

Anti-Christian movements were also provoked. The Great Japan Buddhist Conference and Shinto Priests' Conference took place at the same time and formed a world's student anti-Christian federation. In spite of these counter conferences, the Tokyo conference offered a unique setting where the East and the West encountered each other and at the same time Asians exposed themselves to different Asians. The Japanese, who had despised the Indians as an inferior race, realized their spiritual and intellectual strengths through hearing speeches of Indian leaders.

Protestant missionaries in Shanghai organized the Centenary Missionary Conference to celebrate the first century of Protestant mission in China.<sup>385</sup> Mott also

---

<sup>383</sup> Philip Potter & Thomas Wieser, *Seeking and Serving the Truth – The First Hundred Years of the World Student Christian Federation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 27.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>385</sup> Centenary Committee, *China Centenary Missionary Conference* (Shanghai: Centenary Committee, 1907).

conducted the first organized series of meetings for reaching government schools with the Christian message, and the Centenary Missionary Conference asked the YMCA to make a special effort for both government and mission schools. The Conference advocated “a marked advance in cooperation and in plans for tuning over the control of the Church to the Chinese.”<sup>386</sup> Recognizing that Chinese churches had repeated the same “unhappy division of Western Christianity,”<sup>387</sup> Chinese leaders sought independence of the control of foreign churches and union among their own under the banner of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. It should be noted that the Conference expected the YMCA movements of China, Korea, and Hong Kong to be “of immense service in mediating between awakened minds outside and the full organization of the Christian Church.”<sup>388</sup>

With many resources in money, leadership, and programmes, the YMCA witnessed phenomenal growth. In 1907, there were in China and Korea eleven city and forty-four student associations with memberships of 2,190 and 2,767 respectively.<sup>389</sup> At the general convention of the YMCA for China and Korea held in Beijing, a permanent organization was effected with an executive committee appointed annually by the General Committee of the YMCA.<sup>390</sup> It is important that the Korean YMCA took over the tradition of the former Independence Club, which had been abolished in 1898. The primary leaders of the Independence Club, including Lee Sang-jae and Rhee Seung-man, joined the YMCA and organized a series of conferences. In 1908, Yun was also appointed as President of the Korean Sunday School Association.

Committing himself to industrial education in Songdo and the YMCA in Seoul, Yun planned to build an ideal Christian village in Songdo. Around the school,

---

<sup>386</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: SPCK, 1929), 666. The Centenary Conference recommended to the Home Churches “that they should abstain from claiming any permanent right of spiritual or administrative control over these [indigenous] churches (*Ibid.*, 674).”

<sup>387</sup> Centenary Committee, *China Centenary Missionary Conference*, 3.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>389</sup> Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, 589.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 593.

he attempted to introduce a church, a hospital, farms and small industries.<sup>391</sup> This vision failed to be realized due to the lack of support from missionaries and the deterioration of Korean politics.

#### 4.5.2. *Chanmiga (Songs of Praise) as a Response to Missionaries*

Methodist missionaries, George H. Jones and Louis C. Rothweiler, published the first Korean hymnal in 1892, (later revised in 1895) and Presbyterian missionary, Horace G. Underwood, published another hymnal in 1894. Most missionary hymns had been translated from English or Chinese hymns, so there was a serious lack of hymns written by Koreans themselves.<sup>392</sup> As a result, Korean Christians were taught to repeat Western hymns and to use Western rhythm and melody. Moreover, the theological overemphasis on the separation between religion and politics in Western hymns kept Korean Christians from engaging in political issues even in a constructive way. Seeing evangelism and literary education as the main tasks of Christian education, missionaries strengthened the process of spiritualization much more during the Japanese colonial rule.

Yun criticized the dominance of Western Christianity as a danger in early twentieth century Korea. Pointing out the idiosyncrasies of Western Christianity and its theology, he created a new music style for Korean Christianity, building bridges between the different worldviews of Neo-Confucianism and Christianity, and between the nationalistic spirit and the Christian faith.

Previous hymnals were published under the control of Presbyterian and Methodist mission societies, so they were used for public services and evangelistic work. There was no attempt to write new songs of praise to replace the translated hymnals. But, in 1907, Yun Chi-ho published *Chanmiga* (which was republished in 1908) instead of using existing hymnals. He continued to translate Western hymns into Korean, but added three “patriotic hymns” to his new hymnal. This change was

---

<sup>391</sup> YL to Warren Candler, 16 April, 3 June, 12 October, and 15 December 1907.

<sup>392</sup> The Methodist hymnal, *Chanmiga* (1892) has only one hymn written by an anonymous Korean woman. Its second edition (1897) had two more hymns by anonymous Korean students. The Presbyterian hymnal, *Chanyangga* (1894) had five Korean hymns.

a revolution and a first step in resistance against the predominance of missionary hymnals.<sup>393</sup>

Mission societies didn't recognize Yun's hymnal, and they didn't adopt it for public service. Indeed, Yun seems to have intended his hymnal for use only at the Anglo-Korean School which he founded in Songdo in 1906. Through singing songs of praise and patriotic hymns, he inspired young students to have a spirit of independence and self-assurance. Students sang songs of praise daily and on special occasions.

When Japan annexed Korea in 1910, all of Yun's patriotic hymns were banned in public and his vision of industrial education was broken to pieces under the severe control and brutal oppression of colonial powers. However, his strong influence was not totally lost and manifested itself despite these pressures. In 1915, teachers at the Anglo-Korean School collected and published traditional patriotic songs to teach students. They were all arrested and tortured on suspicion of publishing a book of patriotic songs and infecting students with the nationalistic spirit. Though Yun's hymns were forbidden in Korea during the colonial period, expatriates continued to sing his patriotic hymns elsewhere. One of his songs later became the national anthem of the Republic of Korea.<sup>394</sup>

Yun offered Korean students a new opportunity to express the Korean heart through art. His three patriotic hymns reflected not only his own personal confession of faith but also the collective expression of the indigenous Christian community, which missionaries had overlooked by omitting their hymns in the publication of hymnals. The first patriotic hymn titled "Korea," was sung to the tune, "America."<sup>395</sup> In order to understand the literal meaning of these hymns, I have translated them into English.

Our Imperial Majesty! Live long and healthy  
Like heaven and earth, and the sun and the moon.

---

<sup>393</sup> In this respect, the MFIM (1919) can be not only against colonialists but also against Western missionaries.

<sup>394</sup> See chapter 8. In late 1945, Yun left his family a note where he wrote lyrics of this patriotic song.

<sup>395</sup> Samuel Smith wrote "America."

High mountains and lovely water, our great Korean Empire!  
With the help of *Hananim*,<sup>396</sup> be independent, rich, and powerful!

Rivers and hills are like silk;  
Spring flowers and the autumn moon are beautiful.  
All grains grow in abundance; gold and gems are plentiful.  
How joyful a land in Asia!

Royal achievements are long and endless  
Like the blue water of *Yongheung*<sup>397</sup> River flowing without rest.  
On ten thousand peaks of Diamond Mountain, daylight is bright,  
As the glory of *Taegeukgi*<sup>398</sup> is manifest.

Twenty million brethren, with the same heart and will.  
Let's accomplish our duties.  
Throw away selfish desires and give priority to royalty and righteousness.  
Let's serve King and country out of gratitude.<sup>399</sup>

The first hymn deals with the royalty of the Korean Emperor and the patriotic spirit. Yun praised God who would protect Korea from foreign powers and hoped for the independence and growth of Korea in the midst of political turmoil. In 1895, the Japanese murdered the Korean Queen and burned her body at the palace in Seoul. In 1905, Yun resigned his post of Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and devoted himself to Christian missions and education. The Korean King was also forced to resign in 1907 after he sent a special envoy to appeal for the independence of Korea from Japan at the Hague Peace Conference.

Correlating Christian faith with patriotic spirit, Yun argued that all Koreans should unite in "the same heart and will" to accomplish their responsibility as subjects of the King and as Korean nationals. Confucian virtues such as royalty and righteousness were emphasized together with the recognition of God's presence.

It should be noted that Yun adopted an indigenous term, *Hananim*, for the Christian God. Since he did not distinguish the indigenous God from the Christian

---

<sup>396</sup> *Hananim* is an indigenous term for God. Its literal meaning is "the Lord in Heaven." Methodists accepted this term for the Christian God, but Presbyterians used an alternative term, Jehovah or Yahweh.

<sup>397</sup> Its literal meaning is "dragon rising."

<sup>398</sup> As Korean national flag, it consists of yin-yang and four symbols of change on the basis of *I-Ching*.

God it seems that Yun was later capable of being open to other faiths at least on a practical level.<sup>400</sup> Expressing the love of the land, Yun described the beauty of mountains and rivers. He used the Korean national flag as a symbol of national unity among divided Koreans, and encouraged others to reject individual selfish desires.

Contrary to the first hymn “Korea,” Yun indicated clearly that the second and third hymns were patriotic hymns.<sup>401</sup> Both of them were set to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne,” a Scottish folk song, which was famous among Western missionaries and Koreans in his day. It is interesting that “Auld Lang Syne” was similar to Korean traditional music because it used five note-scales.

Victorious and godly descendents for ten million years are  
Our Imperial family,  
The East Peninsula with high mountains and lovely rivers is  
Our own country.

The great passion of patriotic spirit is  
High like *Bukak* [north mountain],  
Single-hearted loyalty to the king is  
Deep like the East Sea.

Twenty million people with the same heart,  
Let's love the country.  
Without distinction of the scholarly, agricultural, industrial, and mercantile classes,  
Let's discharge only [our] duties.

*Hwangcheon* (High Heaven) will help  
Our country and our King;  
When the whole country will rejoice together forever,  
Let's achieve *Taepyeong* (great peace) and independence.<sup>402</sup>

In this patriotic hymn, Yun touched once again the theme of loyalty to the King and love of the country, paying more attention to the prosperity of the imperial family. Though he recognised the hierarchical order of Neo-Confucian society from the king to the lower classes, Yun addressed equality between social classes. He argued that Koreans should be responsible in doing their duties since such actions were

---

<sup>399</sup> Chi-ho Yun, “Korea,” *Chanmiga*, 1907, reprinted (Seoul: Gwanghakseogwan, 1908), 1.

<sup>400</sup> Yun accepted ancestral rituals and Shinto Shrine visiting as reverence to ancestors.

<sup>401</sup> See chapter 8.

necessary to bring peace in the world and to renew independence in Korea. Yun was convinced that *Taepyeong* was not just a peace without conflict, but a close relationship with fellow Koreans. His inclusive faith in God made it possible to replace *Hananim* with *Hwangcheon* (High Heaven). God was regarded as the foundation of ultimate peace and independence.

In 1906, Yun became the President of the Society of Self-Strengthening, where he advocated public education reform, cultivation of wilderness, and reforestation. He prioritised moral and economic strengthening over political independence, seeing religious renewal as the foundation of all reforms. He recognised the importance of the Emperor as a political steward under God's providence until the last Korean King was killed in 1919.<sup>403</sup> After independence in 1945, Yun proposed "benevolent paternalism" as an alternative political system to democracy and communism.<sup>404</sup>

Yun's patriotic hymns in *Chanmiga* represented an indigenous response to Western missionaries in the sense that he connected the Christian message with the traditional Korean worldview in the form of a patriotic hymn. Through writing hymns, Yun was able to make a creative space for connecting two different worldviews, old and new, inspiring divided Koreans to be united as one community under the protection of *Hananim*, who he believed was not only for Westerners but also for Koreans. These patriotic hymns were written and sung by Koreans, who hoped for independence not only from the oppression of colonialists but also from the prejudice and control of Western missionaries.

---

<sup>402</sup> Chi-ho Yun, "Patriotic Hymn, No. III," *Chanmiga*, (Seoul: 1908), 14.

<sup>403</sup> Yun believed that Korean King was killed by poison.

<sup>404</sup> Chapter 8.



#### 4.6. *The World Missionary Conference (1910) and the Principle of Christ*

I trust that without fail you will attend the great World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh next June. You are pre-eminently the man to represent your important and beloved country. In view of God's mighty work in Korea it is most desirable that you be present in Edinburgh.<sup>405</sup>

Writing this letter, John R. Mott invited Yun to attend the World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh in June 1910. Yun was not an official member of a mission society but one of the honorary members to represent indigenous churches in the Non-Western world. As Andrew Walls points out, "there is no sign that these delegates were expected to have a distinctive or original contribution to the conference."<sup>406</sup> However, of around twelve hundred delegates, one Korean gave the great speech, in which he had done his best during his whole life.<sup>407</sup>

Since Yun opened the way for the American Southern Methodism in Korea, he had been regarded as a symbolic figure in the Korean mission field. After he attended the Methodist Laymen's General Conference in Atlanta, USA, he went to Edinburgh. His earnest appeals for missionaries impressed the representatives of the western missionary societies as W. H. Gairdner described him "a Korean of highest character and standing."<sup>408</sup>

The World Missionary Conference lasted ten days from Tuesday 14 June to Thursday 23 June. At the business session, standing orders and rules of debate were discussed and passed unanimously. J. H. Oldham was appointed Secretary of the Conference, and John R. Mott was appointed Chairman of the Conference. Out of the

---

✓<sup>405</sup> Letter from John R. Mott to Yun Chi-ho, 1 February 1910, John R. Mott's Paper, Yale University Divinity Library. See also YL to Warren Candler, 12 April 1910.

<sup>406</sup> Andrew F. Walls, "From Christendom to World Christianity: Missions and the Demographic Transformation of the Church," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, vol. 22, no.3 (new series 2001): 315.

<sup>407</sup> Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 261.

✓<sup>408</sup> W. H. T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 79. Gairdner comments on Yun: "from Korea, one who is graduate of an American University, and a former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. T. H. Yun Chi-Ho, with a great secular career before him has preferred to sacrifice it all, and give his life for Christ and the Church."

total discussion time, each report was limited to forty-five minutes in presentation. No member might speak more than once on one resolution or amendment.

On Wednesday 15 June, Mott presented the Report of Commission One, "Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World." Indigenous Christians in Africa, Asia, South America, and South Sea Islands, and the Jews, and Oriental Students in the West were discussed under the term, "Non-Christian World." The designation of Asia included Japan, China, Korea, India, Mongolia, and Central Asia.

✓ Yugoro Chiba spoke on Japan and T. Y. Chang represented the Chinese Church.

The Conference operated programmes at Synod Hall (which was demolished in 1966). After the report of Commission Six was presented in the morning, Yun gave a lecture on "the Place of the Native Church in the Work of Evangelisation" with Rev. K. C. Chatterji [Chatterjee] from India on Friday 17 June. The Edinburgh Conference also offered public programmes in Tolbooth Parish Church. Out of eight meetings, half of the programmes dealt with subjects related to Africa, Asia, and the Near East. Rev. George Heber Jones and Bishop Merriman C Harris talked about "Christianity in Japan and Korea," with Rev. Ibuka, President of Doshisha University and Rev. Miller in Tokyo on 18 June.

During the Edinburgh conference, thirteen meetings were held in Glasgow. Four midday meetings and four afternoon meetings were held at St. George's Church located in Buchanan Street. But Yun's lecture was given with other evening lectures in St. Andrew's Halls at Granville Street. The building was opened in 1877 and it had a Grand Hall which could hold 4,500 people (It was destroyed by fire in 1962).<sup>409</sup> All the meetings were well attended, and in the evening St. Andrew's Hall was crowded. Most lectures were summarized versions of the reports of eight commissions presented at Edinburgh Conference. Indigenous Christian leaders in

✓ India, China, Japan, and Korea talked about the conditions of missionary work. Yun seems to have known at least three out of the twenty-five speakers in Glasgow. His colleague of the Student Volunteer Movement, Harlan Beach (then Professor of Missions at Yale University) talked on "Carrying the Gospel to All the World." Bishop Lambuth from Nashville lectured on "The Home Base of Missions." With

---

✓ <sup>409</sup> Glasgow University Archive, PHU 64/38

Robert Speer, his friends of the Student Volunteer Movement, Yun gave another evening lecture on “The Position in Korea.”

Yun contributed to the ends of the conference by addressing in Glasgow and participating in the discussion session. He claimed in the discussion session of Commission One that Korea was a common-people oriented mission field because the Korean Protestant Church mainly focused on the ministry of common people. He reported: “the common people of Korea had received the word gladly.”<sup>410</sup> The Bible was “the most well read, the most widely read book” in Korea. Therefore, the early Korean Protestant Church in the twentieth century was centered on common people and the Bible. Yun spoke of Korea as “a microscopic mission field.”<sup>411</sup> Yun argued that Protestant mission started in 1885 with American Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries. Since Catholic converts were severely persecuted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he argued: “there was not a single missionary and not a single Christian.” Twenty five years after the Protestant mission arrived, there were around two hundred thousand Christians in Korea. He recognized the importance of “common people” in the Korea mission field, mentioning, “Upon the shoulders of the common people rests the future of any country.”<sup>412</sup> Comparing Japan with Korea, he claimed that, contrary to the missionary work in Japan, which targeted the upper class, the Protestant missionaries in Korea paid special attention to the masses rather than the ruling class. Yun also recognized the power of the Bible to give Koreans in despair a hope.

Along with this report, Yun pointed out three dangers: the revival of Buddhism and Confucianism, the introduction of the Western philosophies, and the rapid rate of conversion in Korea. First, Yun warned Western mission societies to prepare themselves missions in the midst of the revival of Asian religions, mainly Confucianism and Buddhism, in Korea. His personal experience of Confucianism was critical, for the Korean Confucian government seemed powerless to reform Korean society, which ran a risk of giving sovereignty to the Japanese colonial

---

✓ <sup>410</sup> World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission I, Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World* (Edinburgh: Olphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 411.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

powers. On the other hand, Buddhism was in a good position to reorganize their religious system and renew their missionary movements with the help of the Japanese Buddhists. Many Buddhist missionaries were sent from Japan to proclaim Buddhist truth to the Koreans. Since the Confucian oppression was no longer present, every religion had started missionary works everywhere – even in Seoul, a sacred city forbidden from other faiths but Confucianism.

Secondly, Western philosophy introduced secularism, atheism, and skepticism into Korean society. For Yun, the secular in the West seemed to have destroyed the sacred in the East. Korean spirituality was being destroyed by the Western philosophy and skeptical education. The sacred time did not give any meaning to Koreans and they also lost sacred places where they could endure the historical terrorism. The city of Seoul was no longer sacred, because it became the place of religious competition and political oppression.

Thirdly, it is clear that Yun regarded the rapid conversion of the people as another danger. Yun criticized the dominant missionary view of Christian mission, which focused on the numbers of indigenous converts and planted churches in mission fields. Yun instead paid more attention to the needs of indigenous Christians, not to the expectations of mission societies and Western churches. He evaluated the missionary works of Western missionaries from the eyes of the indigenous Korean Christians. The model of rapid conversion had a serious lack of deep transformation in personal and social life. He was convinced that conversion was not the final aim but the starting point for gradual transformation, so the converts needed to take enough time to transform themselves and their society. Yun believed that Korean Christians needed Christian education in order to reach the stage of self-determination.

Along with these dangers, Yun also proposed possible solutions to overcome them. First, Yun claimed that the Western churches should send the Korean mission field more qualified missionaries, who were able to teach and train up Korean Christians in Christian religion. The aim of mission should focus not on rapid conversion but on the education and training of indigenous Koreans. He believed that the Korean Christians must be fully educated so that they might be able to cultivate themselves and to renew their society on the basis of Christian truth. Without such

transformation through Christian education and training, the Koreans, individual or collective, could not survive from the ravages of selfishness and despotism. Yun's request also reflected the necessity of qualified missionaries. Most western missionaries preferred China and Japan over Korea, so the missionaries sent to Korea were less educated and competent in theological knowledge and missionary experience than those in China and Japan.

Secondly, in discussing the financial decision of mission field, Yun advocated "the principle of Christ" instead of "the first principle." According to the first principle, "money given by the foreign Church through the missionaries representing the Church should be under the control of those missionaries."<sup>413</sup> While studying theology and Western knowledge in the USA, Yun himself raised funds for the Korean mission and gave two hundreds dollars to Bishop Candler for a mission fund. From his personal experience, Yun knew the process of fundraising and financial decision for the mission field. However, he found serious problems in the first principle, which Western missionaries and even the indigenous Christians thought of as natural and reasonable. He criticized the first principle on mission money from the indigenous Korean points of view, because this principle took care of only the interests of the Western missionaries and the concerns of their home churches. At the same time, the whole power of money was given only to the Western missionaries whom their home church sent. Therefore, as recipients, the indigenous Christians had no authority to deal with the money. Seeking the self-government, self-support, and self-propagation of the indigenous Church, Yun criticized Western missionaries for their arrogance and insensibility, which separated them from the hearts of the indigenous Christians.

Yun was convinced that the Western missionaries exploited the labour and time of the indigenous Koreans for the sake of saving the mission money. Their overemphasis on the number of the converts made and the amount of contributions collected marginalized the opinions of the indigenous Christians who were able to understand their situations better than they did. They controlled not only mission funds but also the conscience of indigenous Christians. For instance, Yun believed

that missionaries had wasted tens of thousands of dollars in the literary works. They employed cheap and incompetent writers, so their works were not worth the paper. Therefore, he thought that Western missionaries did not practice the teachings of Jesus Christ, which they preached. He believed that the general policy of Western missionaries was to hide any defects in their management from the indigenous Christians.<sup>414</sup>

Yun did not want to work under western missionaries, whom he regarded as “spiritual bosses.”<sup>415</sup> When he worked as Principal of Anglo-Korean School, Yun had no actual power to decide missionary policy and financial decisions. He believed that this was partly because Western missionaries had the racial prejudice that the indigenous Koreans were less intelligent in financial issues than they were; the indigenous Christians could not take care for themselves. This arrogant attitude of missionaries caused Yun to avoid parish ministry as a Methodist preacher. In his diary, Yun wrote as follows:

To me the prejudices of heathen unbelievers seem less unbearable than the unintentional but the matter-of-fact “bossism” of missionary superiors. Once become a “native preacher,” I would have to surrender to a missionary not only my time and service but my freedom of opinion and of conscience as well, compelled to preach the doctrines and dogmas of the Mission whether I believed in them or not. I can hardly imagine a situation more degrading or more painful than that in which one has to preach the sacred doctrines of religion not necessarily through conviction but under a sort of pious compulsion.<sup>416</sup>

To overcome this prejudice, Yun seems to have argued that the distribution of the money should be so directed lest it arouse any suspicion in the mind of indigenous Christians. For him, missionaries should have received the advice of indigenous leaders, especially in the distribution of the money. He was convinced that the success of missionary work depended on hearty and sympathetic cooperation of the

---

<sup>413</sup> World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission II, The Church in the Mission Field* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 358.

<sup>414</sup> *YD*, 11 April 1897.

<sup>415</sup> *YD*, 13 April 1897.

<sup>416</sup> *YD*, 1 June 1897.

indigenous Christians. Under the name of “the principle of Christ,” Yun warned the Western missionaries not to overlook the standpoint of the indigenous Koreans, which was necessary for a successful transformation of Korea.

#### **4.7. Imprisonment and the Korean YMCA**

Out of Yun’s extensive diaries, the diaries written between 1907 and 1915 are missing. According to his family, it was partly because the police confiscated part of them in the process of investigation, and mainly because Yun didn’t keep diaries during the trial and imprisonment, and then for almost one year after he was released.

After he returned from Scotland, Yun contributed to the expansion of the Korean YMCA into mission schools, by convening student summer conferences and giving lectures to students from different denominations and nations. Under Yun’s leadership, the first conference was held at a Buddhist temple located in Seoul. The second conference was held in Songdo, where ninety-three student delegates from twenty-one schools attended to hear the speeches of many notable missionaries, including Campbell White and Sherwood Eddy. The issue of joining the World Student’s Christian Federation was also discussed. In August 1911, Mott wrote to Yun about the appointment of Yun as a corresponding member of the World’s Student Christian Federation.<sup>417</sup> The third conference was held in Yun’s absence, because he and several students had been arrested.<sup>418</sup> It is true that colonialists oppressed the Korean YMCA and its student movements.

On the charge of conspiring to assassinate Governor-General Terauchi, a larger number of Korean Christians were arrested and convicted between 1911 and 1912. Due to this persecution, anti-Japanese feeling was re-enforced by the millions

---

<sup>417</sup> Letter from John Mott to Yun Chi-ho, 1 August 1911, Yale University Divinity School, “At the meeting of the General Committee in Constantinople you were appointed a corresponding member of the Federation [World’s Student Christian Federation] for Korea. The duties of this office are chiefly the following: to keeping the General Secretary informed as to new developments in the work of Christ among students, to report items of interest for the Student World, to act as a medium through which information about the Federation can be sent to the students of Korea, and in general to aid in extending the Student Movement.”

<sup>418</sup> Jeon Taek-bu, *A History of the Korean YMCA movements* (Seoul: Beomusa, 1994), 149-153.

of Americans who were interested in missionary work in Korea.<sup>419</sup> The missionaries and the Korean Christian leaders resolutely sought to keep the Christians aloof from all political movements, so obedience to the Japanese authority was preached from every pulpit. The Japanese, however, found in the Korean churches numerous and powerful organizations of their subjects which they did not control.<sup>420</sup> Of 8000 inhabitants of the Korean town of Sincheon, congregations of 1200 or 1500 Koreans thronged the church several times on Sundays and the mid-week prayer meetings were attended by between 700 to 1000. As the Japanese police noted the multitudes of Christians flocking to the churches, they irritably wondered why these Christians met so often and what they were doing. The so-called "Mission Evangelical Campaign" in 1910 and 1911 intensified these suspicions. It was a concerted effort of the churches to seek the conversion of a million souls.

On the other hand, all the education of the Korean was in the hands of the missionaries and the churches under their care. The missionaries had planted the church and the schoolhouse side by side, so every chapel had an attached primary school. Every mission station had a boarding school. Pyeongyang had a college and Seoul had professional schools. Although the Japanese opened schools, the Korean Christians did not send their children to them. Brown commented on the Christian influence in education, "The Japanese common schools... seemed to the Koreans to be chiefly intended to teach the Japanese language, history, and customs, to give a training that was inferior to that of mission schools and that was at best non-Christian and sometimes practically anti-Christian."<sup>421</sup>

In the autumn of 1911, the Japanese began to arrest Korean Christian leaders, including Yun. On 28 September in 1912, the judges sentenced 105 of the dependents to terms of imprisonment – six, including Yun, for ten years, eighteen for seven years, thirty-nine for six years, and forty-two for five years. As President of

---

<sup>419</sup> Arthur Judson Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case* (Northfield, MA: Northfield Press, 1912), 2. See also WCC documents including "Minutes of the Confidential Conference on the Situation in Korea," New York, 11 October 1912, and A. Brown, "The Korean Conspiracy Case, Supplementary Statement," 1 April 1913.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7. See also McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 218-238.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



Anglo-Korean School and Vice-President of the Korean YMCA, Yun was charged with treasonable conspiracy involving assassination of the Governor General.<sup>422</sup>

Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries urged the Japanese Government to deal fairly with the Koreans as follows:

We are not asking consideration for the accused Korean Christians because we believe them to be guilty, but because we believe that their guilt has not been reasonably established. We are therefore not imploring pardon, but urging thorough investigation.<sup>423</sup>

Despite such a strong appeal, Yun was sentenced to six years of imprisonment at the Supreme Court on 9 October 1912.<sup>424</sup> He spent three years in the prison at Seoul and then at Daegu, located in South Western Korea.<sup>425</sup> During this imprisonment, he could not exercise outdoors or see the sun. Contact with outsiders was forbidden and no means of writing was permitted. He was only issued the Bible that he could read in the prison until he was released in 1915.

In Yun's absence, Mott visited Korea to conduct Continuation Committee Conferences in March 1913. When the Continuation Committee Conferences were held in April, Mott helped to write the six terms of affiliation between the Korean YMCA and the YMCA Union of Japan. According to these terms, "[t]he National Committee of Japan recognizes the Chosen Central Young Men's Christian Association and any other Korean Associations as autonomous."<sup>426</sup> During Japanese occupation, the Korean YMCA produced many national leaders for independence movements. Mott wrote, "Another meeting which I shall never forget was the one held with the hundreds of Korean students in Tokyo, where seventy-six accepted Christ ... The days spent in Korea were very full... Much time was devoted to the delicate and grave problems, which just now confront the Church in that land.... The

---

<sup>422</sup> McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 218-238.

<sup>423</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 20-21. Letter from Philip Gillett and J. Gerdine to John R. Mott, 22 May 1912, WCCL.

<sup>424</sup> Y. H. Kim, "A Short Sketch of Dr. T.H. Yun's Life," *The Korean Mission Field*, March 1935, pp. 45-52.

<sup>425</sup> YD, 2 April 1918. Mr Bruen visited Yun when he was in the prison of Daegu.

<sup>426</sup> Korea file, John R. Mott Papers, Yale Divinity School Library.

large pavilion erected for this purpose was crowded each night with three thousand men and hundreds definitely accepted Christ as their Divine Savior.”<sup>427</sup> Eddy also mentions, “Christianity should be given to their students to supplement the moral foundations that had been laid by Confucianism but which were not sufficient to save them in this time of transition.”<sup>428</sup> While resisting the Japanese political authority, the number of Korean Church increased from 14000 in 1902 to 68000 in 1912,<sup>429</sup> for many Koreans found shelter and supporters in Christianity through conversion and commitment.

When he was released by Imperial pardon in February 1915, Yun advocated the strengthening of moral and intellectual power and the development of industry and education. Frank Brockman asked him to become General Secretary of the Korean YMCA. After consulting with Japanese colonialists, he was elected at a board meeting as General Secretary for a term of three years in April 1916. By appointing three Japanese honorary directors, the Korean YMCA took a distinct step toward a pro-Japanese policy.<sup>430</sup>

Maintaining a cooperative attitude to colonialists, Yun focused on industrial education by closing the YMCA middle school. Colonialists did not oppress industrial education as much as literary and religious education. The mere presence of the YMCA, based on sound finance, was his first priority, and he wanted to continue educational work within the boundaries given by the colonial authorities. This was why Yun did not join the March First Independence Movement despite the persuasion of nationalists in 1919. Some members of the YMCA were actively involved in the preparation of the March First Movement, but Yun denounced the Movement as follows:

1. The question of Korean independence will have no occasion to appear in the Peace Conference.
2. There is no power in Europe or

---

<sup>427</sup> John R. Mott, “Experiences and Impressions during a Tour in Asia in 1912-1913, being Extracts from Personal Letters of John R. Mott,” John R. Mott Papers, Yale Divinity School Library.

<sup>428</sup> Letter from Sherwood Eddy to his friends on 1 April 1913, Sherwood G. Eddy Paper, Yale Divinity School Library.

<sup>429</sup> John Mott, *The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia, 1912-1913* (New York: Continuation Committee), 1913.

<sup>430</sup> *YD*, 8 April 1916. See also Jeon, *A History of the Korean YMCA movement, 195-197*.

America which will be so foolish as to offend Japan by espousing the cause of Korea. 3. If independence were given us, we are not ready to be profited thereby. Japan gave us independence in 1894. What did we do with it? 4. When a weak race has to live with a strong one, the former must win the good will of the latter as a matter of self-preservation. 5. This foolish agitation of the students [is] only prolonging the military administration of Korea. If shouting Manseis through the streets will win a national independence there can be no subject nation or race in the world! 6. Don't be deceived by schemers like the Cheondogyo (a Korean new religion) people.<sup>431</sup>

Yun's denouncement of the Movement made him so unpopular amongst the Koreans that at times he felt as if he stood between the devil and the deep. It is important to notice that some Christian leaders, including Yun, did not participate in the movement because they regarded the cooperation with *Cheondogyo* as a sin. Yun also believed that the Movement was rooted not only from Korean dissatisfaction of colonial policies, but also from anti-missionary feelings of the Korean Christian leaders, who resented missionaries for their arrogance and bossism. Keeping the status of Home Rule rather than nominal independence, Yun continued to advocate the strengthening of economic and intellectual power to promote the welfare of Koreans. For instance, he persuaded a young man to return to the land and cultivate it. This does not mean that he overlooked a spiritual power in Christian education. Rather, he was convinced that the moral elevation of people should be based on a firm faith in God, which he believed was the highest philosophy. On the omnipotence of God, Yun commented:

[W]hat is impossible with men is possible with God. Take God out of the universe; this world is simply confusion worse confounded. Life has no meaning and death, no hope. Enthroned God where He is, life has meaning while death loses its sting. O for a unshaking and unshakable faith in this God.<sup>432</sup>

Since faith should be balanced by reason, Yun believed that Korean Christians should not follow the same patterns of many Western Christians. Rather, Yun

---

<sup>431</sup> YD, 2 March 1919.

<sup>432</sup> YD, 22 August 1919.

claimed that missionaries should pay more attention to what they share than what they give, emphasizing mutual exchange between missionaries and indigenous Christians.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

As has been examined, Yun's concern was dramatically shifted from politics to religion, particularly its areas of mission and education. As a politician, he failed to realize his educational ideal in the midst of political turmoil. After experiencing a religious renewal in Paris, he turned his attention to independence movement and the spread of democracy among the Korean masses, instead of governmental reform. This effort also failed, but he had an unexpected opportunity to govern Koreans from the margins, where he received a reputation for being a righteous governor, who loved his people too much.

After the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, colonialists arrested Yun for a conspiracy to assassinate the General-Governor; his international religious networks, and cultural enlightenment movements. All of these caused the Japanese to suspect him of being a nationalist leader of independence movements. Despite severe oppression, Yun created a viable alternative to the dominant missionary models that he came into contact with and extremely nationalistic resistance against colonialists.

First, in his vision of Christian education, Yun chose "strawberries" instead of "Shakespeare." In other words, he concentrated on industrial education, not on evangelism alone. He realized the necessity of job-training and the importance of Western science. Experiencing the process of modernization, Yun thought of the parasitism of Confucianism as one of big problems in the Chosen dynasty. Therefore, industrial education appeared to be a means to improve the economic independence of individuals from foreign powers. It should be noted that the emphasis on practical learning such as industrial education was rooted in the *Silhak* or the Confucian school of Korea. Yun's experience with the black community in the United States played an important role of strengthening the practical dimensions of his ideas on Christian education.

Secondly, in Korea, Yun argued the necessity of cooperation between Western missionaries and indigenous Christians. He believed that the factionalism rooted in a Confucian society should be healed by the unity of the Church, regardless of South and North, or East and West. In this sense, his participation at the World Missionary Conference of 1910 caused him to contribute to the ecumenical movements in Korea.

Thirdly, Yun began to realize the common ground amongst world religions, including indigenous religions. His pragmatic and utilitarian view of religion helped Yun to investigate his own faith and other religions in a more objective way, as he pointed out:

The African heathen bows down to a fetish – some horrid looking likeness of man or beast which his hands have carved. This must appear very barbarous to my friend, Mr. Ji Un-yeong the noted painter who worships a beautiful Kwan Um Bosal [Bodhisattva] which he painted himself and to which he offers white cooked rice three times a day. A Catholic who worships a beautiful image of Virgin thinks he is far superior to Mr. Ji. A Protestant Christian looks down all these with disdain, saying we must worship God in spirit. Yet the idea or instinct or principle which actuates the Christian to worship his [or her] God is identically the same instinct or principle which makes the African to worship his fetish; viz: mans's realization of his utter helplessness in the presence of the forces of nature and of Providence.<sup>433</sup>

---

<sup>433</sup> YD, 4 September 1920.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**COLONIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND RELIGION**  
**1921-1931**

**5.1. Introduction**

As water will never rest until it has found its level; as fire will never rest until it has found its upward current, so the Korean race will never rest until it has found its independence. The wisest thing Japan can do will be to recognize this truth as soon as possible so as to assure the Koreans their ultimate independence in course of time. In the mean time let the Koreans learn how to use independence when they do get it.<sup>434</sup>

The Koreans demand independence, pure and simple which the Japanese will not and can not give. Japan wants to assimilate the Koreans which they regard as impossible. Between these extremes what is the golden medium? ... *We must learn, learn, and learn. We must learn to be clean; learn to be industrious; learn to be efficient, learn to stick together; learn to obey; learn to wait; learn to master freedom and not to be mastered by it – good as freedom is.* Many a Korean seems to think and talk as if to hate the Japanese were the whole duty of man. Hatred is bad because we can't learn if we hate.<sup>435</sup>

After the MFIM broke out early in 1919, colonialists changed their aggressive militaristic policy into a lenient cultural policy. They replaced the military and police forces with civilians, and limited press freedom was permitted until Japan invaded Manchuria late in 1931. Though he noticed that independence was the natural hope of Koreans as he mentioned in the above quotations, Yun regarded this colonial rule as an opportunity to teach the Koreans moral virtues and the Christian message, just as the Israelites learned absolute dependence on God from their wilderness experience.

In this chapter, I will examine how, in his educational vision, Yun responded to his contemporary ideologies, including colonialism and nationalism. In 1921, he accepted the post of Principal of Songdo School once again. In spite of experiencing the new colonial educational policy, unlawful racial discrimination, and widespread communist strikes, Yun continued to claim that Koreans should learn the best virtues of the Japanese and the sufficient moral strength of Christian message. He attempted

---

<sup>434</sup> YD, 4 March 1921. See also, McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 239-302.

<sup>435</sup> YD, 18 February 1921, my italics. Also see 26 January 1921.

to revive the Korean power of cultivating morality, intelligence, and economics for ultimate political independence in the future.

One of the roles, which Yun expected Christian education to play in Korean society, was to prevent the Japanese colonialists from exploiting Korea through the agents of the colonial companies. He was convinced that the gifts and talents that God gave Koreans, should be utilized to the fullest. Therefore, industrial education had been advocated throughout his educational works.

Along with constant fear of colonialists and the PG agencies, racial prejudice of arrogant Westerners made Yun more and more devoted to Christian education. He believed that education was an instrument not only to avoid political involvement with either side, but also to improve moral standards among the Koreans. Experiencing emerging destructive communist movements among the Koreans, including Christians, Yun was more convinced that as a religion Christianity would give Koreans a hope of re-establishing social solidarity and creating a new Korean identity.

## ***5.2. Colonial Exploitation of Land and Korean Nationalism***

Under the oppression of militaristic colonial policy in the 1910s, most nationalist leaders migrated to Korean enclaves in Manchuria, China, Russia, and the USA. After the PG was established in 1919 and nationalists gathered together to initiate united independence movements, the Japanese suspected Yun, even though he had never joined their associations. Then, why did Yun choose to remain in Korea?

Following Confucian ethics, Yun decided to stay with his elderly mother in his own country. It is clear that his long exile experience also taught him the importance of home, family, and the land. During his three-year imprisonment, he also lost his beloved daughter, Mun-hui. Avoiding political affiliations and their dangers, he wanted to protect his family from dangers. Besides, as a cultural nationalist, Yun was different than extreme nationalists who sanctioned the use of violence in independence movements. Contrary to extreme nationalists appealing to such violence as assassination and bombing, Yun believed that, without any violence,

Christian education would improve moral and economic strength, by which he believed Koreans were able to resist the exploitation of the Japanese.

Pain at heart to see that all vantage grounds – mines, springs, harbours – in fact everything and anything that have in it any gain present or future are being rapidly appropriated by means fair or foul, by the Japanese. It is sickening to see the Koreans selling out their birthrights for mere nothings – lands, hills, homes without any thought of tomorrow. It is sad to see how the Koreans persist not only but actually glory in their ignorance and incompetence by absolutely refusing to learn and imitate the good traits of the Japanese.<sup>436</sup>

For Yun, the value of the land was important in preserving economic independence. Noticing the systematic exploitation of the land by colonialists,<sup>437</sup> Yun advocated the necessity of education among the Korean youth. The important sections of all cities and towns were being moved to the hands of the Japanese,<sup>438</sup> while Koreans gave up their ancestral lands and migrated to Manchuria and Siberia. Yun contended that the Japanese government should set up an educational campaign, teaching the Koreans to retain their fields and mountains and not to immigrate to other countries. In the district of Sincheon, for example, one hundred and thirty Korean farmers were forced to move out from their lands in order to make room for eleven Japanese settlers. When the Japanese developed Kumgansan (Diamond Mountain) in 1930, the Koreans, particularly Buddhist monks, were expelled from the mountains, which the Japanese settlers later occupied.

The colonial government assisted Japanese settlers in finding new residences in Korea by supplying financial and legal aids. The improvement of infrastructure in Korea was seen as “a curse” by the Koreans, for by these new roads Japanese settlers moved into very isolated villages. Colonialists seemed to him to have destroyed Korean homes only for the benefit of new Japanese settlers. The modernization

---

<sup>436</sup> *YD*, 23 March 1921.

<sup>437</sup> *YD*, 26 March 1921, 20 June and 23 September 1929. See, Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 138-161.

<sup>438</sup> *YD*, 18 March 1922, 3 December 1921, and 10 March 1926.



process was not for the Koreans but “of the Japanese, by the Japanese, [and] for the Japanese,” as Yun pointed out.<sup>439</sup>

The colonial policy of exploitation and deportation stimulated the emergence and spread of communist movements among the Koreans. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Bolshevism became popular among the Koreans, particularly those who had lost their land and job because of the colonial policy, for it promised a new future for the proletariat through revolution. They resisted colonialists and landowners. A Communist Party was founded in Seoul in 1925.<sup>440</sup>

Despite the lenient colonial policy in the 1920s and the early 1930s, indiscriminate exploitation caused the Koreans, whether they were nationalists or collaborators, to suspect the colonial policy, as Yun wrote:

For Koreans who shout “Mansei” nothing but torture and imprisonment. For law-abiding Koreans who have some means, [the] Government backed bandits are permitted to threaten and rob. Yet the Japanese wonder why the Koreans are ungrateful for the benevolent Japanese rule!<sup>441</sup>

Colonialists continued to force the Korean landowners and small farmers to sell their lands to the Japanese settlers or the colonial government. Establishing Irrigation Associations all over the country, they confiscated millions of tsubos<sup>442</sup> of rice fields in the name of making reservoirs and then levied water rates from the Korean landowners. In order to avoid the high tax and water rates, the Korean landowners sold their land at a low price to the colonial government.<sup>443</sup>

In addition to the colonial exploitation of land, it is worth noting that Yun had another fear of Korean nationalists, who played the role of obstructing the education of the Koreans and thereby retarding religious, moral, intellectual, and economic improvements. Soon after the MFIM occurred in 1919, the PG was established in

---

<sup>439</sup> *YD*, 14 October 1927. Also see *YD*, 28 July 1927, 21 August, 1930, and 1 April 1931.

<sup>440</sup> In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Korean nationalists went into exile in China and the Soviet Union and founded communist groups.

<sup>441</sup> *YD*, 18 April 1930.

<sup>442</sup> Tsubo is a category of rice field. One tsubo is equal to about 3.3 square metres.

<sup>443</sup> *YD*, 9 and 10 January 1931. Also see 24 January 1931.

Shanghai. Though world powers did not recognize its sovereignty, PG announced independence and attempted to free Korea from Japanese colonialism. PG sent its armed agents to assassinate Japanese leaders and planned military resistance against the Japanese army in the 1920s and 1930s. But Yun regarded its agencies as another threat to Koreans.

[The] secret emissaries of the [Provisional Government] of Shanghai are making Songdo an uneasy place to live in. Money famine, blackmailers, Provisional Government agents and police are keeping every Korean in constant fear and trembling. God give us courage and wisdom.<sup>444</sup>

In spite of his continuous denial, nationalists, including PG agents, made efforts to persuade Yun to join their independence resistance. In January 1921, Yun received a letter from Rhee Seung-man, President of PG (1919-1925), asking Yun to donate money to his independence movements. Yun declined since he was under the pressure of surveillance. It seems that Yun's three-year imprisonment was enough reason to deny Rhee's financial request. Therefore, he responded as follows,

First, we are in a great financial stress so that we couldn't give what we haven't got.

Second, we are in constant terror of being caught in any communication with outsider.

Third, the Provisional Government of Shanghai ought to quit foolish attempts as violence for they hurt nobody but Koreans.<sup>445</sup>

That month, Kim Dong-il, a member of the Military Organization of the PG, visited to ask Yun for ten thousand yen. He did not offer financial aid to the military independence movement, saying:

If the fellows in the Provisional Government are really lovers of their own people they would not place them in such dangerous and embarrassing position. They act like simple bandits.<sup>446</sup>

---

<sup>444</sup> YD, 2 February 1921.

<sup>445</sup> YD, 6 January and 19 October 1921, Yun asked Jenkins to give his oral message to Rhee.

<sup>446</sup> YD, 20 January 1921.

Yun's negative view of the PG, particularly its methods of raising funds from the Koreans, alienated him from the nationalists, particularly military independence leaders outside Korea. The nationalists, in Shanghai and Beijing, suspected Yun for not leaving Korea and joining them. Concerning this accusation, Yun defended himself by saying,

If the Provisional Government in Shanghai were really patriotic and sensible, they should issue a manifest denouncing the bandit-like methods of extending money which its agents have been practicing all over the country making every Korean of any means tremble day and night for the security of his life and property. To demand money with a pistol aimed at one's throat is a robber or a bandit and not a government agent.<sup>447</sup>

PG agencies assassinated pro-Japanese Koreans, Japanese colonialists, and pro-Japanese Westerners. For instance, Min Won-sik, a pro-Japanese Korean politician, having insisted that Koreans should make the most of their situation by being thoroughly Japanese, was murdered by a Korean nationalist in Tokyo.<sup>448</sup>

After the failure of the MFIM, leaders of different religions didn't reach a consensus about the issue of whether they would resist or collaborate with colonialists. For instance, Choe Rin,<sup>449</sup> the leader of *Cheongdogyo* (heavenly way sect),<sup>450</sup> supported the Home Rule of Korea, which nationalists strongly condemned.<sup>451</sup> Choe often attempted to persuade Yun to advocate justice and right for the Koreans from the colonial government. In this respect, the political situation of Ireland seemed to have given Korean leaders hope of independence. They heard that Ireland became a free state as an independent member of the Imperial British Family of Free Nations under the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. Yun had deep sympathy with the treaty,<sup>452</sup> claiming that the "unjust" English policy in Ireland should have been stopped at least fifty years earlier. But Yun disagreed with Choi in

---

<sup>447</sup> YD, 10 February and 20 November 1921.

<sup>448</sup> YD, 16 February 1921, The Japanese in Japan and Korea "canonized" Min as a "martyr."

<sup>449</sup> Choe was one of thirty-three Korean representatives in the First March Movements.

<sup>450</sup> Yun used the term "sect" when he referred to this new religion.

<sup>451</sup> YD, 23 December 1931. See also Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 118-137.

<sup>452</sup> YD, 13 December 1921.

terms of cooperation with the colonialists, though he regarded Home Rule as a possible transitional government toward full independence. Choi was actively involved in the colonial government by working as its councillor. In contrast, Yun chose the way of cultural nationalism through Christian education and ecumenical movements.

### 5.3. *The Koreans as “Savages” and Practical Education*

Your people [The Koreans] are savages. The natives of Africa live in better huts than those huts. Look at those fellows with long pipes. They don't seem to have any spirit in them.... I don't believe there is a single Christian in Korea.<sup>453</sup>

These comments on the Koreans are part of an interview of Korean reporters with Lord Northcliffe.<sup>454</sup> The so-called “Newspaper King,” this English man was passing through Korea on his way to Beijing. Hearing these humiliating comments, Yun regarded him as a “pitiless Briton.” In early twentieth-century Korea, Western missionaries played the role of agencies civilizing Koreans and preaching Christian message, but they had cultural prejudice against the Koreans. For Westerners, the Koreans still remained “savages” without any “spirit,” even after they received the Christian message. Western anthropological research also propagated the stereotype. American sociologist, Edmund Brunner, having conducting field research in rural Korea in 1927,<sup>455</sup> insisted that the economic depression of the Korean farmers was caused by their characteristics such as prodigality and laziness.

It is important, however, to notice that Yun was never completely free from such Western stereotypes of the Koreans. Describing the Koreans as “lazy and ignorant,” he also argued that they had “lack of the sense of responsibility and of rectitude in matters of business.”<sup>456</sup> Generalising Korean characteristics, Yun

---

<sup>453</sup> YD, 16, 18, and 20 November 1921.

<sup>454</sup> In his diary, Yun recorded the interviews of Yeo Un-heong, a Korean reporter with Alfred Harmsworth (1865-1922), Lord Northcliffe, founder of *Daily Mail* in 1896 and *Daily Mirror* in 1903.

<sup>455</sup> International Missionary Council, *The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928) 100-208. Edmund Brunner analyzed rural problems in China, Korea, and India on the basis of his field research. See also YD, 18 November 1927.

<sup>456</sup> YD, 24 March 1921 and 8 September 1927.

distinguished himself from the uneducated masses of Koreans, who were socially and culturally oppressed. He recognised himself as an intellectual and aristocrat Korean, who had the privilege of being educated in Western society.

Western missionaries strengthened such stereotypes of the Koreans. Yun was convinced that Westerners and missionaries made serious mistakes on the basis of an assumption of racial superiority. Whenever they overlooked the needs of indigenous Christians or despised their customs, Yun traced the origin of their behaviours to their racial arrogance. He had grave concerns about the power relationship with missionaries, particularly in administrating Christian schools and managing mission funds. Within the Christian mission, where equality should have been expected, there was a hierarchy between missionaries and indigenous Christians. This conflict, having influenced the March First Movement, appeared once again when Yun was asked to become Principal of Songdo School, so he hesitated to accept the offer. It is clear that conflict and tension between missionaries and indigenous leaders continued.

Songdo School was an important mission school to the Southern Methodist Koreans, especially to Yun. He founded this school as the first industrial mission school in 1906. As its first Principal (1906-1912) Yun served until he was arrested due to a conspiracy case fabricated by colonialists.<sup>457</sup> His vision of industrial education was applied to Songdo School and the Korean YMCA. Therefore, the offer of missionaries was another opportunity to accomplish his unfinished mission of preaching the Gospel and educating the Koreans. During previous terms, however, Yun experienced deep humiliation from missionaries. Without any permission or even notice, a missionary sent a Korean student, who Yun himself taught, to a country school for two months. He said,

To be a Principle in name while somebody else [missionary] has the real power is too humiliating to me. But, since the mission will never consent to handing over to a Korean the absolute management of the school, since a foreigner will never be contented to play a second fiddle under a Korean, I can't persuade myself to put my neck under the disgraceful yoke again.<sup>458</sup>

---

<sup>457</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>458</sup> *YD*, 18 January 1921.

Despite having good relationships with most missionaries, Yun continued to criticise the arrogant and impolite attitude of missionaries towards the Koreans.

[The missionary] would have proved himself [or herself] a more acceptable and even more successful missionary if he [or she] took off a little more of U.S. from his [or her] thought and put on more of Jesus Christ in his behaviour.... One is often puzzled to know whether a missionary is preaching the Gospel from pride or from love. It is more charitable to suppose that they preach love and practice pride.<sup>459</sup>

Yun claimed that many missionaries failed to practice what they preached, so the love of God was a theory legitimising racial exclusiveness. The hypocritical image of missionaries caused indigenous Christians, particularly preachers, to advocate the self-government of the Korean churches.

At the same time, Yun also argued that Westerners, particularly the Anglo-Saxon race, had virtues that the Koreans should learn. In the winter of 1924, Yun gave a series of speeches on “the Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon” to a body of Methodist preachers at the Union Seminary in Seoul. These lectures were based on the English translation of Edmond Demolins’ work, *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons* (1897)<sup>460</sup> which he had translated into Korean. Identifying the French with the Koreans, Yun used Demolins’ work as the primary resource for his lectures. Regarding individualism and pragmatism as strengths of the Anglo-Saxon, Yun accepted Demolins’ main argument as follows:

The Anglo Saxon race by holding individual independence to be of greater value than communistic dependence; practical utility to be of higher importance than unrealizable dreams; useful occupations to be of nobler worth than officialdom or even liberal professions, have succeeded the overcoming of all difficulties and in becoming actual dominator of the world.<sup>461</sup>

---

<sup>459</sup> YD, 20 January 1921 and 16 May 1927.

<sup>460</sup> Edmond Demolins, *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1897). Its English translation was *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What Is It Due?* (New York: R. F. Fenno, 1898). See also YD, 13 January 1921.

<sup>461</sup> YD, 5 December 1924.

Using the example of the Anglo-Saxons' success, Yun emphasized the importance of "practical" education system and reflected the "failures of the French system to produce men fit for the changed and changing conditions of the world." He continued to say,

The French education aims at turning out functionaries by means of stuffing the young men with encyclopaedia knowledge to pass the Civil Examinations. The whole content of the author [Demolins] is that individual initiative, energy and the spirit and habitude of self help are virtues essential to success; that these qualities are best nurtured and perfected by the Particularist Formation which throws a man on his own resources, but are atrophied or destroyed by the Communist Formation which makes a man to depend on his family, then friends, then the state.<sup>462</sup>

As Demolins argued, the Anglo-Saxon seemed to Yun to have the unique strength of racial heritage. Through effective education with its emphasis on realistic and practical skills, they succeeded in business, colonial expansion, and industry. Against the subordination of the individual to the community, they initiated individual interests and concerns. The education system at home and in school should develop the whole human instead of wasting time preparing for the civil examination. Yun believed that the education with its focus on individualism and pragmatism was the foundation of success of the Anglo-Saxon race. He noticed the similar inherent weaknesses in French education and Korean Confucian education. He quoted from Demolins,

Indeed, these people (the English) haven't for the manual labour, the superb disdain which we French profess to have for it. They have long been delivered from this old error which has been more disastrous to us than hundred defeats on the field.

In Yun's view, therefore, the social engagement of missionaries was more important than their evangelistic works. He clearly indicated his disagreement with the view of certain missionaries that evangelism was the first task of Christian missions.

Yun's emphasis on Christian action was much clearer in the case of the medical mission of the Methodist church. In 1927, when the Southern Methodist

---

<sup>462</sup> YD, 6 December 1924.

Episcopal Church had its thirtieth anniversary conference, Reid of the Ivy Hospital argued that the ultimate goal of the hospital should be to preach the Gospel to the Koreans, saying,

Missionaries made a mistake to make healing the physical ailments the main and first object of the hospital and the preaching of Gospel the secondary object. From now on this idea or principle must be reversed. A mission hospital is better closed if its main object is to cure disease. Therefore [I] want a first class preacher for [my] hospital rather than first class doctors.<sup>463</sup>

Responding to this comment, Yun criticised Reid for his overlooking the actual needs of the Koreans. For him, medical missionaries should be fully qualified for the effective medical service at the same time with the sympathy with the patients. He believed that “good and efficient treatment by skilful doctors and kindly nurses all serving in the spirit of Christ” would “win the patient sooner to the Gospel than all the prayer meetings and perfunctory sermons.”<sup>464</sup>

Yun also criticized his successor, Principal Weems, in that he had dictatorial and racial arrogance and emphasised religious propaganda more than liberal education. In 1926, students of Songdo School confined the missionaries in their offices for a day. At the request of Korean teachers, the police rescued them from the students, but Yun attributed the fundamental problem to the attitude of missionaries to Christian education.

The immediate cause of the recent strike in the Songdo Higher Common School seems to be the unwise attitude of Mr. Weems in regard to the Bible lessons. The complaints are (1) that he required the boys to memorize verses; (2) that he handled roughly a boy who refused to study the Bible.... What a nonsense to compel the Korean students of today to study the Bible against their wishes, and worse still, to memorize the verses. Men like Mr. Weems shouldn't try to teach the Bible to the students – especially in Korea.<sup>465</sup>

---

<sup>463</sup> YD, 13 September 1927.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*. See also Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 281-291.

<sup>465</sup> YD, 19 June 1926.



According to Yun, the Bible offered Christians with moral standards in their daily lives, but it was not for memorising doctrines and theology. Since the Songdo School was founded, therefore, he had concentrated on industrial and agricultural education as fundamental to the Christian message, but literary education and evangelism were not given priority in his mind.

Indigenous Christians were critical of the missionaries not only for their dominant administrative style, but also for their lack of sympathy with the Korean situation. In the summer of 1924, for example, the Koreans in Songdo experienced a devastating flood. Bridges were almost destroyed and main streets and houses were flooded.<sup>466</sup> The process of reconstruction was delayed due to lack of concern by the Japanese authority. After hearing of a missionary's insensitive comment while on his summer vacation at the East Sea during this disaster, Yun criticized the lack of missionary sympathy.

Mr. S. is only one of the innumerable illustrations that go to show the utter separateness – not necessarily oppositeness – between the interests of the Koreans and of the foreigner. The summer that has filled Korea with sorrow and hunger has been a season of joy to the foreigner! Certainly it takes a little more than ordinary measure of Divine grace for a foreign missionary to understand and sympathize with, the sufferings of the Korean people.<sup>467</sup>

Yun's critical attitude towards missionaries, however, didn't make him blind to the positive contribution of missionaries in Korea. He placed high value on the contribution of James Gale (1863-1937) in introducing the Korean literature to the world despite his pro-Japanese attitude.<sup>468</sup> He also respected Dr. Rosetta Hall as an unselfish pioneer, particularly, in the education of the physically impaired and in the training of female physicians.<sup>469</sup> When he attended the funeral of Gamble, he also claimed that the Korean church lost a loving and lovable missionary.<sup>470</sup> When Mr. Gerdin left the Women's Theological School in Korea, Yun thought of him as one of

---

<sup>466</sup> *YD*, 20, 21, and 22 July 1924.

<sup>467</sup> *YD*, 16 August 1924.

<sup>468</sup> *YD*, 22 June 1927.

<sup>469</sup> *YD*, 22 November 1926.

<sup>470</sup> *YD*, 15 January 1927.

the finest examples of a Southern gentleman and a strong and wise counsellor.<sup>471</sup> In the YMCA, Gregg contributed to the industrial training of the Koreans, which Yun regarded a necessary action for the achievement of Korean economic independence. In brief, Yun recognised missionaries as valuable partners of mission, but he did not hesitate to point out their mistakes, nor their false assumptions about indigenous people.

#### ***5.4. Reformation and Regression: the Korean YMCA and Songdo School***<sup>472</sup>

Facing the threat of nationalists, the oppression of colonialists, and the racial prejudice of missionaries, Yun taught the Korean youths self-reliance. In the 1920s, he withdrew from the front line of the Korean YMCA, but he kept working as its board member. Methodist missionaries appointed him to serve another term (1925-1928) as Principal of Songdo School. Along with this work, he contributed to the development of education by giving public speeches or lectures.

Encouraging young men and women to help the community by doing practical works such as night schools, reforestation, dairy work, and fruit farming, Yun advocated the value of manual labour and practical service to others. In the traditional Confucian society, women and children had been marginalized from formal education, so Yun offered them literary and vocational education through Christian institutions and night schools. He also pioneered ideas on the preservation of Korean forests. While Western colonialists exploited natural resources such as gold and timber on a large scale and Korean farmers destroyed forests in order to gather fuel, Yun taught students to plant trees in Songdo. Instead of traditional grain planting, he introduced fruit and vegetable farms and dairies onto the Korean agricultural system. He was more convinced that only practical learning would improve the economic situation of Korean society so they might compete with the Japanese and the Westerners in the near future.<sup>473</sup>

---

<sup>471</sup> YD, 31 March 1927.

<sup>472</sup> According the Revised Education Law of Private Schools (1915), Anglo-Korean College changed its name to "Songdo Higher Common School" in 1917. In this chapter, I prefer "Songdo School" to its full name.

<sup>473</sup> YD, 23 June 1921. Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 93-96.

Yun's leadership in the Korean YMCA and Songdo School strengthened practical and industrial education in the 1920s. He emphasized the practical dimensions of Christian education, in order to avoid theological and doctrinal controversies that plagued denominations of Protestant churches. Through this emphasis, Yun attempted to unite and reconcile the Koreans. Recognising historical divisions between the Koreans, he hoped that Christian education would reduce antipathy between Northerners and Southerners, by teaching universal love transcending theological parochialism and local factionalism. During the Joseon dynasty, Northerners, having been long discriminated against by the ruling class in the central government, had been marginalized from political, economic, educational, and cultural benefits, while Southerners had occupied main posts and oppressed Northerners with their political power. Yun was convinced that Christian education was able to reconcile the two sides, when he wrote in 1921,

During the five centuries of Yi Dynasty, the people of North Western provinces were placed under political disqualifications and treated with humiliating discriminations. That the North Westerners had a just cause for hating the Southern Koreans – especially those of the ruling caste, goes without saying. But is this the time to harbour and practice the spirit of an-eye-for-an-eye and a-tooth-for-a-tooth plan of revenge? If everybody wanted to get even with his enemies in Korea, when shall we ever become a united race?<sup>474</sup>

The seriousness of local conflicts was illustrated in a incident at a sporting event. In May 1921, when an interschool football contest was held under the auspices of the Pyeongyang YMCA, an umpire from Seoul was almost killed by the Pyeongyang people. They threw stones at him and called for him to be killed until the police used guns to protect him.

By his efforts to reconcile the Koreans, Yun hoped to change the subordinated status of the Korean YMCA to the Japanese YMCA. He succeeded in recovering the independence of the Korean YMCA from the Japanese YMCA by cancelling the Affiliation Agreement of 1912. In March 1922, John R. Mott of the International Committee visited Korea to meet Yun and other Korean Christian

---

<sup>474</sup> YD, 4 June 1921.

leaders. Two months later, in return, Yun and Korean YMCA leaders visited Japan and reconsidered the relationship between the Korean and Japanese YMCAs. Yun, Yi Sang-jae, Cynn Hugh, and Fletcher Brockman represented the Korean YMCA, while Saito, Motoda and Ibuka represented the Japanese YMCA. Korean delegates persuaded Mott and the Japanese YMCA leaders to cancel the Agreement of Affiliation. Advocating brotherly relations, Yun said,

Nine years ago [1912] when the Agreement of Affiliation was drawn up between the YMCA movement of Japan and Korea I was not present [Yun was imprisoned from 1912 to 1915]. But had I been present I would have supported the Agreement. It was made in the belief that the two movements would be mutually benefited by such a compact. But the changed conditions have made the Agreement a stumbling block between the young men of Japan and of Korea. Now the question before us is this. Shall we sacrifice the *spirit* of the Agreement to its *letter* or the letter to the spirit? I believe it is infinitely better to abrogate the offending compact *to promote the brotherly relations between the two movements* than to keep them unfriendly by preserving the Agreement.<sup>475</sup>

Under Yun's leadership, the Korean YMCA regained its autonomy from the Japanese YMCA, which remained until the two bodies were forced to be united in 1938. He influenced YMCA students through his lectures and speeches. He was frequently invited as one of the main speakers at YMCA conferences and other Christian gatherings. Yun often gave a speech to students, particularly when YMCA Summer Conferences were held. In 1924, he addressed the "Present Condition of Korea and her Needs" to the YMCA Summer Conference at Songdo. Again he spoke on the "Christian Young Men of the Future" at the Summer Conference of 1926. In 1927, he spoke on the "Future of the Church of Korea," "Religion and its Traits," and "Find a New Way in the Problem of Faith." In 1928, he also gave a talk on "the Mission of Rural Church" at Chosen Christian College.<sup>476</sup>

The YMCA movements gave Yun another opportunity to accomplish his educational vision in November 1922. After initial hesitation, he accepted the position of Principal at Songdo School on the condition that he ought to have full

---

<sup>475</sup> YD, 16 May 1921. See also, Jeon, *A History of the Korean YMCA Movement*, 261-266.

<sup>476</sup> YD, 25 August 1924 and Kim, *A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho*, 308-317.

control of the school fund. During the second term (1922 to 1925), Yun added many school facilities such as a gymnasium, a science hall, houses for teachers, a library, and a dairy.<sup>477</sup> Against the strong opposition of missionaries, he also made a reserve fund. He pointed out the necessity of a reserve fund as follows:

To carry on a great plant like this [Songdo High School] in the name of the Church of Christ on a hand-to-mouth plan of finance is nothing short of imprudence. We must have a reserve fund on which we may fall back, and which can keep us going at least for six months in case of some unforeseen emergencies.<sup>478</sup>

As he promised, Yun donated ten-thousand yen,<sup>479</sup> raising another five-thousand yen from the public. But the missionaries didn't produce their share, ten-thousand yen, which they had promised for the reserve fund. The issue of endowment funds in mission was controversial within the Southern Methodist Church. Although all the Korean members supported the idea of an endowment fund, most of the missionaries opposed an endowment fund on the grounds that it would weaken the spiritual life of the Church, as Yun summarised their position in 1929.

Mr. Weems, [Principal of Songdo School, an American Methodist missionary], said that such a fund would destroy the spirit of giving for the future is contrary to the teachings of Christ who taught us to pray for "daily bread"; and that a reserve fund is opposed to divine plan because God gives us sunshine a little everyday and not so much for a month or year!<sup>480</sup>

Besides the issue of reserve fund, Yun conflicted with missionaries in their attitude towards indigenous Christians. He found injustice and inequality in the missionaries' salary distribution to Korean workers. Missionaries paid indigenous workers in the Textile Department of Songdo School, less than that of ordinary Korean workers. Yun commented,

---

<sup>477</sup> YD, 19 August 1925. See also, Jeon, *A History of the Korean YMCA Movement*, 195-197.

<sup>478</sup> YD, 25 June 1924.

<sup>479</sup> The yen was the currency of Korea during Japanese colonial period (1910-1945).

<sup>480</sup> YD, 31 January and 1 February 1929. Yun asked himself this question, "Does Mr. Weems keep anything in the bank or life insurance companies for future contingencies or his family?"

[The Koreans] work ten hours a day for ten yen a month for six months as probationers. Just three sen an hour! A common coolie gets a yen a day.<sup>481</sup> Am sorry a man – a missionary – should money out of another man’s sweat that way, even if that money is to be used to promote the course of the Gospel. No wonder the cause of the Gospel isn’t much promoted in the world! No wonder labour hates capital.<sup>482</sup>

As he expected, the antipathy of indigenous Christians towards the missionaries worsened. In 1924, school strikes spread like wild fire in Korea, demanding the dismissal of teachers and the improvement of facilities and curriculum.<sup>483</sup> Songdo students asked Yun to dismiss two Japanese teachers and improve science laboratories and biology classrooms. They also demanded that Yun as Principal should attend school more regularly. He declared an early summer vacation to prevent other students from joining the strike. Concerning the student strike, he did not deny the necessity of the strike, but he was opposed to indiscriminate and unreasonable strikes. He stated,

I firmly believe that there are justified strikes precisely as they are justified insurrection. But indiscriminate and unreasonable strikes are as fully harmful as indiscriminate and unreasonable insurrections. Both must be dealt with big stick. But these strikes hurt the Koreans more than anybody else. The Japanese let them alone just as they connive at morphine, gambling, vagabondism; moodangism [Korean Shamanism] simply because they hurt the Koreans.<sup>484</sup>

Yun was more convinced that any uprising, even for justice, should be operated through legal channels rather than in an emotional or violent state. Despite having sympathy with the students’ request, he did not condone the actions of students. According to Yun, the newspaper played a key role in inciting the students to strike by distributing socialist ideas. He regarded the strike as a product of the newspaper propaganda of the Russian type of socialism. For Yun, Korea stood between “the

---

<sup>481</sup> The yen was divided into one hundred sen.

<sup>482</sup> *YD*, 30 June 1924, Missionaries resulted in the emergence of communist movements among indigenous Christians by paying them low salary.

<sup>483</sup> *YD*, 28 May, 20 June, and 4 July 1924.

<sup>484</sup> *YD*, 4 July 1924.

deep” of the Russian Bolshevism on one hand and “the devil” of the Japanese exploitation on the other.<sup>485</sup>

In September shortly after the second semester began, Yun experienced other “perfectly lawless strikes” led by third and fourth year students. The Japanese police continued to be indifferent to these strikes so that Yun was afraid that the school would be closed in the near future. Just as he criticized Confucianism for its parasitism, so Yun rejected Bolshevism as the justification of “making robbery a Proletarian glory.”<sup>486</sup> Most parts of Northern Korea, including Songdo, faced workers’ strikes in the 1920s. It was in Sincheon, the so-called “Edinburgh of Korea”<sup>487</sup> that missionaries were attacked by workers, including Christians.<sup>488</sup> In the summer of 1926, members of the Worker’s Union attacked missionary houses by breaking windows, throwing stones, and distributing anti-missionary pamphlets. Like the case of Songdo, the police didn’t interrupt the strikes to rescue missionaries from the mob, and even Korean church leaders didn’t stop the attackers. In the late 1920s, students of Songdo School continued to organize serious strikes, asking for the resignation of the Vice Principal and the absolution of strike leaders, who had been withdrawn. The indifference of the police to strikes seemed to Yun a part of conspiracy of colonialists against the Koreans.

In the midst of growing unrest, Yun’s vision of Christian education faced financial problems and the lack of leadership. First, Songdo School closed its industrial department due to a financial short fall in 1928. The Textile Department was experiencing serious financial difficulties to the extent it might have to be closed. Korean Christian leaders, including Yun, petitioned the Board of Missions in Nashville to advance two hundred thousand yen at a low rate, but his request was denied. Following the order of the Board, the industrial department was finally closed in May.

---

<sup>485</sup> YD, 8, July, 18 July and 25 November 1924. Yun recognized expropriation and exploitation as main policies of Japanese colonialists over the Koreans.

<sup>486</sup> YD, 6 September 1924. See also, Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 154-162.

<sup>487</sup> The city of Northern Korea was famous for its large numbers of Christians and their active commitments. It was known that all stores closed on Sundays and more than half of total resident were Christians.

<sup>488</sup> YD, 25 August 1926.

Secondly, several key Christian leaders, including some of Yun's nearest friends, died. In 1926, after he resigned from being Principal of Songdo School, the faculty of Chosen Christian College asked Yun to become Vice-President of CCC. Yun did not accept the offer, avoiding financial burden. He was already being demanded for donations to help other schools and churches. At the same time, he got tired of the student strikes in Songdo. In 1927, Lee Sang-jae and Choi Byeong-heon, leading Southern Korean Christians, died. Lee was former YMCA General Secretary (1913-1916) and a mentor of Christian educational movements. In 1930, Lee Seung-hun, founder of Osan School and leader of Northern Korean Christians, passed away. Feeling left behind and reflecting on the brevity of life, Yun seems to have decided that it was time for him to go into semi-retirement.

### ***5.5. Human Nature and the Golden Rule***

Accepting the Christian doctrine of human depravity,<sup>489</sup> Yun argued that all human beings were sinful and evil after the fall of Adam and Eve. Races, whether they were weak or strong, and nations, whether they were rich or poor, were all sinful and evil before God. In this respect, his view was very different from the Neo-Confucian doctrine of human nature. Since traditionally Korea had been influenced by the School of Mencius, Korean Confucians believed that human nature was good.<sup>490</sup> According to Mencius, human beings were born with the knowledge of good and the ability to be good. In contrast, Christianity taught the sinfulness of human nature stemming from the original sin.<sup>491</sup> Yun commented on human nature,

The meanness, the unspeakable evilness of human nature which is the source of all evils and sufferings in the world, often compels me to sink in hopeless scepticism.<sup>492</sup>

---

<sup>489</sup> Yun explained ongoing wars and colonialism by human sinfulness. (Romans 3: 10-11)

<sup>490</sup> Concerning human nature, there are two main schools of Confucianism. Mencius argued that human nature is good, but Hsun Tzu claimed that human beings are evil.

<sup>491</sup> Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity – A Comparative Study* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977) 70-79.

<sup>492</sup> *YD*, 3 January 1929.



Like individuals, nations behold the mote that is in their neighbours' eye but consider not the beam that is in their own eye.<sup>493</sup> The fact is just as no man is all bad or all good, so no nation is wholly righteous or wholly wicked. The weakest nation is always the most righteous but as soon as it becomes strong enough to oppress others it becomes as bad as the worst of them. The sad truth is that all nations are sinful as all men are sinful. The only difference is the degree of sinfulness in individuals.<sup>494</sup>

According to Yun, all individuals, nations, and races were sinners, but they differed from one another in their degree of sinfulness. The stronger nations oppress and conquer weaker nations through ongoing wars and violence in human history. In this sense, the weaker a nation is, the more righteous; the stronger a nation is, the more wicked. Therefore, no victims can blame their oppressors for their conquest and occupation, for the former still have another chance to rule the latter when they get enough power to do so. Yun saw history as the repetition of rise and fall in human civilization, where heroes played an important role in leading people.

Teaching students to serve others, Yun emphasized the necessity of education, especially vocational and industrial education, on the basis of Christian principles, through which, he believed, the Koreans could find practical work to use their talents and fit themselves to a rapidly developing world. For him, the Japanese colonial experience was a process of self-examination, not an opportunity to judge oppressors with hatred and condemnation.

A person, in Yun's view, was a combination of good and evil,<sup>495</sup> so it is hard, or even impossible, to totally remove the evil, especially under circumstances of oppression and discrimination of the stronger nation or individual. Yun was convinced that God provided all humans with natural laws, under which world history, including colonial history, operated. He stated,

---

<sup>493</sup> See Matthew 7: 1-5, KJV. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

<sup>494</sup> *YD*, 26 May 1921.

<sup>495</sup> *YD*, 10 March 1921. See also, Ceuster, "From Modernization to Collaboration," 594-647.

It is perfectly natural that people, as individuals and nations, should despise, oppress, and discriminate against those who are or whom they imagine to be their inferiors. This side of human nature operates as impartially and as universally as any kind of natural law. The whites discriminate against the non-whites; [the Japanese] discriminate against the Koreans; the different classes in every society discriminate against each other, wherever human beings are found. No government, no philosophy, no religion, has, so far, succeeded in correcting this evil of human nature.<sup>496</sup>

According to Yun, conflicts and tensions between oppressors and oppressed exist on all different levels of individual, nation, or race, because the sinfulness of human nature was so universal and strong that human efforts in religion, philosophy, and government might not change it. However, Yun did not reject the value of religious and philosophical thoughts, in the midst of such power struggles. Indeed, he claimed that Christ came to the world in order to fulfil the natural law, as the Bible says:<sup>497</sup>

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Instead of rejecting religions, Yun argued that religious ideals should be acted upon in ones own daily life rather than merely in word or doctrine. He found reforming power in the Christian message, which, he believed, missionaries should have preached and practised in their life. According to Yun, human nature, though it was sinful, could be improved through education, particularly Christian education. What was important was not ideals themselves but their application in life.

Human pride and human vanity could have devised. Yet as long as one nation or one race deals unfairly and unjustly with another yielding to nothing but force, so long will war remain a necessary evil. Then to abolish war it is not enough to denounce it only, something must be invented or discovered. That will either force or persuade stronger nations or races to be fair and just to weaker ones without appealing to

---

<sup>496</sup> YD, 8 August 1928.

<sup>497</sup> YD, 11 November 1923. Matthew 5: 17-18, KJV.

a war. The golden rule of Christ<sup>498</sup> can do so if the leading powers of the world will only apply it to their international dealings...<sup>499</sup>

For Yun, the “golden rule” was the fundamental solution to all wars and conflicts between nations and individuals. Believers did not practice this teaching in their daily lives. Therefore, Yun advocated the necessity of respect and sympathy not only in Christian fellowship but also in the Christian attitude towards other religions. Particularly, when colonialists “invited” the Koreans to visit the Shinto Shrine, Yun claimed that Christians should accept the invitation and respectively participate in its service.

In as much as Christians invite non-Christians to the dedication services of a Cathedral or a Church and feel hurt when the invited don't come. Why should Christians... not participate in, the dedication services of other religions? Remember what the Golden Rule says.<sup>500</sup>

Emphasising the golden rule in the relationship with other religions,<sup>501</sup> Yun asserted that Christian missionaries discovered hidden potentials in the hearts of Koreans, what he called “three great treasures of inestimable value”: *Hangeul* (indigenous language), women, and young people.<sup>502</sup> While Neo-Confucianism with its patriarchal and Chinese emphasis had long marginalized the three above elements from the Korean education system, Christian missionaries tapped their value by translating the Bible into Korean, introducing indigenous language into the classroom, and promoting the education of women and children. Those who had been disregarded for five centuries were finally given attention when the Protestant missionaries arrived. In this sense, Yun argued that Christianity had the reforming power to fight the devil, the flesh, and the world in order to improve society.<sup>503</sup>

---

<sup>498</sup> Matthew 7:12, KJV, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

<sup>499</sup> *YD*, 25 December 1921.

<sup>500</sup> *YD*, 14 October 1925.

<sup>501</sup> Yun was more open and liberal to other religions than Western missionaries.

<sup>502</sup> *YD*, 7 March 1921.

<sup>503</sup> *YD*, 15 March 1921.

### 5.6. *The Bible as a History of Conquest and God as the “Father of All Men”*

The Bible gave Korean Christians, who had long suffered from foreign invasions, powerful narratives of liberation. It was believed that the Christian message about the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt encouraged Korean Christians to resist Japanese colonialists and adding to this perception was the fact that most of the Korean nationalists were educated in mission schools. As will be later examined, Yun advocated forgiving collaborators during the colonial period, based on the story of the prodigal son.<sup>504</sup>

But it is important to notice that Yun found not only a hope of freedom and forgiveness in the Bible but also an opposite meaning – *the justification of colonial expansion*. Encountering the narratives about the Israelite conquest of Canaan from the Hebrew Bible, he had difficulty in applying this biblical narrative into his contemporary situation. The Hebrew Bible seemed to Yun to have supported the colonial expansion of Japanese colonialists, for the Japanese seemed to have imitated Moses and his followers in terms of the extension of their territory and the oppression of other peoples.<sup>505</sup> Yun quoted from the Bible,

And I [Jehovah] will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.<sup>506</sup>

Just as most contemporary Korean Christians saw the liberation from Japan in 1945 as a parallel of the Biblical Exodus, so Yun identified the historical liberation from China in 1895<sup>507</sup> with the story of Exodus. According to Yun, the Israelites gradually became slaves to Egypt for four centuries. Likewise, the Koreans had been slaves to

---

<sup>504</sup> See chapter 8.

<sup>505</sup> *YD*, 9 March 1921.

<sup>506</sup> Exodus 23: 28-30, KJV.

<sup>507</sup> Japan defeated China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894 to 1895). The Emperor of Japan and the Chinese Emperor signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, where China denounced any claims to Korea and recognized its independence.

China for more than five centuries (1392 to 1910). Therefore, Japan was both a curse on the Koreans and a Divine tool to free the Koreans from the yoke of China.

Yun was convinced that colonial experience under Japan's rule was like the wilderness wandering of the Israelites, which would last around or more than forty years as the Bible story goes. This period was the penalty for sins such as parasitism and factionalism committed by the Koreans, and at the same time it was an opportunity to examine and test the Koreans for moral maturity and economic growth. Therefore, they should make the best of limited personal and natural resources through education.

By the same token, Yun found another historical parallel of the political and economic condition of the Koreans and the Book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was the reformer who restored the walls of Jerusalem and brought revival among the Israelites after they returned from their captivity in Babylon. Yun quoted,

See, we [the Israelites] this day are but slaves in the land [God] gavest to our forefathers that they might eat its fruit and enjoy its good gifts, and it yields a great income to the Kings whom thou has set over us because of our sins. They too have power over our bodies and over our cattle to do what they please and we are in great distress.<sup>508</sup>

Yun believed that the Korea became a Japanese colony because of their sins. They seemed to have lost the power to attain freedom and independence. It was only Christian education that would give the Koreans an opportunity to recover the ability of mastering freedom and reforming society. But Yun saw himself as a “leader of unpopular thoughts” even though he had a “sane” idea of accomplishing independence through education.<sup>509</sup>

Yun didn't believe in the notion of a “chosen people,” for it was contradictory to the image of God as “the Father of all men.” Therefore, he criticized Zionists for forcibly immigrating to Palestine and reclaiming the Promised Land “with a fierce conviction of possessing a divine mandate to it.”<sup>510</sup> He asked the

---

<sup>508</sup> *YD*, 26 January 1931, Nehemiah 9:36-37, KJV.

<sup>509</sup> *YD*, 20 February 1921.

<sup>510</sup> *YD*, 26 January 1931.

question: How can God as “the Father of all men” defend his chosen people and destroy other peoples?

Instead of the imperialist image of God in the Hebrew Bible, Yun argued that Christians should learn the way of Jesus Christ to conquer the world by means of love and forgiveness.<sup>511</sup> Then, how did Yun himself, as a Christian, understand other religious believers?

Though he continued to communicate with leaders of other religions, Yun’s general theological position in the 1920s was so exclusive that he did not recognize the power of reformation or salvation in other religions. Asian traditional religions were regarded as just the objects of Christian mission and its conversion. *Cheondogyo* (Heavenly Way Religion) was “evil doctrines,” making its believers “poor” and “benighted.” Buddhism was a “hopeless and helpless view of life” in the sense that Buddhists spent most their lives in “fruitless contemplations.” Confucianism was the basis of “paternal Government,” “a hierarchy of dependents,” and “parasitism.”<sup>512</sup> Yun insisted that Confucianism had such problems as the “love of official titles” and the “factional spirit,”<sup>513</sup> which weakened and corrupted Korean society. Under the “vileness and meanness of human nature,” Yun also criticized Hinduism and its customs in the light of morality. Remembering the Chicago World Parliament of Religions, he explained Hinduism as,<sup>514</sup>

[A] religion which sanctioned such diabolical institutions as the child marriage; the “sati”; the perpetual worse than death widowhood; the fearful ironbound caste system; condemning 50 or more millions of human beings to untouchables generation after generation...

Therefore, Yun lost many friends through his opinion on religion and politics. But he continued to reflect on the terrors of history in light of the Bible and reason. He was convinced that Christians were able to accept the Bible and at the same time as the theories of evolution. The illustrations from the Biblical narratives, especially from

---

<sup>511</sup> *YD*, 26 March 1922.

<sup>512</sup> *YD*, 14, 15, 22 January 1921.

<sup>513</sup> *YD*, 30 April 1921.

<sup>514</sup> *YD*, 10 August 1930. See also chapter 3.

the Hebrew Bible, seemed to prove that warfare could provide the foundation for the progress. “No individual or racial progress or regeneration has ever been accomplished without ceaseless warfare – between evil and good, filth and cleanliness, vice and virtue, life and death.”<sup>515</sup> Recognizing warlikeness as the necessary virtue for a successful life, Yun argued, “The spirit of warlikeness is at the bottom of all success in life.” According to him, the Koreans lost independence and suffered from colonial oppression due to their lack of the warlike-ness. Though he asked why God did not allow all races and nations to have equal virtues of warlikeness, Yun categorized this inexplicable dimension of life as a mystery.

The great pity is that no nation can have the spirit of warlike-ness without actual experience in real warfare. Why didn't the Almighty and All-wise God so order things that an individual or a race could grow strong and wise without going through the agonies of actual warfare? Oh the mysterious “whys!”<sup>516</sup>

In this sense, Yun did not limit the source of conflicts to racial differences. Indeed, he interpreted the conflicts and on-going wars in terms of human nature. Behind the wars and conflicts in the world, he found the warfare between good and evil. He argued that “All these conflicts between nations and races are not warfare between the different colours of the skin but the everlasting fight between the human nature of one people and the human nature of another.”<sup>517</sup>

When he compared the Japanese with the Koreans in terms of ethnicity, Yun categorized the former as “the people of the sword,” and the latter as “the people of the pen.” Just as Samurai culture gave the Japanese respect for the spirit of fighting, so Confucianism taught the Koreans to respect the literary culture. It is important that Yun regarded Western Christians as the people of the martial spirit, even describing evangelism as a type of conquest.

Yun gave a spiritual meaning to the symbol of the sword. Connecting the sword with “the Spirit of Fight or the Power of Resistance,” Yun argued that the Holy Spirit was “the spirit of fight in its noblest, purest, and highest sense.”

---

<sup>515</sup> *YD*, 7 July 1924.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>517</sup> *YD*, 1 July 1924. See also, Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin*, 44-55.

Therefore, the inferior race should have the spirit of the sword to resist the superior power and develop itself.<sup>518</sup> For him, it was natural that the Koreans had experienced continuing invasions by foreign powers, for they did not have the martial spirit necessary to resist colonialists.

When he evaluated the Salvation Army in terms of its mission methods, Yun attributed its “failure” to its ignorance of the Korean ethnic emphasis on intellectual life. When Colonel Hoggard arrived in Korea at the request of Korean students having been studying in Japan, the Salvation Army started its mission in October 1908. Compared to other Protestant denominations, which began their missions much earlier,<sup>519</sup> the Salvation Army remained a minority among Protestant denominations in the 1920s as it still does now. Its uniform and music were much influenced by a military character which, Yun believed, appealed strongly to “the imagination and instinct of war trained races,” not to Korean culture. Yun saw the Koreans as having a non-militaristic and peaceful ethnic identity though this characteristic proved to be the weakness of victims in Japan’s colonial expansion.

### ***5.7. Two Koreans, Reconciliation, and the Union of 1930***

In the 1920s, the Koreans needed a power to unite their factional divisions and to endure colonial exploitations. Yun was convinced that the Christian Church had a force that was better organised, more intelligent and more public-spirited than any other organization in Korea.<sup>520</sup> In spite of various denominations and their competition in Korea, Yun noticed that the Christian message about universal and enduring love would improve moral standards by cultivating virtues among the Koreans and reducing animosities between Northern and Southern Koreans.

There was another danger to Christian missions. Colonialists were driving the Koreans into Bolshevism by depriving them of every means of livelihood. Many students in mission schools, exposed to the doctrines of Bolshevism, claimed that they were Bolsheviks or Proletarians. Two Korean communist parties were already

---

<sup>518</sup> *YD*, 10 August 1928.

<sup>519</sup> In 1885, Northern Presbyterian Church and Northern Methodist Church started its missions. In 1895, Southern Methodist Church started its missions.

<sup>520</sup> *YD*, 31 January 1923.



established in Shanghai and Irkutsk by 1921. The first Korean communist party, *Joseon Gongsandang*, was formed in Korea in 1925. In order to criminalize nationalism, socialism, and communism, which would threaten the Japanese Empire, the Peace Preservation Law was passed in the same year. But strikes among students, workers, and farmers continued to endanger the progress of Christian education.

Yun and his proponents were convinced that the unity of the Church was necessary for uniting divided people. The conflicts between Northerners and Southerners found their way into the Methodist churches. Yun realized the necessity of promoting the public spirit, for Koreans seemed to have a little of the public spirit – “spirit of cooperation, of disciple, and of subordinating individual interests to the common people.” Yun believed that any movements for morality and temperance would not succeed without religious foundation.<sup>521</sup> Such factional tension was, however, the same in other Christian communities in Korea.

In August 1930, there were great tensions between Northerners and Southerners within the Korean YMCA.<sup>522</sup> At the request of the Korean Central YMCA, the International Committee of the YMCA in New York decided to recall W. C. Nash, a missionary, who had worked in Pyeongyang. Most Southerners accepted the recalling as a reasonable solution, on the grounds of Nash’s inability at rural work and disharmony with the policy of the Korean National Council. Especially, Cynn, General Secretary of the Korean YMCA (1920-1935) and his supporters in Southern Korea were in favour of recalling Nash. But most Northerners of the YMCA asked the National Council to reconsider the recalling.

It is important to note that Yun supported the Northerners by opposing the recalling of missionaries. Yun argued that missionaries who were willing to love their work and stay among the Koreans should not be recalled. Yun feared that Northern members would take this chance to quarrel openly with the Southern members. Above all, he as Chairman of the YMCA National Council seems to have arbitrated between the two sides.

---

<sup>521</sup> *YD*, 1 March 1923.

<sup>522</sup> *YD*, 15, 17, 19 August 1930.

Such protracted conflicts enabled Yun to play a key role as a catalyst in completing the Union of Methodist Churches in 1930. It took more than one and half year to reach the final Union. From the early stage, Yun's contribution was great. In April 1929, the Preparation Committee met at the Women's Bible School and discussed the process of Union. Yun clearly expressed his opinion on the necessity of the Union, which the Committee accepted.

We wish for the union of the two Methodist bodies [Northern and Southern Methodist Churches] in Korea into a united self-supporting church, providing at the same time for a vital relation with the mother churches in America, leaving the means and ways of such a relation to the judgment of the Joint Commission to be appointed by the two General Conferences in America and by the Annual Conferences of Korea.<sup>523</sup>

In December 1930, Northern and Southern Methodist Churches were finally united into "Korea Methodist Church"(KMC).<sup>524</sup> In his speech to the First General Conference of the United KMC, Yun claimed that the union was more practical than logical in the sense that the KMC should be "an autonomous church," and at the same time, have a vital relation with "mother churches." The cooperation of indigenous Christians and missionaries secured the success of the Union as Yun also recognized the contribution of the American missionaries, especially Bishop Welch, a Northern Methodist missionary, to this Union. Yun was convinced that the United KMC would play a new role of guiding or supporting Koreans wandering in the "wilderness" of Japanese colonialism as follows:

May the new church which [missionaries] helped to create prove its right of existence by its vigour and vitality, a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to the Korean people.<sup>525</sup>

---

<sup>523</sup> *YD*, 15 April 1921, my italics. Yun tried to satisfy the concern of missionaries and the need of indigenous Koreans in the process of the Union. According to his statement, the Union was not completely independent of Western missionaries and their American Churches.

<sup>524</sup> *YD*, 2 December 1930, The Union of Korean Methodist Churches was made earlier than that of American Methodist Churches, which was later accomplished in 1938. Since the American Civil War, Methodist Episcopal Churches were divided into Northern and Southern branches. In November 1938, leaders of the two groups met in Nashville and agreed to final plans for the union, which were approved by a majority of the delegates.

<sup>525</sup> *YD*, 16 December 1930.

However, there seemed to be no consensus on the operation of this united church among missionaries though they supported the Union of indigenous Methodists. With regard to the meaning of keeping up an organic relation with the “mother” Methodist churches in America, some missionaries, including Mr Fisher, saw this Union as a political decision and claimed that the USA government would not send a single soldier to protect Korean Christians. Concerning the issue of finance, Northern Methodist missionaries continued to supply the Union, while Southern Methodist missionaries were opposed to supporting the KMC.<sup>526</sup> Therefore, Yang Ju-sam, having been elected as the first General Superintendent of KMC, didn’t receive a salary due to the apathy of the Korean church and the antagonistic attitude of missionaries.<sup>527</sup>

Even after the Union was completed, the conflicts between Northern and Southern Methodist leaders manifested themselves in some issues. In the relation with Japanese Methodists, Northerners kept a more antagonistic position than Southerners.<sup>528</sup> Yun criticized those who refused to show Japanese visitors “Christian welcome and hospitality,” as “blind leaders.” At that time, Northern Methodist Koreans didn’t invite any Japanese preachers to their churches, while Southerners had an intimate relation with Japanese Christians. Yun pointed out serious tensions between the two sides as follows:

Every Korean freely admits that factions which kept the people divided into so many hostile camps [were] one of the greatest curses to the [Korean] race. The Yi Dynasty [Joseon Dynasty], whose two unpardonable crimes were the concentration of all powers in the hands of a few aristocratic families and the demartialization of the people, passed away in 1905. Yet the traditions and the prejudices and the spirit of factions are as alive today as they ever were. It is well known that the north and western faction, Subukpa led by Ahn Chang-ho ....hates the southern faction, Gihopa, with a deadly hatred. Wherever

---

<sup>526</sup> *YD*, 18 February 1931, Yun argued that in dealing with Korean Christians Northern Methodist missionaries behaved like “a real mother,” whereas Southern Methodist missionaries acted like “a step-mother.”

<sup>527</sup> *YD*, 17 February and 6 June 1931.

<sup>528</sup> *YD*, 11 March 1931. When the Western Conference of the Japanese Methodist Church was held in Seoul, Southern Methodist leaders entertained Japanese leaders.

Koreans are, in Hawaii or in America, in Siberia or in China, these two factions keep up an irreconcilable hostility. The north-western faction is said to have declared as one of their party principles that the southerners must be exterminated before the Japanese are driven out. All southern Koreans who have returned from abroad agree in one thing – that is the irreconcilability between the two factions.<sup>529</sup>

Despite incurable hostility, Yun attempted to reconcile the two parties. In his view, both sides had reason to hate each other, but the existence of factional animosities under Japan's colonial rule was unacceptable to him. Such division among the Koreans seems to him to have helped colonialists to exploit Koreans and their lands.

Improving unity among divided Koreans and strengthening their powers of morality and economics, Christians should bridge the two parties, making peace and sustaining harmony. Yun devoted himself to educational efforts such as the YMCA and Methodist Mission. As Chairman of National Council of the Korean YMCA, Yun visited Pyeongyang to give speeches such as "Is Religion Opium in Fact?" to Northern Christians,<sup>530</sup> who were exposed to active communist movements. In June 1931, five middle schools including two Christian schools in Ham Heung took strikes, requesting the reduction of tuition, the dismissal of incompetent teachers, and the discontinuance of compulsory religious education. Yun was afraid of the rapid spread of communism as an enemy of Christianity in Korea.

### *5.8. The Image of God or Sinful Human?*

Whatever rationalism or atheism may say, we can't live without God. We need God not so much for the great here-after as for the stormy present.<sup>531</sup>

Despite facing different ideologies like nationalism, colonialism, socialism, rationalism, and communism in the 1920s, Yun retained his Christian faith. As will be examined with his concept of religion in next chapter, he argued that God was necessary to human life, especially in suffering and despair. For Yun, God was a

---

<sup>529</sup> *YD*, 17 April 1931. See also, *YD*, 20 March 1931.

<sup>530</sup> *YD*, 7 April, 1931.

<sup>531</sup> *YD*, 5 February 1924.

lawgiver, making the principle that no progress was possible without struggle or war.<sup>532</sup> Seeing the world as full of evils, Yun confessed that God was the “only tower of strength,” “wisdom,” and “cheer” of saving the Koreans from chaos and despair. Yun prayed,

God grant I may live the remaining years of life so that when the time comes for me to leave this strange world with all the mysteries unsolved, I may leave it cheer and hope for the future!<sup>533</sup>

Yun was opposed to the Western image of Jesus. After he saw the film of *the Life of Christ*, he claimed that Jesus had been depicted as too “helpless and hopeless.” Grown up in Asian soils and familiar to historical novels, Yun preferred the Asian image of heroes and philosophers. They had much a nobler attitude of coolness in similar difficult circumstances.<sup>534</sup> According to Yun, Jesus was a hero, who had a fighting spirit in the midst of suffering and oppression.

In spite of distinguishing religion from morality, Yun didn’t separate them. In his view, religion was a matter of instinct, so it should be adorned with morality. Similarly, morality was a matter of reason, so it should be motivated by religion. He argued that a “perfect man” was able to harmonize religion and morality.<sup>535</sup> Christian education was a tool for teaching the harmonious balance between religion and morality, instinct and reason.

According to Yun, selfishness is not only the root of all evils but also the starting point of all social virtues.<sup>536</sup> Individual or national selfishness manifests the form of nationalism, patriotism, expansionism, and militarism. Racial and cultural discrimination on the basis of a superiority complex can be explained as a type of selfishness due to the lack of courtesy to other races and cultures. Though it can be abused as the justification of wars and conflicts, religion ultimately directs its

---

<sup>532</sup> *YD*, 30 September 1929. In Yun’s view, the warlike nature of humanity was necessary for the achievement of the greatness in races, nations, and individuals. See also, *YD*, 29 December 1922.

<sup>533</sup> *YD*, 14 May 1923.

<sup>534</sup> *YD*, 24 June 1921. When he worked at the Korean Palace in early 1880s, Yun often read stories of heroes like *Romance of Three Kingdoms* for the Korean King, Queen, and Prince. In early 1940s, he continued to read this novel.

<sup>535</sup> *YD*, 8 January 1923.

<sup>536</sup> *YD*, 29 October 1924 and 22 October 1925.

believers to the concerns of other people, embracing differences beyond the boundary of the self. In this sense, religion should play the role of breaking boundaries between segregated and divided society – like the Koreans. Therefore, Yun saw the Japanese colonial rule as being not only a horrendous terror but also an opportunity, for Koreans to learn different but necessary virtues, to redefine national identity, and to build a modern society. If selfishness remained only within the boundary of the self, one nation, or one race, however, it could not be a foundation of further consequent virtues, which made the world peaceful and unified. Mentioning a Biblical passage – “Love thy neighbour as thyself,”<sup>537</sup> Yun claimed that to love our neighbour was to love ourselves.

Yun had difficulty in explaining the “image of God” in humanity when he witnessed the “extreme meanness of human nature.”<sup>538</sup> Cruel wars, severe colonial exploitation, and ongoing factional conflicts seemed to have resulted from “sinfulness” of human beings. In December 1923, Yun gave a series of lectures on “Christianity and Progress” at Methodist Theological Seminary, introducing the Vanderbilt Cole Lectures<sup>539</sup> of Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), a liberal Baptist minister and Professor of Union Theological Seminary, New York. For example, when he encountered Fosdick’s argument that “All the best in us is God in us,”<sup>540</sup> Yun stated that the divine nature of Christ in humanity was contradictory to the evil nature in humanity. Yun claimed that Fosdick made everyone God. Christ was the ideal son of God, because he had “one hundred percent of God in him.” Yun also asserted that Fosdick’s theory made Christ “only so many percent diviner than some other great and good man –like Confucius and Gautama [Buddha].” Rather arguing that Christ was not a “perfect” man, Yun argued that the Biblical portrait of Jesus was an easier way to believe Christ as the son of God. In his view, the Bible was the best source to correct the misunderstanding of Jesus, especially his divine nature. He

---

<sup>537</sup> Matthew 5:43, KJV, Also see Leviticus 19:18.

<sup>538</sup> *YD*, 27 September 1925, and 14 January 1929.

<sup>539</sup> The Cole Lectures were established by Colonel E. W. Cole in 1893 for the defence and advocacy of the Christian Religion in the Vanderbilt University.

<sup>540</sup> *YD*, 12 October 1925. See, Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Meaning of Prayer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Student Christian Movement, 1916).

also believed that the immortality of human beings is “the gift of God”, not “the outcome of [the] nature.”<sup>541</sup> It is God as a father and faith that gave the eternal life to His believers after their physical death. He wrote the third verse of John Newton’s hymn.<sup>542</sup>

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
This grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

Yun argued that religion itself was based on “gratitude to God.” Gratitude, in his view, was the basis of all private and public virtues. Confucian virtues such as filial piety, loyalty, and faithfulness of friends were also related with gratitude.<sup>543</sup> Concerning the colonial attitude of the Koreans, Yun argued that Japanese should recover the trust of the Koreans by using a Confucian teaching: “A nation may afford to be without an army or food. But a man can’t stand without trustworthiness.”<sup>544</sup>

### **5.9. Conclusion**

The change of colonial policy, from military occupation to cultural assimilation, made Yun’s position more complicated in the 1920s. The exploitation of the land and the deportation of Korean residents caused many to embrace communism as well as the Christian message. As a landowner, Yun had difficulty denying the request of nationalists to donate funds for independence movements.

Yun experienced the lack of sympathy and respect that he claimed missionaries should have towards indigenous Christians and their culture, but he recognized the strengths of the Anglo-Saxon races, such as individualism and pragmatism, which I believe influenced his vision of industrial education. Yun attempted to realize his ideas through the YMCA and Songdo School. He succeeded

---

<sup>541</sup> *YD*, 6 November 1925.

<sup>542</sup> *YD*, 12 February 1921.

<sup>543</sup> *YD*, 22 February 1921.

<sup>544</sup> *CA*, 12.7.1-3. Concerning the requisites of the government, Confucius put faith or trustworthiness over food and military equipment.

in securing the autonomy of the Korean YMCA from the Japanese YMCA, but he struggled with frequent strikes at Songdo School under the influence of communism.

Yun's conviction, that all humans in the world were sinful before God, caused him to advocate the practice of the golden rule, which he believed made the world better. The Bible was the foundation of his Christian faith, but he found a danger that the Bible might be used for the justification of colonialism, especially in a Korean context. Keeping his belief that God was the father for all people, not only for a chosen people, Yun persevered in his attempts to reconcile Northern and Southern Koreans and finally succeeded in making an autonomous Korean Methodist Church.

In the midst of colonial oppression and ongoing wars, Yun faced the complexity of the tension between the image of God and sinful humanity. Instead of finding a clear solution, he advocated gratitude to God and the recovery of trust among races.



## CHAPTER SIX WAR AND THEODICY 1931-1935

### 6.1. Introduction

The real and fundamental cause of the conflict began something like 500 thousand or a million or so years ago when man was first created with his “human” nature implanted in his mean heart.<sup>545</sup>

In this chapter, I will examine how Yun created his own theodicy about the “imperfect world” full of ongoing wars and colonial oppression. As Max Weber argues, it is through theodicy that “man finds a common meaning in spite of all existing and unbridgeable tensions in numerous concrete circumstances.”<sup>546</sup> Mircea Eliade makes it clear that the task of a historian of religions is “to show how these meanings have been experienced and lived in the various cultures and historical moments, how they have been transformed, enriched, or impoverished in the course of history.”<sup>547</sup> Distinguishing “personal faith” from “cumulative tradition,”<sup>548</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith emphasizes that the faith of believers even within the same religious community differs.<sup>549</sup> I will argue that, by creating his own theodicy, Yun as a religious man attempted to understand particular meanings of his situation.

After a brief account of his theodicy of choosing a “lesser evil” and the social context in which it was developed, I will focus on the following questions. How did Yun *as a Christian* explain the war in Manchuria? How did Yun relate Japanese militarism to Shinto? Why did Western missionaries regard Korea as “an Ireland in

---

<sup>545</sup> YD, 11 October 1932.

<sup>546</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. by Ephraim Fishoff (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1963), 138-150. Weber mentions several types of theodicy: messianic eschatology, belief in an afterworld, providence, retribution, salvation, and rebirth.

<sup>547</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 9.

<sup>548</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (London : S.P.C.K., 1978), 139-173. According to Smith, all doctrines and creeds are historical human constructs. Therefore, “[t]he proper way to understand a religious statement is to endeavour not to see what its words and clauses mean (which may too easily become, what they mean to me), but to see what they meant to the man who first uttered them, and what they have meant to those since for whom they have served as expression of their faith (165).”

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

East Asia”? Were there any conflicts between missionaries and indigenous Christians? And how did his understanding of religions develop in terms of a general concept of religion?

## **6.2. Making a Theodicy in a Sinful World**

The Koreans faced a new stage of Japanese militarism after Japan invaded Manchuria in September 1931. Despite the League of Nations’ intervention following China’s request, Japan didn’t withdraw from Manchuria and controlled it until the end of World War II in 1945. Indeed, the Japanese established a puppet state, Manchukuo (in Korean, Manjukuk), in February 1932, declaring its independence from China. Puyi, the last Emperor of the Qing Dynasty was installed as the Emperor of Manchukuo.

As the Japanese colonial expansion crossed the Korean Peninsula to China, the Koreans, such as Yun, recognised that they would have to wait much longer for independence from Japan than they expected. Concerning the invasion of Manchuria, Yun contended that Japan followed what he called the “fool steps” of America and Europe into imperialism.<sup>550</sup> He was afraid that the political and economic situation of Korea would become worse due to grown demands of the Japanese to support the extensive wars in China. The Japanese armies in Manchuria shamefully attacked the Chinese despite the fact that their government didn’t permit them to initiate the war, so his trust in the honour of the Japanese Samurai was shattered. It should be noted, however, that he legitimated Japan’s expansion by using the logic that Japan was a “lesser evil.”

America and England should let Japan have a free hand in Manchuria simply because that rich territory will promote the “open door” policy of the West better under the orderly development of Japan than under the chaotic misrule of China or the Communistic terrors of Russia. The Japanese occupation of Manchuria may be an evil, but who will deny that it is a lesser evil than the Chinese anarchy or the Russian brutality?<sup>551</sup>

---

<sup>550</sup> YD, 10 January 1932 and Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Kyo-sin*, 47.

<sup>551</sup> YD, 28 April 1932.

For Yun, “order” and “development” were important to the Korean situation, so he regarded China and Russian as greater “evil” nations than Japan in that they both were experiencing political chaos under the influence of communism. China had oppressed Korea for about five centuries (1392 to 1910). Russia, though it had shielded the Korean King Gojong at the Russian Seoul Embassy in 1897, became a communist nation after the Russian revolution in 1917. It is important that Yun thought of Japan as one of the “evil” powers that conquered her neighbouring countries. His decision to collaborate with Japan was the choice between a greater and lesser evil, not between good and evil.

With the positive evaluation of Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, Yun contended that the Koreans would have a good chance of gaining new employment and economic opportunities in Manchuria. He seems to have viewed the situation from the perspective of his own ethnicity. As he predicted, many Koreans, including his relatives and friends, later migrated to Manchukuo, where Yun found new possibilities to improve Korean society’s economic status and morality. Making the best of this new opportunity, Yun wanted the Korean people to catch up with the economic and intellectual status of the Japanese.

Yun’s theodicy seems to have been much influenced by Social Darwinism.<sup>552</sup> He put the Japanese in the category of a “superior” race and justified their right to conquer or “insult” the Koreans as an “inferior” race. By the same token, it was the Koreans themselves that could change the situation of colonial oppression. By improving their social system and moral standards,<sup>553</sup> in other words, they would prove to other races that they were able to handle their own situation without any help, they will be independent from imperial powers such Japan, England, and America.

Yun was convinced that God as a law giver controlled the destiny of the world and its nations. According to him, all wars began and ended by the Providence

---

<sup>552</sup> Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 7-30. Developing a Darwinism for human society, Herbert Spencer claimed that the weakest members of what he called a “race” will die out and the strongest in the race will survive and reproduce. Yun applied Social Darwinism to international and interracial relations, not to individual competition among all members of the same race or nation.

<sup>553</sup> YD, 2 May 1933 and see also chapter 8.

of God, so human beings could not change the fundamental direction of history, which was planned by God. All human beings could do was to pray to God and cultivate the gifts and talents given by God. Because of a huge gap between creator and creatures and the sinful nature of the latter, human beings were unable to comprehend the Divine plan and God, who was withdrawn from the world. Yun described this dilemma as a mystery. Seeing young Japanese soldiers sent to Manchuria, therefore, Yun prayed to God that war would never “curse” the world.<sup>554</sup>

Christianity gave Yun hope of not only enduring his present suffering but also of improving his situation. Under the terrors of Japanese colonialism, he was confident of the economic, intellectual and moral development of the Koreans through Christian education. On this point, Yun differed from other nationalists. On the issue of political independence, he asked different questions: When do the Koreans get political independence? How do the Koreans become independent from the Japanese? He disagreed with “extreme” nationalists who believed that violence or assassination could be justified as a method of independence movements.

Yun believed that immediate political independence without any improvement of the Koreans, particularly in the areas of religion, education, and economics, was both impossible and ultimately meaningless. He regarded home rule as a transitional stage between colonial rule and independence. In his view, Koreans should educate themselves and adapt to a rapidly changing world during the colonial period. If independence had been given without any improvement of Korean morality and economy, such independence would only unleash chaos in Koreans. Colonial rule was another chance to develop Korean society.<sup>555</sup>

Christianity also gave Yun new hope for progress, but there was a difference between religious expectations and historical realities in his view of life. Instead of calculating and planning the future, therefore, he focused on the practical dimensions of social justice in daily life. But he first needed a spiritual shelter to support his ideas and to aid his desperate country. Complete dependence on the providence of God, he thought, was the key to understanding and coping with the chaotic world. As

---

<sup>554</sup> *YD*, 3 February 1933.

<sup>555</sup> *YD*, 2 October 1935.

his disappointment and unhappiness grew in the 1930s, Yun focused on his own theodicy, which was able to explain personal failures as well as social oppression during the colonial rule.

The older I get, the deeper I realize that every good and perfect gift is from God – not as matter of course but as a matter of agreeable surprise. ... Don't calculate; don't pray; don't expect; don't pray even except that prayer of the publican which is applicable to everybody, everywhere, the Lord's Prayer which is as grand as it is universal – all in the spirit as taught in Philippians II: 6-7. Trust in God and keep your power dry is the highest wisdom. Neglecting either would be a presumptuous sin.<sup>556</sup>

Yun claimed that trust in God could help Christians to endure unexplainable events by finding the meaning of life. He had a quite negative view of human nature under the influence of Christian doctrine. Yun believed that within every human was “a Nero.”<sup>557</sup> The difference between a saint and a sinner was how much this unconscious destructive desire might be maintained or managed. Concerning the methods of dealing with the sinful nature, Yun argued that it was fear not love that kept this world a tolerable place to live,<sup>558</sup> holding that sinful humans ought to fear a righteous God. Counting historical evidences from world history, he continued to emphasize human sinfulness. He said:

Experiencing the daily exhibitions of cruelty, vanity, and unspeakable selfishness in a bunch of women in our family circles; having been and am being, cheated and deceived by all sort of men – many of whom bite the very hand that feeds them; and witnessing the awful selfishness, meanness, and inhumanity in international and interracial dealings, *I can't believe that the human nature is in essence good.... All honours to the few noble and holy men in all ages and in all countries who have tried to develop and cultivate and propagate the tiny seeds of good in the essentially evil nature of the human beast. Every one of us ought to contribute our mite toward that noble effort of the few great souls.*<sup>559</sup>

---

<sup>556</sup> *YD*, 4 January 1932.

<sup>557</sup> Despite his sympathetic attitude to African Americans in the USA, Yun still used the term “a Negro” in a negative sense. It here refers to a selfish desire at one's unconsciousness. In this sense, for Yun, Africa was still a “dark continent of ignorance,” and Africans were “primitive” people.

<sup>558</sup> *YD*, 24 January 1932.

<sup>559</sup> *YD*, 10 April 1932.

According to Confucianism, particularly the teaching of Mencius, all human beings are good by nature. To Yun, however, this worldview does not apply to life under desperate circumstances. Rather, his experience of racial discrimination, the arrogance of missionaries, and the oppression of Japanese colonialists persuaded him to accept the Christian doctrine of original sin. His early belief in the innate goodness of humanity was replaced by the Christian doctrine of human depravity. His conviction that Christianity was the only hope in Korea led him to the conclusion that no other religions provided a greater hope of salvation for the Koreans. For Yun, this salvation was to be realized in this world through the efforts of a small number of religious leaders and by the support of believers. In this process, Christian education had a role to play in cultivating and developing the good in human nature, Yun claimed.

### **6.3. *Fear and Forgiveness***

With Yun's understanding of "sinful" human nature, communist movements emerging in the 1920s and 1930s influenced his anti-communist attitude. He was convinced that without the help of religion no human movement could succeed in changing human destiny, what communists call "alienation." After the Russian Revolution in 1917, student and worker strikes broke out in Korea in the 1920s and the interest in Bolshevism was widely spreading by the 1930s. Through artistic performances as well as the media, communistic ideas were popular to the public. Choe Seong-hee (Choe Seong-hi),<sup>560</sup> a famous Korean dancer, introduced modern dances to Korea under the theme of "Freedom of Religion"<sup>561</sup> and Yun attended one

---

<sup>560</sup> Choe Seong-hi (1911-1969) was the Korean dancer who popularized traditional Korean dance in Korea, Japan, China, Europe and the United States. In the late 1920s, she studied modern dance under the Japanese dancer, Ishii Baku, and founded her own dance studios in Seoul (1929) and Tokyo (1935). In February 1930, her dance troupe had a great success. In 1931, she married Ahn Mak, a leftist writer. During this period, Yun attended one of her dance shows related to a communist theme such as "Freedom of Religion." After liberation in 1945, she went to North Korea and worked for Kim Il Sung. She was awarded the People's Actress Medal in 1955, but she was banned from the stage due to her involvement with a counter-revolutionary group in 1967. She died in 1969. Her disciple, Go Yeong-hi became Kim Jeong-il's wife. As the case of Yun Chi-ho, Choe was stigmatized by her collaboration with the Japanese during the colonial period.

<sup>561</sup> YD, 30 January 1932.

of her shows in 1932. As a Christian reformer, who intended to reform Korean society through Christian education, he feared the popularity of communism among Koreans, especially among students and the young generation.

For colonists, the term “communist” often referred to Korean nationalists who attacked Japanese soldiers and politicians in Korea and China. Yun Bong-gil,<sup>562</sup> a member of the Korean Patriotic Cops, threw a bomb at Japanese military leaders in Shanghai when they attended the birthday ceremony for the Japanese Emperor on 29 April 1932.<sup>563</sup> General Shirakawa and Dr. Kawabata died and other leaders like Nomura, Uyeda, Shigemitsu, and Murai were wounded. Yun Bong-gil was regarded as a Korean communist as well as a terrorist.<sup>564</sup>

Fear of communists, however, was an international phenomenon. The news on communist terror reached Korea from Europe. A Russian communist, Paul Gorguloff, assassinated Paul Doumer, the President of France, on 6 May in 1932. The fear of communism was great amongst intelligent Koreans, especially Christians, including Yun. As Karl Marx criticized religion as “the opium of the people,”<sup>565</sup> Communists denounced religion as a curse to mankind. It should be noted that Yun agreed with them that religion made its believers content with their desperate conditions. But he contended that such a function of religion was not an illusion but an essence of happiness.<sup>566</sup> According to Yun, religion helps believers to transcend the fear of oppression or persecution by hoping for compensation in life after death.

As well as overcoming the fear of worldly powers, religion had another important function: forgiveness and reconciliation. In his social acts, Yun often played a role of peacemaker in reconciling divided people among the Koreans: missionaries and indigenous leaders, Northerners and Southerners, colonialists and

---

<sup>562</sup> Yun Bong-gil (1908-1932) was born of Papyeong Yun clan, (which differs from Yun Chi-ho's Haepyeong Yun clan). He founded a night school for farmers' children in 1926 and wrote *Agrarian Reader* in 1927. Experiencing the oppression of colonialists, Yun came to China as an exile in 1930 and joined the Korean Patriotic Society founded by Kim Gu. After assassinating Japanese leaders, he was arrested on the spot and executed in December of the same year.

<sup>563</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, 7 May 1932 and *The Illustrated London News*, 28 May 1932.

<sup>564</sup> *YD*, 30 April 1932, he was executed on 18 December of the same year in Japan.

<sup>565</sup> Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 138-143.

<sup>566</sup> *YD*, 1 August 1932.

nationalists, Christians and non-Christians. This effort was true of his personal and family life. In 1932 Yun faced a family problem as one of the elders in his clan.

When his nephew, Yun Bo-seon<sup>567</sup> came back from Scotland in 1932, he found that, in his absence, his wife had had a sexual relationship with his cousin, Yun Myeong-seon.<sup>568</sup> The adultery of Bo-seon's wife shocked the whole extended family and clan. Though he had two children with his wife, Bo-seon spent eleven years studying at Woodbrooke College in England, and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Bo-seon and his parents were Presbyterians, so Yun considered two possible solutions base on the Christian Bible: divorce and forgiveness. Regarding the choice of divorce, Yun found backing in the Gospel of Matthew: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement (Matthew 5:31, KJV)." Jesus seemed to allow one to divorce one's wife in the case of adultery.

On the contrary, Yun argued that forgiveness is "a truth more glorious than the sanction of divorce on account of infidelity,"<sup>569</sup> using the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of John: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her... Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (John 8:7, 11, KJV)." Yun persuaded Bo-seon to forgive his wife and his cousin, writing him a letter.

I am sincerely sorry that you had to pass through a painful experience. Now I want to say is this: By one generous act of heroic forgiveness, you will save a young man from ruin; another from a premature grave; two other cousins of yours from a life long grief; and last but not least your own innocent children from ineffable sorrow and despair.<sup>570</sup>

Following Yun's advice, Bo-seon didn't accuse his wife and cousin of adultery. Instead, he asked them to leave Korea for Manchuria in January 1933. Yun Chi-ho supported them financially.

---

<sup>567</sup> Yun Bo-seon (1897-1990), nephew of Yun Chi-ho, studied archaeology at the University of Edinburgh (MA, 1930). He became Mayor of Seoul (1948), Minister of Commerce and Industry (1949) and President of South Korea (1960-1962).

<sup>568</sup> Yun Myeong-seon was son of Yun Chi-so and Yun Bo-seon was son of Chi-o. Chi-so and Chi-o were brothers and cousins of Yun Chi-ho, so Myeong-seon and Bo-seon both were Yun Chi-ho's nephews.

<sup>569</sup> *YD*, 11 October 1932.

<sup>570</sup> *YD*, 15 October 1932.



It should be noted that such narrative of forgiveness continued to give Yun a powerful explanation for interpreting the injustice of colonial rulers and enduring personal sufferings under political oppression and economic exploitation. It doesn't mean that he forgave all sins. Rather, Yun believed that on international and personal levels morality should be characterized by restraints and governed by "the police, the court, the jail, religious social checks." The principles of morality like "justice, kindness, honesty, and generosity," should be realized through authority on an interpersonal level. At the same time, on an international level, "the law of the jungle" should force morality between the nations.

The biblical narrative, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10, KJV), made Yun be silent about unjust colonial policy. In his view, the term "the Lord" included not only Christian God but the worldly "lords" appointed by the heavenly "Lord." In this sense, he argued that the Koreans ought to "fear" and obey the authority of earthly rulers, including Japanese colonialists, even when they oppressed Koreans by using cruel methods.<sup>571</sup> Yun believed that God, who had withdrawn from the world after the creation, still controlled his creatures through natural laws and human agents.<sup>572</sup> He said,

It is literally true that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom – of order and peace among men. Now in international relations, where is the police, the court, the jail to make nations strong nations – to behave? Fear keeps most individuals on good behavior and fear alone will make nations behave.<sup>573</sup>

He was convinced that worldly rulers were given the authority to rule their subjects under the providence of God, regarding legal methods as necessary elements of morality.<sup>574</sup>

---

<sup>571</sup> *YD*, 12 June 1933.

<sup>572</sup> *YD*, 17 September 1933. In his dialogue with his thirteen-year-old son, Jang-seon, Yun compared God to a fan maker by using the design argument for the existence of God. But he was embarrassed when he received the following response from his son, "if God made the universe, who made God? Besides man who made the fan doesn't have to live, always. God may have made the universe, does that prove necessarily that God still lives?"

<sup>573</sup> *YD*, 12 June 1933, Yun quoted from Proverbs 1:7 (KJV)

<sup>574</sup> *YD*, 15 June 1933, Japanese colonial government raised the fund by using the police force.

#### 6.4. *Shinto and Sword*

Yun saw the Japanese as “a militaristic people,”<sup>575</sup> while he regarded the Koreans as a peaceful people. He explained that the difference of racial ethos came from religious difference: Shinto and Confucianism. Witnessing the expansion of Japanese colonialism, he traced its origin in Shinto, an indigenous Japanese religion. That the sword is enshrined as one of the main symbols of divine worship,<sup>576</sup> Yun argued, proves that the Japanese are militarists. He criticized even Western missionaries in that they defended the Japanese through the press by regarding the Japanese colonialism as the recovery of a new order in China and Manchuria.

Similarly, some Koreans supported by force or voluntarily the Japanese colonial expansion financially. While at the dedication ceremony for the airplanes built with money subscribed by Koreans and Japanese in Korea,<sup>577</sup> Yun criticized the role of religion in supporting the wars.

What a pity religion, science, politics all are made to serve one end – that of killing of our neighbours. War is the element in which the Japanese nation live and move and have their being as factionalism is the element in which the Koreans live and move and have their being.<sup>578</sup>

He believed that the fundamental problem were either a part of the human nature or racial ethos, blaming the lack of unity in Koreans and the extreme martial spirit in Japanese on inherent qualities. Oppressor and oppressed were both guilty of killing people in wars. For him, religion, science, and politics seemed to have been misused by “sinful” human beings. It should be noted, however, that Yun criticized the Japanese for their excessive love for war, not for their martial spirit, which was regarded as one of the virtues which Koreans should learn.

---

<sup>575</sup> YD, 11 January 1932 and 16 September 1933. Yun claimed, “Every Japanese is a soldier – a fighter – first and last.” But he believed that a state could not live “by sword alone.”

<sup>576</sup> The sword, mirror, and jewel are the most sacred objects in Shinto. The mirror symbolizes the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. The sword is believed to be used by Susanoo (brother of Amaterasu) to defeat the dragon. The jewels are said to be given by Amaterasu to her grandson, the first Japanese Emperor. The Shinto Shrines have one of them as the symbol(s) of the presence of *gami*, gods. Only the high priest is allowed to see them.

<sup>577</sup> YD, 17 April 1932 and 15 May 1932. Two ceremonies took place on Sunday. The airplane No. 1 was dedicated on 17 April, and No. 2 and No.3 were launched one month later.

One can't help admiring the thoroughness of preparation, the promptness in action, the discipline, the courage, the tendency and the utter contempt for danger and death of the Japanese. Army and Navy, hundreds of thousands of men are mobilized without noise and hitch. These virtues have made the Japanese soldiers so far invincible by land and by sea....It's nonsense to say that Japan has learned to fight only after Comm. Perry forced open the gates of Japan in 1852. The Japanese nation knew how to fight – and fight well – centuries before America was ever dreamed of the fighting virtues – energy, efficiency, power to command and to obey, thoroughness in preparation and promptness in action – not only have enabled the Japanese a splendid soldier, but a good fighter in every branch of human occupation.<sup>579</sup>

According to Yun, the martial spirit was a part of Japanese history before American colonialists oppressed the Japanese. This virtue should be mitigated and seasoned by other virtues like love and peace, which he believed the Koreans had.

Just as the Japanese should learn virtue of love and peace from the Koreans, so the Koreans should learn to fight. He was convinced that mutual learning would heal divisions among the Koreans and remove the arrogant Japanese attitude towards Koreans.<sup>580</sup>

The martial spirit without the virtues of love and peace seemed to Yun to have led the Japanese to become more destructive and militaristic. Young naval officers assassinated the Japanese Prime Minister, Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932) on 15 May 1932. Though the rebellion failed, emerging Japanese militarism ended Japan's party-led government. Yun argued that this incident was a "direct action of Bolshevism" due to the deterioration of the Samurai Spirit and Japanese Imperial authority.

Young officers in Naval and military uniforms seize a 78 year old Prime Minister and shoot him in cold blood. Where is the vaunted discipline and chivalry and reverence of age of the Samurai of Japan?... the theory and tradition of the divinity of the Reigning Family are

---

<sup>578</sup> *YD*, 17 April 1932, my italics.

<sup>579</sup> *YD*, 4 February 1933.

<sup>580</sup> *YD*, 2 May 1933.

being undermined or discredited by the Japanese youth of this generation.<sup>581</sup>

Yun predicted the possibility of another world war due to the dissatisfaction of the young military generation with the old generation in Japan. He said, "The Japanese nation fed on war from cradle and grave for centuries on centuries are never happy except when they kill or be killed.... To cool off the boiling blood-thirsty temperature of the nation, some great foreign war will be needed. Otherwise a civil war may break out."<sup>582</sup> Witnessing the Japanese severe dealings with Korean nationalists, Yun was convinced that the Japanese "divide friends and foes with cold blooded distinction."<sup>583</sup> He held his position of standing between extreme nationalists and Japanese colonialists, but his attempts at distancing himself from sensitive political issues were no longer possible.

The Japanese apologists used Confucian concepts to justify the Japanese invasion. They asserted that Manchukuo was founded on *Wangdo* (kingly way) the ideal political principle which Confucians attempted to realize. Under *Wangdo*, a righteous king should rule his country by his virtues. However, Yun argued that this Confucian ideal had never been realized in East Asian History.

During the last 22 centuries no state has yet appeared in China or the East where these high ideals of "Kingly Way" have been carried out in practice. The whole trouble with the Kingly way business is that you must have a success of good Kings and wise ministers of the higher kind to carry out the "Kingly" principles.<sup>584</sup>

Contrary to Confucian ideals which the Japanese colonialists promoted, the Koreans in Korea were discriminated against in public education. In the normal schools supported by the colonial government, eighty percent of the students were Japanese and only twenty were Koreans. In the Government Medical College, the twenty percent ratio for the Korean students was reduced to twelve to make room for eight

---

<sup>581</sup> YD, 17 May 1932.

<sup>582</sup> YD, 21 July 1933.

<sup>583</sup> YD, 26 December 1932.

<sup>584</sup> YD, 17 April 1933.

Manchurian students.<sup>585</sup> He continued to explain this discrimination on the ground that “all men are sinners, white or yellow, black or red.”<sup>586</sup>

Finding that the efforts of the Japanese to develop the land of Korea were colonial tools, Yun claimed that the Japanese would displace the Koreans from their own lands in the near future.<sup>587</sup> In the 1930s, many Koreans in rural areas left their homes to seek refuge in Seoul, for social benefits were concentrated in urban areas where the Japanese immigrants congregated. Racial discrimination took place in Manchuria as well as Korea. At political meetings, the Koreans were marginalized in making decisions and planning the economic development of farming, manufacturing, commercial, mining, fishing, forestry, and industries.<sup>588</sup>

On the war, Yun disagreed with what Norman Angell argued in his work, *The Great Illusion*, in 1933.<sup>589</sup> Territorial expansion, Angell argued, is not necessary for a nation to improve society, expand population, and increase industry and war is the justification for “the survival of the less fit.” Angell said,

The warlike nations do not inherit the earth; they represent the decaying human element.... Are we, in blind obedience to primitive instincts and old prejudices, enslaved by the old catchwords and that curious indolence which makes the revision of old ideas unpleasant, to duplicate indefinitely on the political and economic side a condition from which we have liberated ourselves on the religious side? Are we to continue to struggle, as so many good men struggled in the first dozen centuries of Christendom – spilling oceans of blood, wasting mountains of treasure – to achieve what is at bottom a logical absurdity, to accomplish something which, when accomplished, can avail us nothing, and which, if it could avail us anything, would condemn the nations of the world to never-ending bloodshed and the constant defeat of all those aims which men, in their sober hours, know to be alone worthy of sustained endeavour?<sup>590</sup>

---

<sup>585</sup> YD, 30 June, 1933.

<sup>586</sup> YD, 28 June 1933. When Yun’s younger brother, Yun Chi-chang, and his wife visited California in 1932, they were compelled to leave his house “because the white occupants threatened to quit the house if the Korean couple were to live in the same building.” Yun had already experienced the similar experience of racial discrimination when he studied in the United States.

<sup>587</sup> YD, 8 August 1932.

<sup>588</sup> YD, 13 May 1933.

<sup>589</sup> See, YD, 11 and 19 August 1933.

<sup>590</sup> Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (London: Heineman, 1933), 381-392.

Yun claimed that Angell's anti-war argument did not fully apply to an East Asian context, for the argument seemed to work only in the context of Anglo-German Europe. When one highly developed nation like England conquers another highly developed nation like Germany, there are no economic benefits. But when one highly developed nation like Japan invaded "a land whose rich resources lie untouched in the hands of a backward people," there are economic benefits. In addition to economic reasons, Yun added different motives for wars such as loyalty, patriotism, honour, passion for revenge, or retribution. Emphasizing the balance of virtues between the worship of the Pen in Korea and China and the worship of the Sword in Japan, he argued that the attitude and policy of Great Britain was "the golden medium between the two extremes."<sup>591</sup>

### **6.5. Korea as "an Ireland in East Asia"**

Because [the North-Westerners] hate the Southern or Kui Ho Koreans worse than the Japanese, they wouldn't hesitate to resort to mean tricks against the Kui Ho faction by flattering the Japanese.<sup>592</sup>

In the 1930s, there were serious factional conflicts between North-Western and Southern Koreans, as an American missionary, B. P. Barnhart described Korea as "an Ireland divided into Northern and Southern parts."<sup>593</sup> During the Joseon dynasty, the Southerners had occupied major privileged positions – political and social – and exploited natural and human resources from the Northern Korea, whereas the Northerners had experienced political and economic discrimination with cultural isolation from Seoul, the centre of Korea.

After Yun was arrested in 1912, Ahn Chang-ho founded *Heung Sa Dan*, a national network for independence movements, in 1913. His supporters established *Suyangdonguhoe* early in 1920. Ahn played a role of leading North Western Koreans whose centre was Pyeongyang. A similar movement was led by Rhee Seung-man

---

<sup>591</sup> *YD*, 11 August and 18 September 1933.

<sup>592</sup> *YD*, 6 October 1933.

<sup>593</sup> Taek-bu Jeon, *Ingan Sin Heung-u* (A Biography of Huge Cynn) (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1971), 252.

headed for Southern Koreans living at home and abroad. Rhee founded *Dongjihoe* in the United States (1921) and Southerners set up its branches called *Heung Eop Club* in 1925. Ahn and Rhee both were Christians,<sup>594</sup> but the animosity between these two groups was too serious for them to be united.<sup>595</sup> Their conflicts and conspiracies were spread to Koreans in Hawaii, America, Shanghai, Manchuria, and Russia. The Southerners even believed that the Northerners would first “destroy” them instead of the Japanese, for the Southerners had been “enemies” of the North-Western people for five hundred years.<sup>596</sup>

It is important to note that Yun stood between two parties, making a bridge for cooperation and reconciliation though he himself belonged to the Southern party by birth. As I have already mentioned before, when Yun Bong-gil assassinated Japanese leaders, Ahn was arrested as one of the suspects for the planning of bombing.<sup>597</sup> Concerning methods of achieving independence, both Yun and Ahn advocated gradual independence through educational enlightenment and economic growth. Therefore, Yun had sympathy with Ahn’s works and met Ahn, the leader of the Northerners, when he was being transferred from the prison on 22 June 1932. Yun asked the Japanese authorities to release Ahn, but it was of no use. Ahn was sentenced to four years of penal labour in December 1932. Southern leaders suspected Yun’s intimate relation with Ahn and other Northern leaders.

Miss Helen Kim [President of the Korean YWCA] seems to have been scandalized by the rumor that I have been busy asking the powers that be to release Mr. Ahn. The scandalous quarrel between Dr. Rhee and his supporters and Mr. Ahn, heading the North-Western faction seem to have come to Seoul – to stay! Hugh Cynn... must feel offended by my open friendliness with the [North-Western] leaders...<sup>598</sup>

---

<sup>594</sup> Ahn was a Presbyterian and Rhee was a Methodist. They both were educated at mission schools.

<sup>595</sup> The marriage of Yun’s daughter to a Northern man had been criticized and suspected by Southerners, even though Yun himself allowed this couple to marry.

<sup>596</sup> *YD*, 2 and 4 October 1933.

<sup>597</sup> It seems that Ahn, leader of cultural nationalists, wasn’t informed of this bombing plan by Kim Gu, a leader of extreme nationalists using violence against colonialists.

<sup>598</sup> *YD*, 15 July 1932.

When he was offered the position of President of the *Christian Messenger*, Yun refused to accept the offer due to his deteriorating health. Another reason was that he regarded the *Christian Messenger* as “a battle ground of the North-West and the South.”<sup>599</sup>

The local tension between two groups was also manifested in a new religious movement called the “Positive Faith League (PFL)” when Hugh Cynn, a Southern leader, declared his statement in 1932. He initiated a revolutionary movement with five principles and twenty-one rules.<sup>600</sup> Cynn addressed the necessity of revolution in the following statement of faith.<sup>601</sup>

1. I believe in God who is revealed in nature, history, Jesus, and experience.
2. I believe that to be one with God and to fight evil, so as to make triumphant, is the first principle of human life.
3. I believe that in human rights, duties, and conduct there should be perfect equality, without regard to sex; and that in things which do not interfere with others there should be complete liberty.
4. I believe that the individual acquisitive motive should be replaced by the humane contribution motive for the construction of a new society.
5. I believe that society is to guarantee to all an ascending equity and security in the economic, cultural, and spiritual life.

Emphasizing mass participation and a simple life, Cynn and his supporters attempted to adapt Western Christianity to Korean culture. Like Yun, Cynn was one of the important figures in Korean church. After Yun resigned, Cynn succeeded in the position of General Secretary of Korean YMCA from 1920 to 1935. Just as Yun had attended the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, so Cynn represented the Korean Church at the World Missionary Conference of 1928 in Jerusalem. Though they had many common goals, their relationship became too stained to be healed as it will be explained below.<sup>602</sup>

---

<sup>599</sup> YD, 6 December 1932.

<sup>600</sup> Jeon, *A Biography of Cynn Hugh*, 373-374.

<sup>601</sup> “A Declaration of Positive Faith,” declared by Dr Cynn on 1932.

<sup>602</sup> YD, 12 October 1933.



It should be noted that mainline Christians, including Yun and Yang Ju-sam, criticized this radical views of PFL and finally forced Cynn to resign as the General Secretary of National YMCA in 1935.<sup>603</sup> Yun argued that the PFL movement was a “secret society” that added more factions in the Christian institutions such as the Korean YMCA, British and Foreign Bible Society, Presbyterian and Methodist churches, *Christian Messenger* – a weekly Christian united newspaper, and the Christian Literature Society.

Indeed, PFL began its own hierarchical system under the leadership of Cynn and succeeded in occupying the executive committee of other Christian institutions. Seeing existing Christian churches as “desperate, conservative, and hopeless,” new reformers used covert political methods to further their agenda and control Christian institutions. But their revolutionary ideas faced strong resistance from the majority. Speaking out against the formation of PFL, Yun claimed that all genuine movements should begin with life, putting priority on action over creeds. Their declarations and principles reminded Yun of the dry theological work of Western Christianity. He was convinced that gradual change not revolution would allow Korean Christians to reform their life and morality. It was reform not revolution that Yun wanted in Korea.

Yun argued that the invention of new religious movements was unnecessary to change the society and improve individual morality. Rather, he claimed that believers should practice the ideals and teaching of their religions in their acts and daily life. When he heard of the appearance of an Indian Messiah, he says,

Seriously and really do we of East and West need any more systems of religion. Absolutely none. Why should we want or invent another religion when we have made such a poor use of the religions we have already? If we could find a religion that would and could so strengthen a man's will as soon as he has sincerely resolved to turn a new leaf, that he finds it practically inconceivable to change his mind, we should welcome it. As a matter of daily fact, no matter how sincere or honest a man may be in his determination to live a new and higher life, he finds himself *utterly unable to overcome his pet sin*, his will being weaker than the temptation. What Christianity has failed with the human nature, no other religion, old and new, can or will do better.<sup>604</sup>

---

<sup>603</sup> See, *YD*, 20 October 1935, “A Personal Letter Regarding Our Attitude Toward the Positive Faith League,” Korea File, Missionary File Series, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ, USA.

<sup>604</sup> *YD*, 22 June 1933, my italics.

It should be noted that in the 1930s Yun criticized that Christianity for failing to cultivate human nature in a similar that he criticized Confucianism. It is clear that Yun's optimistic vision of the future of Korea was overshadowed by Japan's invasion of Manchuria and factional tension among Koreans. His distrust of religion began to intensify, as factionalism within Korean churches was spreading.

This spirit of hatred, of unholy quarrels and of destruction works and disgraces every religious gathering –Summer Conferences, Annual Conferences, even YMCA Summer gatherings.<sup>605</sup>

Against these factional conflicts, however, Yun rejected neither such organized resistance as PFL nor individual opposition. Rather, he argued that both the Northern and Southern Koreans should reform themselves by renewing existing religious systems and cooperate with each another by embracing difference. In order to remove animosity between the two groups, Yun suggested the process of reconciliation as follows:

Let us be gentlemanly toward the North-Western leaders, associating with them freely and frankly, playing them no secret tricks, co-operating with them in all good things, not hesitating to disapprove any wrong doing they might do. I think that will win them in the long run better than any organized fight or individual oppositions. Let us not give the Japanese the chance of using one section of Koreans against the other.<sup>606</sup>

As he emphasized in the case of the missionary attitude towards indigenous Christians, Yun proposed the change of attitude from “small or petty man (*Soin*)” of selfishness to “gentleman”<sup>607</sup> (*Gunja*) of virtue. Being a “Gentleman” as the ideal of Confucian education cultivates morality and gives benefits to others, so Confucianism exhorts believers to become gentlemen through self-cultivation and

---

<sup>605</sup> *YD*, 8 September 1933.

<sup>606</sup> *YD*, 8 October 1933.

<sup>607</sup> Under influence of Confucianism, traditional Korean society was patriarchal and hierarchical. Male-biased terms *Ja* (son/man) is still used in referring to Confucian ideal of person, male or female.

political involvement. Factional conflicts result from individual or local selfishness, so these situations call for a change of internal mind.

Secondly, the change of attitude should be demonstrated by “free” and “frank” association with Northerners in education, economics, and even political movements. In spite of an long established prejudice of Southerners against Northerners, Yun had worked with prominent Northern leaders like Ahn Chang-ho (of Daeseong School), Lee Seung-hun (of Osan School), and Yang Ju-sam (of the Methodist Church). His previous experiences as mayor<sup>608</sup> in Northern Korea also seemed to influence his open-minded attitude to Northerners.

Thirdly, Yun criticized the use of “secret tricks” by some Southerners to disturb the process of dialogue and reconciliation. As has already been said, one example of secret societies within Korean Churches was Cynn Hugh and his Positive Faith League founded in 1932. Yun rejected their revolutionary ideas, especially their attempts to influence Korean Churches and marginalize existing church leaders.

Fourthly, Yun limited the boundary of cooperation with Northerners. He was convinced that Southerners should play a different but complementary role from their counterpart in Northerners. Based on an ethical awareness of good and evil, he argued that Southerners should cooperate with Northerners in certain cases and on the issues. The Union of Methodist Churches in 1930 was accomplished with the cooperation of two parties. In contrast, regarding the issues of the March First Independence Movement and visiting State Shinto Shrine, Yun defended his position as different from Northerners (especially Presbyterians). Though he was open to ecumenical relations with other Protestant churches, Yun had negative view of Catholics and believers of new religious movements including Cheondogyo. Yun didn't join the March First Independence Movement, an inter-religious movement, because Cheondogyo leaders seemed to have used political riots in order to hide their embezzlement of donations. On the other hand, while Presbyterian missionaries closed their mission schools because of the rules regarding the Shinto Shrine ritual, Yun saw it as a “patriotic” action.

## 6.6. *Christian Missionaries: Friends or Masters?*

As well as colonialists, Western missionaries sometimes acted as masters rather than as friends. Yun expected that missionaries should deal with Korean indigenous cultures and customs with respect and sympathy. For him, to live a real missionary life meant to wear Korean dress, eat Korean food and follow Korean fashions. He had a good relationship with most missionaries, but he criticized some unreasonable policies without hesitation. First, the attitude of the missionary to the indigenous people and culture was important to him. He often met missionaries who regarded the indigenous cultures as “inferior,” “immoral,” “unclean,” and “uncivilized.” He criticized the methods of missionaries when they spoke of the indigenous people of the mission field with “the feelings of pity or of contempt.”<sup>609</sup> On the issue of mission funds, the tension between Yun and missionaries had intensified since the late 1920s. Yun claimed that reserve funds should be necessary for Christian institutions to prepare for unexpected financial problems. But most Methodist missionaries had opposed the creation of reserve funds on the grounds that it was against the teaching of Jesus Christ: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal (Matthew 6:19).” After the Great Depression began in 1929, most mission funds from America had been withdrawn and Christian institutions in Korea were struggling due to financial shortage.<sup>610</sup> The Northern Methodist Episcopal Church decided to recall twenty missionaries in 1932. Some missionaries, including Smith, still argued that the discussions about self-support and endowment of the Church were a disease or a sin of the Church, claiming that “Christians ought to [rely] on daily manna.”<sup>611</sup> Regarding God as thoughtful and provident, Yun claimed that the phrase of faith missions, “If we start God will provide,” was so abused that the whole Korean mission field became “dead and dying schools, hospitals, and churches.”<sup>612</sup>

---

<sup>608</sup> See chapter 3, Yun worked as Major of Deok Won (1899 and 1901) and Sam Hwa (1900) in Northern Korea.

<sup>609</sup> *YD*, 12 February 1932.

<sup>610</sup> *YD*, 19 December 1932.

<sup>611</sup> *YD*, 16 March and 29 June, 1933.

<sup>612</sup> *YD*, 26 December 1933.

Secondly, the distribution of mission stations and missionaries was another aspect of the missionary movement that Yun sharply criticized. He argued that missionaries should select key stations in consultation with indigenous leaders and focus their missionary work on the chosen cities or areas. He called this policy “centralization.”<sup>613</sup> He rejected the idea of missionaries that mission stations should be diffused over wide areas of Korea. Yun claimed that decentralized stations would result in unnecessary competition of mission boards and waste funds.

In October 1933, missionaries and church leaders of the Korean Methodist Church persuaded Yun to go to the United States in the following year to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He declined on the grounds that to leave his ninety-year-old mother and go abroad was against the ethical notions of Korea. But one more fundamental reason for his declination was that he did not want to experience the same “indifference” of many American Christians as when he visited Nashville in 1910.<sup>614</sup> Though he was given several opportunities to visit the United States, he never visited again.

### ***6.7. Religions: Christianity, Shinto, and Confucianism***

In the 1930s, the colonial government convened inter-religious meetings to promote “patriotic spirit” among Koreans. Yun presided over these meetings. Since the Japanese were expanding battle grounds to China, they needed support from the Koreans. Leaders of religious organizations had been used to promote the colonial policy to the public, and donations for building Shinto shrines and contributions for supporting military resources were mandatory.

For Yun, Christianity as a religion was the final “hope” for changing Korean society by improving morality and educating the Koreans. Neo-Confucianism, which was transmitted from China, brought two moral diseases to the Koreans: factionalism and parasitism. Confucian traditions seemed to be too divided to reconcile different parties in philosophical and political positions, supplying grounds for local animosity between the Northerners and the Southerners in Korea. Koreans spent time

---

<sup>613</sup> Chapter 3. Yun proposed this policy when he visited the USA to attend the Methodist Laymen Conference, held in Nashville, 1910.

<sup>614</sup> *YD*, 10 October 1933.

memorizing Chinese literature and history, despising the value of labour. While studying for the examination, many Koreans received financial support from their relatives. Yun called this situation “parasitism.” On a national level, the Koreans had studied Chinese history, Chinese language, and Chinese culture instead of Korean language, Korean history, and Korean literature. Christianity seemed to Yun to remedy this segregation and parasitism. He said:

...there is no one single force that can unite and educate and lead the scattered multitude of Koreans...except Christianity<sup>615</sup>

After the success of the Union of Methodist Churches in 1930<sup>616</sup>, Yun continued to resist other factional movements. For Yun, Christianity was the salvation of his nation from China, Confucianism, and factionalism.

In Korean religious history, however, the Shinto Shrine issue had been controversial among Korean Christians during the 1930s.<sup>617</sup> Colonialists forced Koreans to attend State Shinto Shrine rituals as a patriotic duty. With regard to the Shinto Shrine visit, Korean churches were divided into two major positions: conformist and non-conformist. Catholic and Methodist churches considered the Shinto Shrine veneration to be a “patriotic act,” while Presbyterian churches regarded it as a “religious idolatry.” In the late 1930s, Presbyterian missionaries protested against the “compulsory” veneration of State Shinto Shrine. They finally closed the mission schools and left Korea. Korean Christians were abandoned and forced to attend the Shinto Shrine ritual. Yun argued that the Japanese colonial powers used Shinto as a spiritual foundation of imperial policy in East Asia. Yun wrote in his diary:

Pan-Asian movement is more than an ideal or a dream. It’s a policy which all leaders in Japan are seriously engaged of persuading the various races and nations of Eastern Asia to unite in a grand racial block under the hegemony of Japan.<sup>618</sup>

---

<sup>615</sup> *YD*, 24 May 1934.

<sup>616</sup> Chapter 5.

<sup>617</sup> *YD*, 12 and 13 December 1935.

<sup>618</sup> *YD*, 10 May 1934.

In addition to State Shinto Shrine, the Koreans were also compelled to listen to the Imperial Rescripts. In spite of continuing protests against this policy, the Korean people had no choice but to submit to the colonial power. Yun said:

The Imperial Rescripts in the schools or in the army are regarded not only as the very words of gods but as deities in themselves.<sup>619</sup>

Yun was forced to visit the Shinto Shrine, but he did not believe in its doctrine. Since the colonial government allowed believers to have freedom of religion only at the personal level, all Koreans were expected to respect the national emblems of the Japanese nation as “patriotic” signs. Concerning the unjust colonial policy, Yun said:

Shintoism is the cult of Loyalty. Its gods are the reigning Mikado and his ancestors who have one and all descended from the Sun Goddess. The Japanese nation holds on this Religion of Loyalty, making devotion to the Divine Dynasty the cardinal virtue of every Japanese. This Imperial god worship more than any one simple force, enabled the Loyalists to effect on the Meiji Restoration; it united the once divided kingdom of Feudaldom into one patriotic unit that worked out by the wisdom and courage of the galaxy of great statesmen and warriors. The wonderful Meiji Revolution!; it fought and won the wars with China and Russia. The Japanese leaders are leaving no stone unturned to revive and restrengthen this worship of Loyalty to prevent the ancient system of the Japanese nation from being sapped and disintegrated by the damnable Communism. That’s all right. But the official efforts that are being made to make the Koreans to believe in the Shinto doctrines of the Sun-Goddess and other gods are rather too premature. You can make a man bow his head but you can’t make him believe a doctrine by sheer force.<sup>620</sup>

When he referred to Shinto, Yun used the terms such as “cult,” “religion,” “worship,” and “devotion.” This seems to indicate that Yun regarded Shinto as a religion. Therefore, his conviction that Christianity had the power to unite the Koreans should be testified in the situation of the Shinto Shrine visit being forced on the Koreans.

Early Korean pioneers of religious studies supported the Japanese policy by exploring the common origin of the two races. For instance, Choi Nam-seon, who

---

<sup>619</sup> *YD*, 12 May 1935.

<sup>620</sup> *YD*, 19 July 1935.

composed the Independence Declaration in 1919, argued that the Korean and Japanese people had much common ground such as similar ancestors and religious background in sun worship.<sup>621</sup> Lee Neung-wha also held that heaven was the common object of worship in Korean religions.

On the contrary, Yun saw Confucianism as a “dead” religion in the sense that it failed to realize Confucian ideals in the Korean situation. Comparing Confucianism with Christianity, Yun pointed out the differences in the understanding of heaven, human nature, ethics, mission, and virtues. His general view of Confucianism was very critical and negative. However, it should be noted that his criticism was not of the Confucian ideals but of the lack of power to realize them in the Korean context. Therefore, he continued to use Confucian wisdom and Confucian references to criticize the militaristic expansion of Germany and Russia: “The extremes of the East and of the West find the common sense medium in the teaching of Christ and of Confucius.”<sup>622</sup>

### **6.8. Religion and War**

Yun’s life mission, to which he decided to devote himself when in the United States, was to educate and evangelize the Koreans. This personal conviction continued to be emphasized and confirmed in his writings on other religions. He criticized other religions for their lack of the power to reform Korean society and to improve moral standards among the Koreans. In contrast, Yun described Christianity as the highest developed religion and as the final solution to the Korean dilemma. In the 1930s, however, his appreciation of other religions became more objective and comparative.

Yun recognized that world religions claimed contrasting religious truths. Instead of regarding them as right or wrong, he described the reality of religious pluralism without a particular value judgment. He said:

Christians believe that Christ is the Truth. But millions upon millions of non-Christians don’t believe that way. Buddhists have their sets of

---

<sup>621</sup> YD, 8, 9, and 11 December 1935.

<sup>622</sup> YD, 3 August 1934.



truth which non-Buddhists don't believe in. Not only so even among Christians the Catholics believe in what they regard as truth – such as transubstantiation etc. which Protestant flatly deny. The Shintoism teaches something for which many devout Japanese believers would rip open their bowels, yet which non-Shintoists regard as rank superstitions. Where is then a truth in religion and philosophy that everybody would and could accept as truth? Thus a very insignificant man like Pilate can ask questions which seven or any number of wise men can't answer satisfactorily. Hence many a man defines truth to be what a man believes true.<sup>623</sup>

Yun didn't argue that Christianity was the absolute truth among many religious claims. Rather describing that Christ was not the truth to non-Christians and that Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist was not acceptable to Protestants, the distinction between truth and "superstition" depended on the religious groups which believers belonged to. In this sense, his strong religious conviction changed into agnosticism.

Yun did not claim that different religions should be united in the form of one universal faith or a synthetic religion. Instead, he recognized the difference of religions and explained the relation of human beings to religions as a system. He argued that each nation manufactured its own religion, and explained the destructive nature of religion by the "sinful" human nature that all humans shared with one another. He said:

Still the great, glorious, races of the world are arming themselves to the teeth, in the name of justice [and] humanity, each praying to their gods to bless them and curse their enemies! Each nation has created its own gods after its own image!<sup>624</sup>

Yun claimed that there was always a danger that religions could be misused for the justification of injustice and violence. As he pointed out, religion seemed to justify war and support the use of violence. Christianity in Germany and Confucianism in Japan played the role of legitimating illegal terrors on the weak nations or races – the Jews and the Koreans – under the name of justice and humanity. Identifying the Jews under German persecution with the Koreans under Japanese occupation, Yun

---

<sup>623</sup> *YD*, 6 November 1933, my italics.

<sup>624</sup> *YD*, 27 July 1934.

claimed that Christianity was the ideology to supply the military colonialists with the power to oppress neighbouring nations. He said:

When Hitler was asked what his source of power was, he is said to have pulled out a pocket *New Testament* from his pocket. It is well known fact that the *Confucian Analects* was a favorite companion of Kato Kyomasa, one of the greatest fighters under Hideyoshi... Thus the teachings of the Prince of Peace; the precepts of Confucius whose whole life was spent in denouncing war... all are made to contribute their best to the making of men-slaughter!<sup>625</sup>

In spite of religious teachings for peace, religions seemed to add support to militarists who wanted a justification for killing people. Finding the same phenomena among other religions, he pointed to the immorality of human beings as the origin of war and violence. He commented on the contract between religious ideals and historical realities as follows:

[A]s long as the human beast remains the meanest in all the animal Kingdom, there is no hope of peace in the world. What then is religion doing? Well, give a man a religion. He will make it the pretext for killing those who differ from him. Witness the mutual butchering between Mohammedans and Christians, the Hindus and [Muslims]....<sup>626</sup>

Yun also argued that religion had the power to change the world. He predicted that the peace of the world would come true when the ideals of religions were fulfilled by their believers. Locating the problems and their solutions within the boundary of religions, he argued that the practical application of religious teachings to daily life would solve problems in war and conflicts. He said,

The Hebrew prophets who professed to hold direct communication with the All-mighty Jehovah had no better success in keeping kings and states from committing all sorts of crimes than Confucius had in China and Korea, or Buddha in India or Siam or Christianity in Europe... [The human race] must obey the teachings of these religions if they really want to live like man and not to die like jungle beast.<sup>627</sup>

---

<sup>625</sup> YD, 26 March 1935.

<sup>626</sup> YD, 8 November 1933.

<sup>627</sup> YD, 3 December 1934.

These discussions of religions or particular faith, reached the general concept of religion. Yun's definition was very functional.<sup>628</sup> He distinguished his own definition from those of his contemporary thinkers such as the "morality touched by emotion" of Matthew Arnold, "the belief in spiritual beings" of Edward Tylor; "what the individual does with his own solitariness" of Alfred Whitehead, "the pursuit of the highest social values" of Edward Ames, "the sense of something transcending" of Robert Lowie, "sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties" of Solomon Reinach, "a completely satisfying life" of Eustace Hydon, "that which binds men to one another" of George Shaw, and the "deep breath of relief" of Havelock Ellis.<sup>629</sup> Yun defined religion as

*Man's effort or wish to extend and prolong the good things of this life minus its ills, on the other side of death line.*<sup>630</sup>

Yun's definition has three characteristics. First, he argued that religions were made or invented by human beings, as a community or by individuals. He did not equate religion with revelation from higher beings, but with "man's effort" or "man's wish." Religion was the product of society as well as the creation of individuals. According to him, a society made its religion for the solidarity and wellbeing of its members, while an individual projected his/her wish on religion to live a "good" life, diminishing "bad" elements in this world.

Secondly, Yun placed the role of religion in two different worlds: visible and invisible. Religions help their believers to "extend and prolong" the good things from one world to another world. For Yun, Confucian, Buddhist, and Christian traditions have the similar concept of the after-world, which even Shinto tradition acknowledged. Yun was convinced that he would meet his family and wives after he died.<sup>631</sup>

---

<sup>628</sup> YD, 5 December 1935. He believed that there were the hope and peace which religion alone was able to give to believing soul.

<sup>629</sup> YD, 29 July 1935.

<sup>630</sup> YD, 29 July 1935, my italics.

<sup>631</sup> YD, 20 and 24 November 1935.

Thirdly, Yun's definition has a utilitarian and pragmatic dimension. According to Yun, religion must play the role of giving its believers "the good things" not only in this world but also in the afterlife. It helps them to overcome the "ills" of this world. Yun did not talk much about the distinction between divine beings and human beings. Rather, he concentrated on the pragmatic side of religion, with emphasis on its ethical role. In his view, religious systems helped believers to learn good from evil in the world, giving them legal rules and moral standards.

### **6.9. Conclusion**

In the 1930s, Yun developed a theodicy of choosing "a lesser evil" by using the Christian doctrines of human depravity with biblical concepts such as "fear" and "forgiveness." Through this theodicy, he not only endured the colonial experience, but also interpreted the ongoing wars as the transitional stage towards independence. Connecting social problems with religions, Yun claimed that Shinto supported the Japanese militarism and Neo-Confucianism gave the qualities of factionalism and parasitism to the Koreans.

Though he tried to reform Korean society through the reforming power of Christianity, Yun found that the racial "arrogance" of missionaries was so great that they could not fully cooperate with indigenous Christians. As the Shinto Shrine "worship" was forced upon Koreans as "a patriotic act," his attitude to religions or particular faith gradually moved from an exclusive or apologetic position to a more pluralistic or agnostic position. Ironically, pointing out the misuse of religion as *the justification of war* in history, Yun defined religion as the product of man for *maintaining morality* and ensuring life after death. This contradiction between distorted function of religion and its ideal role, in his thought, was explained by human "sinfulness."

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**“A SCOTLAND OF JAPAN”:**  
**IMPOSING JAPANESE IDENTITY**  
**1936-1945**

**7.1. Introduction**

The most intelligent sections of Koreans know and admit that the Koreans have *only one way or means for self-preservation and for further advancement* in this Hitler and Stalin cursed world. That is by being as thoroughly assimilated into the national system of the gallant Japanese Empire, as Scotland has been assimilated into the national system of England. For the good of Japan and Korea I do hope and pray that the wise leaders of Japan shall make Korea *a Scotland of Japan and never, no never, an Ireland of Japan.*<sup>632</sup>

In this chapter, I will analyze how Japanese colonialists developed the “notorious” colonial policy of “The Unification of the Japanese and the Koreans,”<sup>633</sup> and deal with Korean Christian responses to this policy of assimilation. I will argue that Yun interpreted this colonial policy in a more creative and positive way. But the questions remain. How did colonialists succeed to finally “proselytize”<sup>634</sup> Yun and other leaders of Christian communities? Why did Yun change his enduring moderate position and finally collaborate with the colonial powers in public? What religious and political implications can we uncover from Yun’s argument of “a Scotland of Japan”?

Korean Christians, particularly those living in Korea, had to reshape their religious identity in the midst of consecutive world wars and aggressive colonial policies. The Japanese initiated the second Sino-Japanese War in July 1937 on the pretext that they were attacked by the Chinese army at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing. Using Manchuria as a launching point for troops, the Japanese invaded China. Despite the Chinese resistance, they occupied Shanghai in November 1937 and the capital Nanking (Nanjing) in December 1937. But the Chinese government

---

<sup>632</sup> YD, 1 March 1943, my italics.

<sup>633</sup> Referring to this colonial policy on several occasions, Yun used different terms such as the “Union of Japan and Korea,” “Oneness of the Japanese and the Korean People,” or the “Unification of the Japanese and Korean into One Family.”

<sup>634</sup> Nationalist historians have criticized Yun for collaborating with colonialists, regarding the year of 1938 as the turning point of his betrayal.

didn't surrender, but continued a guerrilla war until 1945. These local wars were complicated by beginning of the Second World War.

In 1940, Japan occupied French Indochina (Vietnam) and joined the Axis powers of Germany and Italy.<sup>635</sup> In December 1941, the United States declared war on Japan soon after the assault on Pearl Harbour. Japan extended her territory to India in the West and New Guinea in the South. But after they were defeated at the battle of Midway in June 1942, the Japanese began to withdraw from the colonies in the Pacific. In August 1945, when two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union entered the war, the Japanese reluctantly submitted to an unconditional surrender. Four months later, after Korea became independent from Japan, Yun died at the age of eighty in Song Do.

### ***7.1. Colonial Unification as Assimilation***

In the late 1930s, Yun was forced to publicly change his position towards the Japanese occupation. Since 1938, Yun collaborated with the colonialists, especially on the policy of the Unification of the Japanese and Koreans (into one family). But his collaboration did not mean that he accepted the colonial policy without any criticism of the colonial view. It should be noted that he continued to articulate the justification for his collaboration. Then, how different was his position from that of colonialists, particularly in the application of the policy of unification to the Korean context? To answer this question, we need to first understand how the colonialists developed the policy of unification as a form of "assimilation."<sup>636</sup> In the late 1930s and early 1940s, colonialists used various methods to assimilate the Koreans into Japanese cultures, which later Korean historians called "*Minjok Malsal Jeongchaek* (ethnic cleansing policy)."<sup>637</sup>

It should be noted that the church was divided over the issue of assimilation. Sensing this, the colonialists used the factional divisions among the Koreans to

---

<sup>635</sup> Yun argued that Japan made a terrible mistake in becoming one of the Axis nations.

<sup>636</sup> Assimilation was the process of removing the cultural uniqueness of one culture and being absorbed into another.

<sup>637</sup> In general, Korean historians divide the Japanese colonial period into three stages: first, the military control period (1910 to 1919), secondly, the cultural control period (1919-1931), and thirdly, the ethnic cleansing period (1931-1945).

weaken their resistance. Even before Yun decided to collaborate with colonialists, some Koreans, such as *Iljinhoe*, supported the Japanese colonial policy. Koreans Christians spoke different voices when they encountered colonial policy.

First, radical Christian groups including Cynn Heung-u and Positive Faith League supported Japanese policy against existing church leaders. When they attempted to drive out Superintendent Yang Ju-san in 1934 and seize the Executive Committee of the Central YMCA in 1936, Yun condemned their actions and sought to block them from the YMCA and Methodist Church. Yun felt that Cynn was using the Christian Church as a bait to win the favours<sup>638</sup> of the Japanese colonial powers and was willing to put the Central YMCA into the hands of the Japanese. Under the direction of Shiowara, the Director of the Education Bureau, Cynn seemed to have organized a Fascist party<sup>639</sup> or “a form of the Nazi party”<sup>640</sup> to control the Christian churches in order to oppress the Christian community and “wipe out the missionary influence in Korea.” Although Cynn was one of the influential Christian leaders within Korean churches, Yun thought of Cynn as “a Hitler,” and his Positive Faith League as a Korean version of the Nazi party.<sup>641</sup>

Yun was different from Cynn in that his primary goal was to unite Koreans. He clearly rejected Cynn’s scheme in following the three respects. First, Cynn seemed to have used colonial powers to control the Christian churches. Cynn appealed to the colonial government as the last resort to recover his previous failures and occupy the hegemony of Christian communities. Secondly, Cynn did not consult with the existing leaders of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, but conducted church business in secret meetings with his followers. Yun believed that Cynn should deal with his agenda through a legal and open means. Thirdly, no criticism was allowed to be raised against Cynn’s plan due to the protection of colonialists, particularly of Director of Education. Yun felt that even the police was unable to interfere with Cynn’s meetings. In this situation, Yun condemned Cynn as a

---

<sup>638</sup> *YD*, 10 January 1938.

<sup>639</sup> Jeon, *A Biography of Hugh Cynn*, 253, *YD*, 25 January 1938.

<sup>640</sup> *YD*, 28 January 1938. Yun once praised Mussolini and his charismatic leadership of the unification of Italy, but he had a negative view on Mussolini’s cooperation with Hitler and expansionism.

<sup>641</sup> Yun criticized Hitler and his party of their military expansion and oppression of the Jews.

Mussolini or Hitler, being suspicious that his plan was another way to capture the Methodist Church and the YMCA movement in Korea under his control.

When such Christian leaders could not reach any consensus in how to respond to the colonial policy, colonialists lumped Korean Christian churches and educational organizations with their Japanese counterparts under the name of “Chosen Christian Union.” As Yun wrote in his dairy, the real meaning of this Union was the union of the Japanese and Korean Churches *in Korea*, not the union of two races in the Japanese Empire. In other words, Yun thought of this Union as part of the ecumenical movements in Korea. With regard to the agenda of the Union, Yun found three predominant positions of Koreans towards Union.<sup>642</sup>

First, to “enthusiastic” unionists, the Union was an ideal policy to “abolish” the racial or ethnic distinction between the Japanese and the Korean churches, and to “harmonize” the two ethnic groups. They regarded the Union as a necessary step in establishing a Japanese Empire without any racial divisions and inequality. After he began to collaborate with the colonialists, Yun argued that two races should be united “in spirit and mind.”

Secondly, to a small number of moderate nationalists, the Union was a temporary concession that allowed them to avoid the suspicion and oppression of colonialists. It seemed to give “a means of saving the Korean churches from constant suspicion and consequent maltreatment from the police officials all over the country.”<sup>643</sup> For them the Union was not a positive development, but an acceptable action to preserve churches during colonial rule. Yun kept this position in the early stage of his cooperation, in the late 1930s.

Thirdly, the majority group of nationalists rejected the Union, which they regarded as the “first step toward the amalgamation of the Korean churches into the Japanese churches.” Oppressing the independent activities of the Korean churches and abolishing their religious freedom, the colonialists bound Korean churches under Japanese religious organization. It is clear that Yun continued to reject the Union with this third view until he was accused of his association with *Heung Eop Club* in

---

<sup>642</sup> YD, 10 May 1938. See, also IKCHS, *A History of Korean Church*, vol.2, 302-310.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*.



1938, as I will explain below. The indiscriminate arrests and their consequent tortures changed Yun's moderate nationalist position into passive collaboration, and later made him leader of the pro-Japanese collaborators.

When the arrests by the West Gate Police became widespread in 1938, Yun met Governor-General Minami and promised that Korean Christians would actively cooperate with colonial national movements such as the "All-Nation" Cooperation Movement.<sup>644</sup> Despite his best efforts, the arrests went on. His opponent Cynn advised Yun to stand "in line with the colonial authorities," informing him that colonialists were going "to copy the methods of Hitler and Stalin to weed out all whom they think to be half hearted toward Japan."<sup>645</sup> His fear of colonialists was gradually intensified in the late 1930s.

### 7.2.1. *Heung Eop Club Incident, 1938*

Yun's collaboration seemed to be forced at the beginning, but he justified his "unforgivable"<sup>646</sup> pro-Japanese action by his religious worldview. He believed that Christian churches existed for others and their welfare rather than for themselves and their happiness, so he criticized individual selfishness and put community interest over personal preference, especially in his public decision to deal with colonial policy. After the so-called "*Heung Eop Club Incident*" broke out in 1938, the political position of Yun radically changed "from nationalism to collaboration."<sup>647</sup> Abandoning his moderate nationalist position, Yun played a major role in supporting colonial policy to the public. Why did Yun change his position and become a

---

<sup>644</sup> In the 1930s, the colonial government initiated several national movements to support Japan's military expansion to China.

<sup>645</sup> *YD*, 26 May 1938. See, also IKCHS, *A History of Korean Church*, vol.2, 274-277.

<sup>646</sup> On 28 February 2002, the National Spirit Society of Korean Assembly members announced the list of seven hundred and eight Koreans, the so-called "*chinilpa* (pro-Japanese group)." Yun was accused due to his appointment as a member of the House of Peers in the Japanese Imperial Diet (in February 1945) and his relation to *Daejeongchinmokhoe*, a pro-Japanese industrial association.

<sup>647</sup> Koen de Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 207-242. In this article, Ceuster argues that most nationalists were forced to collaborate with colonialists after the second Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937. He claims that the role of historians is not that of judges: neither to "pronounce sentences" nor to "administer punishment" on history.

“traitor”?<sup>648</sup> Why did he *have to* collaborate with colonialists and become a “victim”?<sup>649</sup> To answer these questions, one must understand Yun’s own interpretation of his collaboration.

After he resigned the position of Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Korean government in 1905, Yun declined several positions in colonial government. Distancing himself from political affairs as much as possible, Yun devoted himself to Christian education during colonial rule. Yun was actively involved with the administration of the YMCA, Ewha College, Chosen Christian College (in Korean, Yeonhi College), and Songdo Higher Common School (former Anglo-Korean School) in the 1930s and the 1940s.

In January 1938, Yun declined for a second time the post of the Privy Council offered by the colonialists, assuring Governor-General Minami that he could be “a more serviceable man out of office than in it.”<sup>650</sup> Yun acknowledged that the Korean people would criticize him if he accepted the offer and that his reputation would “vanish” the moment he accepted an office.<sup>651</sup> It was not an easy task to stand “neutral” between the anti-Japanese nationalists and pro-Japanese collaborators. He said,

Our new [Japanese] rulers are treating us with the hellish policies of the corrupt officials of the old Korean Emperor, only in this case, the refugees live in far away America while the charges are plotting or wishing for independence, and Anti-Japanese speech or thoughts.<sup>652</sup>

The terms of “pro- and anti-Japanese” were being used or abused to attack political opponents and Korean nationalists. After the Manchurian war began in 1937, the Japanese colonialists and pro-Japanese Koreans, who took an active part in colonial propaganda, suspected Yun’s politically moderate position. For instance, a pro-

---

<sup>648</sup> In the nationalistic discourse, the term “pro-Japanese group” means “traitor” or “betrayed.”

<sup>649</sup> Christian historians and theologians have regarded Yun as “victim” or “hero.” His early contribution to Christian mission was evaluated as a heroic action, but his latter collaboration was explained as an unavoidable choice due to militaristic colonial policy.

<sup>650</sup> *YD*, 11 January 1938.

<sup>651</sup> Min, *Korean Church History*, 494-502 and *YD*, 23 February 1938.

<sup>652</sup> *YD*, 20 August 1938.

Japanese Korean, Jung Jae-heup publicly criticized Yun and his brothers as anti-Japanese.

In March 1938, the West Gate Police began arresting the Korean faculty teaching in the Chosen Christian College and the Korean staff working in the YMCA. In order to release prisoners undergoing torture, Yun collaborated with colonial powers in public and admonished other Korean leaders to conform colonial policy. He finally changed his historic moderate position. Then, what was Heung Eup Club? And why did Yun organize this club?

In 1925, Yun and Korean nationalists founded the Heung Eop Club (HEC), a secret independence society. This was similar to the Northern Korean's Heung Sa Dan, another independence group, founded in 1913 by Ahn Chang-ho (1878-1938)<sup>653</sup>, a prominent Northern Korean nationalist. In 1937, Ahn was arrested and severely tortured. During a temporary release for medical treatment in 1938, he died. In the case of the HEC, Yun seems to have feared similar persecution of colonialists. Yun was one of key figures of the HEC. As its treasurer, Yun helped Lee Sang-jae (1850-1927),<sup>654</sup> its President. The HEC intended to foster the independence movement among the Koreans in Korea and to support Rhee Seung-man (1875-1965)<sup>655</sup> and his work in America.<sup>656</sup> After Lee Sang-jae died in 1927, Yun succeeded him to the position of HEC president. Following Yun's order, Cynn reported to Rhee Seung-man that they had organized branches in Korea to support his independence work. But, Yun was unable to give Lee financial support due to severe surveillance of his activities. Therefore, his relationship with Cynn and Rhee became estranged.<sup>657</sup>

---

<sup>653</sup> Ahn Chang-ho was a leader of Northern Koreans, who devoted himself to the independence movement in Korea, China, Japan, and the USA. He worked with Yun at the Independence Club (1897) and the Daeseong School (1907). After Japan's annexation, he stayed outside Korea. In June 1937, he was arrested due to his engagement with Donwuhoe, a nationalistic club.

<sup>654</sup> Lee Sang-jae led Southern Korean Christians and worked as the first Korean secretary of the Korean YMCA from 1913 to 1916.

<sup>655</sup> Rhee Seung-man was a leader of Southern Koreans. As the President of Provisional Government (1919-1921), he led independence movements in China and then in the United States. As Yun's pupil, he was actively involved with the Independence Club and the YMCA. After liberation in 1945, he became the first President of South Korea in 1948.

<sup>656</sup> *YD*, 16 August 1938.

<sup>657</sup> In the interview with the police, Cynn deposed that he tried to raise fifty thousand yen to help Rhee Seung-man. Yun did not support the Korean independence movements financially, which he thought was too dangerous for the Koreans living in Korea under the severe surveillance of colonialists.

In the summer of 1938, the West Gate Police tortured Cynn and made false deposition of the HEC. Before long, Yun was summoned to be questioned by the inquisitor at the Higher Police Section of the West Gate Police Station. Throughout the interview, despite his presidency of the HEC, Yun strongly denied his involvement with independence movements by suggesting the following three arguments.<sup>658</sup> First, Yun opposed the MFIM that stirred up the whole Korean population in 1919 by publishing his arguments against it in the *Keijo Noippo* (Seoul Press).<sup>659</sup> Secondly, as HEC's President, Yun did not encourage anyone to join the society, which Yun claimed he did not know was a branch to support the independence movement in the USA. Thirdly, the fact that he did not support the nationalists financially proves that he did not sympathize with their independence work. But these excuses didn't work.

Because of the threat that Yun's persistent denial would delay the release of prisoners, Yun finally admitted that the HEC was created to promote the cause of Korean independence and that it also supported Rhee Seung-man and his *Dongjihoe*, an independence group.<sup>660</sup> Even after the investigation, Yun was constantly afraid of imprisonment. He wrote, "Korea – the political Korea – hasn't [been] very much better than hell for the 70 years past."<sup>661</sup> He was also called before Judge Nagasaki, the Thoughts Prosecutor. Yun continued to argue that he participated in the Club without any political motives. Since the colonists recognised his influence on Korean Christians, they persuaded him to cooperate with the colonial policy. In his diary, Yun kept the record of the last remarks made by Nagasaki.

We of the Government General are grateful for your efforts to promote the cause of Japan-Korea unification. I hope you will lead these men

---

<sup>658</sup> Yun later stated a similar argument to the Japanese Thoughts Prosecutor on 31 August 1938. It is clear that he did not expect political independence through the HEC immediately. Rather, his aim was to keep religious and economic independence from Japan. But his view on the Club seems to have been very different from HEC members including Cynn, who sought political independence from Japan.

<sup>659</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>660</sup> Jeon, *A Biography of Hugh Cynn*, 254 and *YD*, 2 September 1938.

<sup>661</sup> *YD*, 20 August 1938.

for the same cause as they seem to trust you almost as a “kamisama [god].” I shall treat them leniently for your sake.<sup>662</sup>

Two weeks later, after Yun admitted the relationship of HEC to the independence movement, HEC’s members were finally released on the one condition: They had to sign a new “manifesto” under the direction of Yun.

In this public confession, HEC members expressed their regrets that they had organized HEC to promote Korean independence that they had supported Rhee Seung-man in the USA. On 3 September, those who had been detained by the West Gate Police for the last three months or more, were released. Thereafter Yun met the Governor General to hear the three expectations for his conduct,<sup>663</sup>

First, teach the young men of the [Korean] Peninsula to be consistent in words and deeds. Tell them not to think one thing and act another.

Second, remember that the essence of the ideal to make the Orient the “Orient of the Orientals” is the *Unification of Japan and Korea*.

Third, the root and foundation of the *Unification of Japan and Korea* is to be the faithful and loyal subject of the Empire of Japan.

Assuring the colonial authority of their alignment with colonial policy, Yun and HEC members formulated the following plans,<sup>664</sup>

First, to join the great patriotic associations and to contribute such services as occasion and needs demand.

Second, to promulgate the Three Points of Governor General’s Message: 1<sup>st</sup> to the leaders of the city churches, 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Christian community of the city, 3<sup>rd</sup> to the Christians in the country.

Third, to contribute by each member per month 20 or 50 sen toward National Defence Fund.

All HEC members were released, but some members, including Yu Eok-gyeom, were not allowed to return to their previous work. Threatening the others with a

---

<sup>662</sup> YD, 31 August 1938 and Min, *Korean Church History*, 499-500.

<sup>663</sup> YD, 5 September 1938.

<sup>664</sup> YD, 24 September 1938. See, also Ceuster, “from Modernization to Collaboration,” 433-435.

similar judgement, the colonialists used this leverage to make Yun fully collaborate with their policy. Yun begged colonialists to deal leniently with those men who had lost their school positions. He repeated promises to cooperate with the Governor General, so the colonialists finally succeeded in compelling Yun to guide other Koreans into pro-Japanese collaboration.

### *7.2.2. Terrors, Tortures, and Two Masters*

Colonialists used violence to proselytize moderate or cultural nationalists and Christian leaders. When he was imprisoned from 1912 to 1915, Yun experienced torture. In 1938 when the colonialists forced Yun to collaborate with colonial policy, they used similar methods of terror and torture. In agony, Yun prayed,

God, help us poor Koreans who have to endure these *terrors* and have nobody to appeal to for help!<sup>665</sup>

As a board member of Chosen Christian College, Yun was frequently harassed by the police. In March 1938, three teachers were jailed for having contributed Communist books to the library. On 15 May 1938 the College premises were searched for these books. Jeong Kwang-hyeon, his son-in-law and Yun Chi-yeong, his cousin, were taken to the West Gate Police Station. For Yun, this arrest was “the policy of the [colonial] Government to abolish the [Chosen Christian College] or at least to take it out from the missionary control.”<sup>666</sup> The investigation was extended to the graduates of the college who were working in banks and large business companies. Many of them were arrested on charge of propagating Communistic principles. Yun’s vision of moral, intellectual, and economic renewal through Christian education was scrutinized and persecuted under the heavy hand of the Japanese colonial administrations.

When the indiscriminate arrests were widely spread to the YMCA and Bae Hwa School (a Methodist women’s school), the police continued to use torture in order to find information. According to Yun, the police beat and kicked a victim and

---

<sup>665</sup> *YD*, 18 May 1938, my italics. Yun argued that colonialists were using severe terrors on Christian communities.

<sup>666</sup> *YD*, 16 May 1938 and Min, *Korean Church History*, 502-505.

poured water through the nose to get the so-called “confession.” On the basis of forced confessions, the police expanded their investigation to new men until they had a good record.<sup>667</sup> Yun was informed that the Secret Police had “a book in which all English-speaking Koreans were black-listed as possible or potential spies.”<sup>668</sup> Understandably, The Korean Christians, including Yun, felt uneasiness as the arrests by the West Gate Higher Police spread.

It should be noted that at this point Yun donated ten thousand yen to the Army of Korea Headquarters for the National Defence Fund, to help invalid allied soldiers, and to aid the Japanese victory at Suchow (Xuzhou) where nearly five hundred thousand Chinese soldiers had amassed.<sup>669</sup> He attended the celebrations in the Chosen Shrine for the victory of Suchow on 21 May 1938. These activities seem to indicate that Yun wanted appease colonialists to protect the CCC, YMCA, and Ewha College from further persecution. He even sought advice from the Director of Police and the Dangerous Thoughts Prosecutor.

In contrast, the Japanese in Seoul regarded the West Gate Terrorism as a good policy to smash up all Korean organizations, for it pushed Korean communities to merge with similar Japanese groups. Just as Koreans lost political sovereignty, (especially, diplomatic autonomy) in 1905, so they lost religious freedom and their ability to network with international religious communities. The Police suspected any Korean who travelled America or any foreign country “as a Korean representative of an organization, separate and distinct from that of Japan.”<sup>670</sup> Isolating the Korea from international community and merging it into Japanese groups, the colonialists attempted to fully control Korean churches.

Yun felt that the colonial government supported the West Gate Terrorism of the police. He seemed to have trusted the promise of General Minami that he would regard what was past as blank paper. One week later, however, Minami argued that

---

<sup>667</sup> There was a competition to arrest communists and nationalists among Police Stations in the late 1930s.

<sup>668</sup> *YD*, 5 June 1938.

<sup>669</sup> Out of ten thousand yen, Yun donated four thousand yen for National Defence Fund, one thousand yen for the invalid allied soldiers, and five thousand yen for the Japanese victory at Suchow (Xuzhou) in 1938.

<sup>670</sup> *YD*, 30 July 1938.

“all pardonable misdeeds were to be regarded as blank paper but that they couldn’t be let go free for any act or word that endangered the Public Safety Regulations.”<sup>671</sup> All his political entreaties and negotiations failed, so he had to commit himself further to cultural nationalism in order to get the prisoners released.

During the investigation of the HEC, torture was systematically used on the HEC members in order to force them to confess their “crimes.” Yun described their situations like this:

The poor prisoners ... are doing or saying everything and anything the Police wants them to say or do just to get out of the hell.<sup>672</sup>

In his diary, Yun recorded individual cases of torture and mistreatment. For instance, Hong Byeong-seon had been left in prison for forty days while his disease continued to worsen to the extent that he was permitted to go the hospital. He also recorded other cases,

From the men who had the taste of the West Gate horrors I learn that all of them were put to torture, to confess what they had never dreamt of doing. One of the [cruellest] forms of torture was to be forced to stand for hours on and with two arms stretched forward. Hugh Cynn says he was made to stand 72 hours once and 52 hours once. I can hardly believe it.<sup>673</sup>

After Yun’s intervention, the prisoners were released, but other investigations still went on. Helen Kim (1899-1970), a YWCA Christian leader was summoned to the police. In 1938, Yun and other Christian leaders became “missionaries” of the colonial government.<sup>674</sup> Under the name of Japanese Imperialism, Yun attended the patriotic service held by the Thought-Watching Bureau. Colonialists summoned Yun and others in the Education Bureau to instruct them on how to disseminate colonial propaganda, and sent them to all provincial centres in Korea.

In order to subdue the persecution and oppression of colonialists, Yun persuaded missionaries to resign their posts in Christian educational institutions. A

---

<sup>671</sup> *YD*, 31 May 1938 and IKCHS, *A History of Korean Church*, 326-327.

<sup>672</sup> *YD*, 3 September 1938 and Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 115-117.

<sup>673</sup> *YD*, 8 September 1938.

<sup>674</sup> There were parallels between Christian mission and Japanese colonial propaganda in their methods.



board member of the Ewha College, Yun proposed the resignation of Alice Appenzeller (1885-1950), a Methodist missionary, by giving three reasons to the College Board.<sup>675</sup> First, Yun claimed that the colonial power didn't want foreigners to head secondary schools in Korea. They seemed to have been afraid that missionaries might "de-Japanize" Korean students: from "the children of the Emperor" to the children of [Christian] God. Secondly, it seemed to be impossible for missionaries to comply with all requirements of colonial education policy such as bowing to the flag, reciting the Oath of Loyalty, praying for the success of the war and dead soldiers, and visiting the Shrines. Thirdly, the police and spies oppressed Korean teachers if they expressed "awkward and cynical expressions [towards colonial policy]," which missionaries commonly showed to students.

As Yun proposed, the board meeting appointed Helen Kim as the new President of Ewha College in place of Appenzeller and received the permission of the Educational Bureau. In order to protect Christian higher education from the terrorism of colonial powers, Yun suggested to Helen Kim the following points in detail.<sup>676</sup>

First, more men should be in the College cabinet

Second, one or two Japanese teachers should be added to the cabinet

Third, some Japanese pastors should be invited to teach or lecture on religious topics once or twice a week.

Fourth, that care should be taken not to alienate the good will of missionaries in or out of the school.

As his proposal shows, Yun intended to reconcile conflicting interests of two masters – missionaries and colonialists, while at the same time maintaining the independence of administration and finance at College. His urgent concern was to continue education for Korean women without interrupting the missionaries or incurring persecution from colonialists. As the oppression of Christians by the colonialists became stronger and wider, however, he argued that the American missionaries should leave Korea in order to save the Koreans from being molested.<sup>677</sup> Most American missionaries left Korea between 1941 and 1942.

---

<sup>675</sup> YD, 15 February 1939.

<sup>676</sup> YD, 11 April 1939 and Min, *Korean Church History*, 492-494.

<sup>677</sup> YD, 7 November 1940.

### 7.2.3.. *Japanese Nationalism as Religion*

By means of oppression and persecution, Japanese colonialists motivated a “national spirit” among all Japanese subjects, including Koreans. On 6 March, 1938, the Japanese Government passed the National Mobilization Bill, under which the government had the absolute power to use the life and property of all Japanese subjects in time of war or emergency. Despite severe criticism in the Diet, it controlled all industries connected with defence and authorized compulsory labours and the prohibition of strikes.<sup>678</sup>

Organizing the Korean Union of the National Mobilization, Yun and Korean leaders had public meetings with the Japanese to discuss how to promote it to the Korean public on 22 June 1938. Korean members nominated Yun to be the President of the Korean Union of the National Mobilization. Due to the objections of some Japanese on the ground that he was liable to be arrested by the West Gate Police,<sup>679</sup> however, Yun was not elected. The Director of Education, Shiozawa, became its President. In July, when the Seoul and Korean Unions of the National Mobilization had their organizational ceremonies, Yun led the audience in shouting *mansei* (in Japanese, *banzai*, “ten thousand years”) for the Japanese Emperor. In the afternoon, the Korean Christian Union also had its organization ceremony with the address of Governor General Minami. On 15 July, Yun attended the ceremony of the Gyeonggi Provincial Union of the National Mobilization. The Loyal Thoughts Union of Korea was organized by those who were “converted” from socialism, communism, or Korean nationalism to Japanese nationalism.

In August, 1938, Yun was invited by the Director of Education to attend the organizing ceremonies of the Provincial Union of the National Mobilization of South Chung Cheong Province, where he gave his speech in Japanese on the instructions of the Vice Governor. On 22 September, the first conference of the National Mobilization was held in Seoul, where all leaders of the Provincial Unions of NM attended. On 24 September, the All-Chosen Young Men’s Association was

---

<sup>678</sup> *The Times*, 28 March, 1938. vol. 31. no.14.

<sup>679</sup> *YD*, 30 June 1938.

inaugurated. Around four thousand young men from thirteen provinces participated. General Minami gave an address and Yun read the Declaration of the Association. The Korean Athletic Association was also dissolved into the Japanese Athletic Association in 1938 under the leadership of Yu Eok-gyeom. At the national and local levels, the Korean society was prepared to support the Japanese war.

In May 1939, Yun, as President of the Volunteers Supporting Association, gave an address of encouragement to the Korean volunteers, expecting the possibility of the “remartialization of the people under the tutelage and discipline of the gallant Japanese army.”<sup>680</sup> Anti-English associations were founded in Japan, Manchuria, China, and Korea. In July, Yun was elected the President of the Anti-English Association in Korea.

In 1940, “the Korean Federation of the General Mobilization of National Spirit” became “the Korean Federation of Total Strength of the Nation,” and General Minami became its president. All trades of goods and food were placed under severe restriction and governmental control. When the Tokyo cabinet permitted the Koreans to join in the Imperial Navy, Yun said,

[This is] a momentous decree for the Koreans. We must thank the Imperial Government for admitting the Korean youth into the proud ranks of the glorious Japanese Navy. I hope the Korean sailors will prove worthy of the great honour.<sup>681</sup>

In September 1943, Yun broadcast a speech in support of “the formal beginning of the enforcement of the Conscription Law in Korea.”<sup>682</sup>

---

<sup>680</sup> *YD*, 9 May 1939 and chapter 6.

<sup>681</sup> *YD*, 16 May 1943 and Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin*, 95-99.

<sup>682</sup> *YD*, 23 July 1943.

### 7.3. Yun Chi-ho's Unification: Equality and Diversity

World War Two<sup>683</sup> made the Korean political and economic situation much worse. All resources, natural and human, had been mobilized in support of Japanese soldiers in the front. The colonial power utilized even religious groups for the diffusion of propaganda of colonial policy. Inter-religious gatherings were convened and Korean churches were forced to unite with Japanese Churches. Confucianism, which had been a state religion during Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), failed to receive colonial recognition and in fact lost the status of a religion all together. Colonialists allowed the Koreans to choose one among three official religions – Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity.

Under the oppression of the Japanese colonial authority, the “notorious” unification policy had been used to systematically remove Korean identity and exploit Korean natural and human resources. Most Koreans had no choice but to adopt Japanese names in order to avoid racial discrimination and mistreatment in their daily life, education, employment, and trade. The local police and magistrates forced Koreans to adopt Japanese names as Yun recorded, “They refused to grant deeds to houses built or bought unless the applicant had adopted a Japanese name. Children who wanted to enter primary schools were ... unable to get their census certificates until their names were Japanized.”<sup>684</sup>

At the meeting hosted by the Japanese colonial authority, Yun for the first time encountered the Japanese colonial policy on “the Unification (or oneness) of the Japanese and Korean peoples.” Japan seemed to him to have been a model of modernization and survival, which the Koreans should adopt.<sup>685</sup> When he visited Japan, Yun received a positive impression of what the Japanese accomplished as follows:

The more I see what Japan has done at home and abroad the more I am compelled to take off my hat to the great Japanese people in profound

---

<sup>683</sup> Koreans regarded Japan's attack on Pearl harbour as the beginning of World War Two (1941-1945), but the Chinese thought of 1937 Japan's invasion to China as its beginning (1937-1945).

<sup>684</sup> YD, 30 May 1940 and IKCHS, *A History of Korean Church*, 274-277.

<sup>685</sup> See, chapter 3. In 1881, Yun was sent to Japan to learn Japanese modernization as one of members of the special mission.

admiration and respect. After having made their home islands beautiful and rich, their energy and efficiency overflowed into Korea.... Again the super-abundant energy of the Japanese race leaped over the Great Wall and in ten months has conquered China as Gengiskan [Genhis Khan] or Noruch had ever conquered her.<sup>686</sup>

Supporting the Japanese side in international affairs, Yun criticized the unjust political actions of the West and the anti-Japanese education of the Chinese. Yun believed that the Japanese had the “right” to expand their energy to the world.

Now isn't a folly on the part of the arrogant Americans and Europeans to try to bottle up such a valiant and energetic race in a beautiful but poorly endorsed country by exclusion bills and tariff walls? It was certainly a blunder worse than sin on the part of Chiang K.S. and his party to educate 400,000,000 people in thoroughly anti-Japanese principle and policy thus depriving Japan [of] the only room for expansion and only market for her products.<sup>687</sup>

It is likely that Yun thought of himself as a “Korea-born subject under the Japanese Emperor” or a “Korean Japanese.”<sup>688</sup> In the late 1930s, particularly after 1938, Yun seemed to have followed the colonial policy without any external resistance. Most Koreans were forced to identify themselves as Japanese citizens, but in the 1940s Christian leaders, including Yun, voluntarily supported colonialists and their warfare, even asking colonialists guidance about their methods and direction of collaboration.

Colonialists also utilized religious systems to assimilate the Koreans into their Japanese Empire. Religious rituals performed on a regular basis. Whether they were Christian or non-Christian, all Koreans were forced to bow toward the East, where the Japanese Emperor lived, and to show their respect to the Shrine where the Imperial ancestors were worshipped, and to bow to the shrine for the dead soldiers' spirits. Japanese and Korean Christians, pastors and laymen, paid their respect to the Shinto shrines. The spirits of the soldiers, who died in the military service, were

---

<sup>686</sup> *YD*, 20 April 1938.

<sup>687</sup> *YD*, 22 April 1938, see also chapter 6.

<sup>688</sup> When Korea was formally annexed to Japan in 1910, Yun recognized that Korea lost its sovereignty to Japan, accepting Japan as the colonial government. In the 1930s and 1940s, he continued to emphasize the cooperation with the Japanese as the only way for the Koreans to survive in Korea.

worshipped by the Emperor at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. National Shinto controlled other religions and daily life of the Koreans.

Religious leaders, representing the main Korean religions such as *Cheondogyo*, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity, supported the colonial policy by joining the inter-religious conference and cultivating national support for “the National Crises.” Yun even argued that the Japanese concept of gods contributed to the Christian concept of a violent God.

The Jewish concept of God terribly in anger and intolerant of different beliefs, demanding bloody sacrifices of cattle, sheep, goats. Such a terrible and intolerant god would [be] quite out of place or harmony in Japan. Japan’s contribution to Christianity will be to emphasise the attribute of the God of 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.<sup>689</sup>

In Psalm 103, David described God as loving and forgiving. God forgives all iniquities and heals all diseases, redeeming lives and crowning His children “with unconditional loving kindness and tender mercies.” As a Korean intellectual, Yun believed that “the one thing and the best thing that the Korean race can do is to become one with the Japanese.”<sup>690</sup> In this sense, it is clear that he was a Unionist.

But, why did Yun support this policy? It is important to note that Yun interpreted the colonial policy based on *equality* rather than *assimilation*. Recognizing the suffering of the Jews under the German Nazis in Europe, he identified the fate of the Koreans with that of the Jews. He was convinced that “the unification of the Japanese and the Koreans” was the best and last method of preserving and protecting the Koreans, and he emphasized the positives of *equality and justice* in the unification policy. Based on this conviction, Yun supported this unification policy.

In the present discourse about Yun Chi-ho, even “forced” cooperation with the Japanese colonialists is enough to deeply stigmatise him as a “traitor,” one of the so-called *Chinilpa* (pro-Japanese party). But it is important to notice that few scholars failed to recognize Yun’s personal interpretation of the unification policy. Unlike the Japanese colonial perspective, he was concerned about *justice and*

---

<sup>689</sup> YD, 2 May 1938.

<sup>690</sup> YD, 7 September 1938 and Yang, *Yun Chi-ho and Kim Kyo-sin*, 97.

*equality* – the rights of the Korean people. Yun proposed the following three suggestions to Governor-General Minami.<sup>691</sup>

First, Korean and Japanese students should be admitted to the Government schools and colleges *on equal terms* as to number.

Second, the official appointment should place *no discrimination* against the Koreans.

Third, the use and teaching of the Korean language should have *no official restrictions*.

Objecting to racial discrimination against Koreans, Yun argued that the unification policy should be based on the equality of opportunity in public education, employment, and language. Yun's argument that the Korean indigenous language, *Hangul*, should be taught and used in education doesn't mean that he overlooked education in other foreign languages. Indeed, recognizing the importance of multi-lingual education, he claimed that the Japanese and Chinese should be taught in mission schools. For example, Yun transferred his daughters from mission school to public school, for the former did not offer girls' language training in Japanese and Chinese.<sup>692</sup> Secondly, Yun was convinced that many more Korean students should be admitted to the public schools. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Japanese rulers practiced racial discrimination in the distribution of official positions and in the limitation of the number of Korean students admitted to Government colleges to fifteen or twenty percent. This resulted in growing discontent amongst Koreans. Since he worked as an officer of the government, Yun was very concerned about the ratio of Korean and Japanese in the government employment. He claimed that many more Korean officers should be employed in the colonial government in central and local levels. In addition to matters of equality, Yun addressed the importance of *diversity* in the unification policy.

The mania for forcing everything Korea to be confirmed to the corresponding things in Japan, seems to be very unnecessary and

---

<sup>691</sup> YD, 3 March 1939.

<sup>692</sup> Yun was dissatisfied with the curriculum of mission schools in that they did not have the classes for practical learning such as sewing and other Asian languages.

unwise policy. *Variety is the spice of life.* A great Empire which Japan aspires to be must necessarily be composed of many races. To compel them to be exactly alike in everything is an impossible and foolish policy.<sup>693</sup>

On the other hand, a significant number of Japanese scholars, including Imaizumi, were justifying the colonial expansion of the Japanese Empire in Korea by claiming the racial superiority of the Japanese,

As Japan is the Root and Source of all nations... all countries should become the subsidiary countries of Japan for the manifestation of the essence or flower of the Japanese national structure. The princes or rulers of all nations should submit themselves as the subjects of Japan for the realization of the ideal or essence of the Japanese national structure and for the unification or domination of the universe or the world.<sup>694</sup>

Japanese scholars and politicians, with some Korean scholars, justified the colonial policy of the assimilation of the Koreans by advocating the common origin of Korean and Japanese religions in the worship of the Sun Goddess.

Yun, however, put diversity over unity and emphasized differences over similarities in the unification process. Instead of subduing Korean identity under the Japanese Empire, Yun wanted to keep the uniqueness of Korean cultures and customs, protecting the rights of the Korean people from “unjust” and “aggressive” colonial policy. In 1943, he asserted that the Koreans differed from the Japanese.

The vast majority of the Korean population up to date was not born Japanese subjects. Those Koreans who are older today than 34 or upward were born *under the Korean flag*, the subjects of the Korean King. They had their own nationality and their own government whose officers from the Prime Minister to the humblest clerk were all Koreans. More than that, they have had *a written history* that dates back centuries before the official date of the Foundation of the Japanese Empire. To ask the Koreans to forget to wipe-out from their memory *the history, traditions and sentiments that have been ingrained into their very soul for last 30 centuries* to make room for everything Japanese is not reasonable, is not wise.<sup>695</sup>

---

<sup>693</sup> YD, 4 January 1940, my italics.

<sup>694</sup> YD, 24 February 1943.

<sup>695</sup> YD, 1 March 1943, my italics.



Though Japan was a model of modernization for Korea, the Koreans prized their own history, culture, language, and sentiments because these differences enabled to distinguish them from other races. Yun was convinced that Koreans and Japanese were to learn from each other in morality and intellect. Defining the spirit of Japan as the spirit of conquest and domination, Yun wanted the Koreans “to get seasoned and drilled into the Japanese mould of character tempered with Korean’s love of peace and gentleness.”<sup>696</sup> Yun believed that “the fittest” would survive by means of waging wars under God’s providence, and he hoped that the Koreans would learn “the high sense of responsibility and of public morality” from the Japanese.<sup>697</sup>

For Yun, Hitler and Stalin were two evil symbols to curse the world of his day. Stalin founded Bolshevism, which Yun regarded as the greatest curse. Hitler conquered the weaker nations in Europe and persecuted the Jews, whom Yun identified with the Koreans. In order to preserve and advance Korea, Yun argued, “the wise leaders of Japan shall make Korea a Scotland of Japan and never, no never, an Ireland of Japan.” Then, what did “Scotland” mean to Yun Chi-ho under the Japanese rule? What positive image of Scotland did Yun have at that time in terms of forming a new identity of the Koreans?

✓ Historically, Scotland had a huge impact on early Korean Protestants, particularly the formation of Yun’s thought. John Ross (1842-1916), a Scottish missionary of the United Free Church, translated the New Testament into Korean in the 1870s. While studying theology in the United States, Ross’ achievement as a missionary in China and Korea inspired Yun to devote himself to the evangelism of Korea. Furthermore, reading about historic figures in Scotland, including Robert the Bruce (1274-1329), David Livingstone (1813-1873), Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), and Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Yun was convinced that Christian education would strengthen the Koreans and free Korea from the oppression of foreign powers. Believing that “might is right,”<sup>698</sup> he attempted to transform Korean society on the

---

<sup>696</sup> YD, 11 January and 20 February 1943.

<sup>697</sup> YD, 3 June 1939 and chapter 6.

<sup>698</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1842) 36-48, 73-74. Carlyle equated might with right.

basis of Christian morality and the modern education system. According to him, Scotland had been integrated into the national system of England, “for self-preservation and for future advancement” without losing its Scottish identity.<sup>699</sup>

#### ***7.4. Patriotic Christians and the Proselytized Korean Church***

Then, how did Yun apply his view of “diversity in unity” to Christian life? He played an important role in uniting Korean and Japanese churches, particularly in the Korean YMCA. In June 1938, Yun, President of the Korea YMCA, proposed a union with the Japanese National Council, after the Korean Church was united with Japanese Church in Korea. He already felt the pressure from the police before he planned to unite the YMCA into the Japanese National Council. He felt that it was no longer possible for the Koreans to keep the National Council of the Korean YMCA independent. Consulting with Byron Barnhart, an American missionary, Yun presented two recommendations<sup>700</sup> to the regular board meeting of the Central YMCA, where Japanese police attended as observers.<sup>701</sup> The presence of the police in this meeting seems to indicate that colonialists intervened in the affairs of the YMCA Union from the beginning. According to Yun’s suggestions,

First, to invite two members of the Keijo<sup>702</sup> YMCA directors to serve as our honorary directors.

Second, to request the Executive Committee of the Korean National Council to appoint a committee to open negotiation with the Japanese YMCA National Council to unify two Councils as speedily as possible.

In addition to the police, the Japanese Christian leaders instigated the YMCA union. They warned Yun that the Seoul Police regarded the Chosen Christian College and the YMCA “as the medium through which funds came from America to feed the

---

<sup>699</sup> YD, 1 March 1943.

<sup>700</sup> YD, 1 and 4 June 1938.

<sup>701</sup> According to Yun’s diary, the Chief of the Higher Police Section, its Vice Chief, and two detectives were present at the YMCA board meeting.

<sup>702</sup> After the 1910 Annexation, colonialists changed the name of Hanseong (old name used from 1392 to 1910 for Seoul) into Kyeongseong (in Japanese, Keijo).

Communitic cells in Korea.”<sup>703</sup> Under the pressure of slander and surveillance, Barnhart published the Japanese anti-foreign policy in Korea and offered his resignation from the position of Principal of the YMCA School. Korean YMCA leaders were also forced to sever its connection with the International YMCA. The proposal to bring about an integral union with the National Council of the Japanese YMCAs was unanimously approved. The Committee was appointed to negotiate with the Japanese Council, as Yun proposed,

[T]he intellectuals of Korea today all realize that the destiny of the Korea is inseparably bound with that of Japan; that the best interests of the Korean people can be promoted by becoming one with the Japanese people; and that Manchuria and North China have opened up a field for the development of the Korean people never before dreamt of.<sup>704</sup>

Though he attempted to convince colonialists that Korean Christians were willing to be the loyal subjects of Japan, Yun felt more anxiety about being imprisoned under the intolerable arrests of the police. He wrote: “My mind so preoccupied with fears and anxieties living in an atmosphere charged with injustice, suspicion, espionage, and oppression.”<sup>705</sup> The Committee of Korean and Japanese Councils met at Seoul YMCA and arranged the terms of admitting the former into the latter. The following conclusions were reached.<sup>706</sup>

First, the name of the Korean YMCA National Council is to be changed to “the Korean Union of the National Council of Japanese YMCAs.”

Second, the relations which the Korean Council used to maintain with the International YMCA Organizations are to be transferred to and carried on by the Japanese Council.

Third, the Korean Council is to write formal letters to these bodies announcing its withdrawal from them.

---

<sup>703</sup> YD, 5 June 1938.

<sup>704</sup> YD, 8 June 1938 and Jeon, *A History of the Korean YMCA movements*, 396-416.

<sup>705</sup> YD, 10 June 1938, see also chapter 6.

<sup>706</sup> YD, 23 June 1938.

Fourth, the New Constitution of the Korean Union is to be prepared by the members of the two committees residing in Seoul.

After arranging the formal mutual agreement, Yun and Japanese Christian leaders informed colonial officers of their agreements for the Union. Yun wrote the Constitution of the new Korean Union of the Japanese National Council of YMCAs. Just as Korea was politically isolated by Japan from the international community in 1905, so the last international religious network was disconnected by the Japanese police in 1938.<sup>707</sup> On 6 July, the plan to form of the Korean Union of Christian Workers was initiated by the Korean and Japanese Christian leaders. Christians collected six hundred and twenty pieces of brass at the Central YMCA and presented to the Police Station.<sup>708</sup>

On 19 August, 1938, the Triennial Korean YMCA Conference approved “the affiliation of the Korean National Council with the Japanese National Council, transferring all international relations to the latter body.” In September Barnhart finally resigned his post as principal of the YMCA school.

Korean Methodist churches gradually followed the similar pattern of union with the Japanese Methodist churches. When two churches sent their representatives to the Methodist Church Conference in the USA in July, the police and gendarmerie objected to the participation of Korean representatives in the international conferences. Yun considered a plan of uniting the two churches in order “to avoid the misunderstanding of the [colonial] authorities.”<sup>709</sup> And shortly thereafter, Korean Methodist churches started the process of unification with their Japanese counterparts. He was actively involved in the Union of the Korean Methodist Church with the Japanese institution.

Religious leaders of the Korean Methodist churches taught their students to accept the colonial policy. On 7 October, after Yang led a patriotic parade, where over seven thousand students marched to the Governor General Building, shouting their praises of the Emperor and the Governor General. Then, they marched to the

---

<sup>707</sup> Korean churches were totally isolated from the international community after the disconnection from YMCA International Committee.

<sup>708</sup> *YD*, 13 September 1938.

<sup>709</sup> *YD*, 17 July 1938.

Joseon Shrine and paid respects to the ancestral spirit of the Imperial family. For the first time, the Korean Methodists and the Japanese Methodists worshipped together in Jeongdong Church in Seoul on 9 October.

That month, twenty delegates<sup>710</sup> representing city and student YMCAs from Japan and Korea gathered to organize the new Korean Union of YMCA. The Korean YMCA was gradually merged into the Japanese YMCA under the banner of “patriotism.” In September 1940, Yun and other Methodist leaders decided to unite the Korean Methodist Church with Japanese Methodist Churches.

Some Korean Methodist leaders voluntarily supported colonial policy. Bishop Jeong Choon-su proposed to the Korean Methodist Church a resolution on the Revolution of the Christian Church, emphasizing the following agenda – “leading thoughts in right direction, renovation of religious instruction, social education to propagate the Imperial Way, assisting military affairs to persuade believers to join the volunteers, consolidation of the church organization.”<sup>711</sup> This resolution was adopted unanimously in October 1940. Methodist leaders asked students of theological seminaries, middle schools, and colleges to study the subjects of Japan and learn military skills. Redefining the nature of the Christian message, they attempted to remove the Jewish traditions from the “pure” Gospel of Christ and express Asian thoughts with Christian teachings. All churches under the control of foreign mission societies or international bodies should be independent in respect of finance and leadership.

Yun didn't regard Japan's recruitment of Koreans into the military as labour exploitation. Indeed, recognizing that the recruitment of the Imperial Army was the sign of racial equality, he seems to have thought that the Imperial sanction giving Koreans the chance to be recruited as volunteers in the Imperial Army was a privilege. The Central Government had an idea to create a purely Korean regiment composed of volunteers in 1938. The ceremony for admitting the Korean Volunteers to the Volunteer Training School was held in the Keijo (Gyeongseong, Seoul) University in June 1938. In November, the students of middle schools, colleges, and

---

<sup>710</sup> Out of twenty members, thirteen were Koreans and three Japanese in Korea. Four represented the National Council of Japan.

<sup>711</sup> *YD*, 2 October 1940 and *IKCHS, A History of Korean Church*, 304.

universities gathered to encourage 301 Korean volunteers before going to the war front. Under the name of “patriotism,” Korean churches supported the Japanese expansion by performing rituals and teaching believers to join as volunteers.

### ***7.5. When Might Turns Right, Who Can Throw the Stone at Japan?***

The Highland wife, with her husband at the foot of the gallows, patted him on the shoulder...., and said amid her tears: “Go up, Donald, my man; the Laird bids ye.” To her it seemed the rights of lairds were great, the rights of men small; and she acquiesced.<sup>712</sup>

Accepting Thomas Carlyle’s doctrine that might was right, Yun interpreted colonial expansion as a universal phenomenon. The law of the jungle seem to have controlled all nations in the international society, so the Western imperial powers, including England and Russia, did not have the right to criticize the Japanese expansion in the West. Yun said,

Given a world as it is, a world in which international or interracial ethics haven’t reached the stage of inter-individual morality imperfect as it is; a world in which the law of [the] jungle reigns supreme; in which might does make right; a world in which wars of ambition or of aggression will never cease until no nation or race having valuable resources which it has neither the ability to develop nor the power to defend encumber this suffering earth; given a world as it is inhabited by human being with nature as it is, there is nothing condemnable in the imperialistic doings of Japan, England, France, Russia – in fact all the European Powers can’t throw the first stone at Japan in the matter of aggression on weaker neighbours or nations.<sup>713</sup>

Yun ascribed the cause of imperialism to the sinfulness of human nature. Since individuals were sinful, the nations were sinful. Therefore, no nations, especially nations which occupied other weak nations, were able to blame Japan for her imperial expansion in Asia. Indeed, he argued that the Japanese had a right to dominate Asia because it was one way of abolishing Western colonial rule in East Asia.

---

<sup>712</sup> Carlyle, *Chartism*, 46.

<sup>713</sup> YD, 20 January 1938.

When Yun justified the Japanese wars as a counterattack against the West, he used memories of the events he experienced in Shanghai and Edinburgh. His anger over the racial arrogance and superiority of many Westerners, including some missionaries, was strengthened by his own experience of racial discrimination in the United States.

First, remembering the placard of “No Dogs and Chinese admitted” in Shanghai,<sup>714</sup> Yun supported Japan’s invasion in Shanghai and contended that the Japanese “smashed up the white man’s aggressive arrogance.” Yun said,

Japan has abolished forever, I hope the twin brothers of white man’s pride – the extraterritoriality and the tariff discriminations which the Anglo-Saxons have imposed on the Far Eastern nations. Shanghai, the embodiment of the Anglo-Saxon brutality with its placard of “*No Dogs and Chinese admitted*,” nailed at the gate of the Broad Garden – I hope that Shanghai will go to hell forever.<sup>715</sup>

For Yun, Japan was a divine instrument of judgement on Western imperialism and its racial oppression of Asians. In 1943, he continued to praise Japanese imperialism against the West, saying,

The series of brilliant victories that have crowned the Japanese Army and Navy during the last 12 months have brought down the pride-balloon of Anglo-Saxon prestige and arrogance to the earth. The sun flag of Japan is proudly waving over the citadels and Government buildings on the islands which John Bull and the Dutchman held in their iron grip for 3 centuries. The Japanese have proved themselves a miracle among the nations of the world.<sup>716</sup>

Yun was convinced that the Koreans should “be unified with the Japanese [people] as Scotland was unified with England for the good of both.”<sup>717</sup> Under the influence of Social Darwinism, he had a dualistic understanding of race – the Koreans were inferior, whereas the Japanese were superior, particularly in such virtues as military

---

<sup>714</sup> YD, 15 June 1939, “I still remember with deep indignation how sad I felt when years ago I saw the placard which the English had hung at the gate leading to the public garden in Shanghai with these words in big Chinese and English letters: ‘No dogs and Chinese admitted’.”

<sup>715</sup> YD, 20 January 1938 and see also chapter 3.

<sup>716</sup> YD, 1 January 1943.

<sup>717</sup> YD, 25 May 1940 and Yu, *The Study on Yun Chi-ho in Early Modern Korea*, 250-257.

spirit. But this evaluation was not permanent. He believed that it could be changed through self-development. Therefore, the history of the world was the cycle of victory and defeat.

Yun claimed that in the nineteenth century the so-called “cultivated”<sup>718</sup> white races had oppressed and exploited the black and yellow races. But in the early twentieth century, a new era had arrived for Asians with the advent of Japanese colonial expansion. Based on evolution theory and a “might is right” doctrine, education was regarded as one of the best ways for the weak races to survive cutthroat global competition. Each race should be educated to be fit to the rapidly changing colonized nations. “Weak” races or disadvantaged minorities deserved their situations because they were less fit than others. His conviction that Japan was an Asian model of successful modernization and development was strengthened.

When the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Yun believed that the war of the coloured races against the white races had started. His previous experiences of racial discrimination in the United States justified his support of the colonial expansion of the Japanese Empire. In 1941, Yun “prayed” as follows:

Japan may succeed in not only puncturing the balloon of Anglo-Saxon racial prejudices and injustices and arrogance but in tearing that balloon to shreds and tell them, “Go to hell with your boasted science discoveries and inventions with which you have kept the coloured races in subjection and shame for so many centuries.”<sup>719</sup>

Such racial humiliation also came from some missionaries’ arrogant attitude to Asian Christians. Recalling the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, Yun ✓ criticized Western missionaries of having “vulgar jingoism.” He said,

A Dr. White, at a luncheon given in a large auditorium to the delegates representing a score of nations, wasted nearly one hour in eulogizing the achievement of the Anglo-Saxon nations - England and America. [...] Hitler will have done one good thing in the world if he succeeds

---

<sup>718</sup> Yun thought that Asians were highly cultivated in morality and culture before they encountered the West.

<sup>719</sup> *YD*, 11 December 1941.



in punching a big hole in the arrogance – balloon of the Anglo-Saxon pride – of the coarse Kipling type.<sup>720</sup>

When Germany began World War II by annexing Austria in March 1938, Yun argued that the France, America, and Britain had been too cruel to Germany and they made the League of Nations “just to protect and perpetuate the status quo to the benefit of the biggest grabbers.”<sup>721</sup> He noticed that the superiority complex of the Anglo-Saxon nations was “the disease” as follows:

With all my admiration for the great qualities of the Anglo-Saxon nations I can't help feeling that they are suffering awfully from *the disease of superiority complex*. This disease made them so careless that they actually offered to disarm themselves forgetting or overlooking the fact that three great war-like hungry nations [Germany, Italy, and Russia] were arming to the teeth to jump on any prey that might come within their reach.<sup>722</sup>

In this sense, Japan was not only a divine instrument to heal this disease of the West but a model of modernization and advancement in morality and education. Yun sent his two sons to study in Japan, where his first son studied agriculture at Kagoshima and his second son studied music at Uyeno Music School. He believed that despite her weaknesses, Japan had strengths that the Koreans could emulate.

[My sons] need learn the best Japan has to teach in habits of discipline, of efficiency, of economy, of cleanliness and of courage – if they will only learn the best.<sup>723</sup>

But Yun's conviction of Japanese virtues became more ambiguous. When Bishop Moor informed Yun of the Nanking Massacre, for instance, Yun seems to have lost his confidence in the virtues of the Japanese.

[T]he foreigners residing in the city of Nanking had fully expected that the discipline and efficiency of the Japanese troops would bring order and safety as soon as they occupied the city. But the foreigners were sadly disappointed when they saw the utter break down of discipline among the Japanese

---

<sup>720</sup> YD, 5 November 1940 and see also chapter 3.

<sup>721</sup> YD, 13 March 1938.

<sup>722</sup> YD, 13 March 1938.

<sup>723</sup> YD, 3 January 1938 and chapter 3.

soldiers who looted houses, raped women of all ages from 14 to 60, killing the Chinese upon the least provocation – in fact on no provocation at all.<sup>724</sup>

When Japan conquered China in Shanghai and Nanking, the Chinese Consul-General publicly burned the flag of the old Nanking government in order to protect the thirty thousand Chinese settlers in Korea. Therefore, Yun's belief that might is right, gradually, made him criticize Japanese colonial policy and its expansion to China, because he recognized that their virtues might be changed into a brutal violence on the battle grounds.

### 7.6. *Imposing Identity: from Yun Chi-ho to Ito Chikau*

“We are the subjects of the Japanese Empire.” - *The Oath of Loyalty*

Japanese identity was imposed on all Koreans, first of all, through the education system. In July 1938, colonial government ordered the Koreans in mission schools and churches to recite the Oath of Loyalty. In 1939, all children were required to bow to the Shrine every day as they went in and out of the school. All ceremonies in schools, public and mission, were performed in Japanese in the 1940s. When Yun attended a graduation ceremony at Ewha College, Christian women's college, in March 1940, he mentioned the following eight “patriotic” programmes.<sup>725</sup>

1. Bowing to the [Japanese] flag<sup>726</sup>
2. Bowing toward the East
3. Singing the *Kimigayo* [Japanese national anthem]<sup>727</sup>

---

<sup>724</sup> YD, 1 February 1938.

<sup>725</sup> YD, 12 March 1940. Yun was one of the board members at Ewha College.

<sup>726</sup> Hinomaru is the national flag of Japan and means “sun circle.”

<sup>727</sup> This song is the national anthem of Japan. The words praise the imperial reign and its eternal prosperity. In 1999, Japanese Prime Minister addressed that the word of *kimi* (Emperor) in *Kimigayo* was “the symbol of the nation and of the unity of people based on the will of the people.”

Kimigayo wa [May the reign of the Emperor]

Chiyo ni yachiyo ni [continue for a thousand, nay, eight thousand generations]

Sazare-ishi no [and for the eternity that it takes]

4. Reading the Imperial Rescript on Education
5. Reading the Imperial Rescript on the Duties of Youths
6. Recital of the Patriotic Oath
7. Singing of *Umiyukaba*<sup>728</sup> [going out to sea]
8. Silent Prayer for the Success of the Japanese Army

Flag and song as symbols played important role of imposing Japanese identity on Koreans. Through *Kimigayo* as a national anthem, they praised the Japanese Emperor and his eternal rule. The policy that the Ministry of Education in 1893 put the anthem into the curriculum of the public schools and required that it be sung at the public school ceremonies was applied to colonial Korea, even to mission schools in the 1940s. *Umiyukaba* was a traditional Japanese song which the Japanese pilots sang before undertaking suicide air attacks during World War II. The Koreans attended services to pray and declare to the *Kamisama* (god) their decision to comply with the new way of life. In September 1940, the colonial government forced the Koreans to bow toward the East at seven in the morning and do silent prayer for the brave soldiers at noon. As Japanese nationalism became much stronger and its colonial policy became more oppressive, Yun realized that it was no longer possible for him to stand at the margin of conflicts between nationalists and colonialists. He said,

[W]e must make up our mind to be the Japanese subjects or else to immigrate to Europe or America or heaven. It is very dangerous to straddle on the fence. Those who want to keep distinct Korea organization independent – especially in their relations with Foreign

---

Iwao to narite [for small pebbles to grow into a great rock]  
 Koke no musu made [and become covered with moss].

<sup>728</sup>Inoguchi, Rikihei, *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 61.

*Umi yukaba* [If I go away to sea],  
*Mizutsuku kabana* [I shall return a corpse awash];  
*Yama yukaba* [If duty calls me to the mountain],  
*Kusa musu kabana* [A verdant sword will be my pall];  
*Ogimi no he mi koso shiname* [Thus for the sake of the Emperor]  
*Nodo niwa shinaji* [I will not die peacefully at home].

Committees – think they can fool the Japanese by verbal subterfuges. They don't know the Japanese psychology and nationalism.<sup>729</sup>

Yun seems to have adopted the Japanese identity, even though it was initially forced upon him by the Japanese colonial authority. Unlike previous years,<sup>730</sup> Yun did not begin his diary entry by writing a praise and thanksgiving to God in January 1940. Instead, he visited the Shinto Shrine to pay the new-year respect to “the Imperial Divinities.” Under the influence of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, all Koreans were forced to attend Shinto Shrine, which Yun accepted as a “patriotic action.” In the 1940s, he did not attend any public service on Sundays but only on several exceptional occasions.

The colonial government forced the Koreans to change their family names to Japanese ones, shocking particularly the high class Korean, *Yangban*. Yun criticized colonialists for forcing Koreans to adopt Japanese names, which he regarded as a mania and an unnecessary and unwise policy. Justifying multiculturalism against cultural assimilation, Yun said:

*Variety is the spice of life.* A great Empire which Japan aspires to be must necessarily be composed of many races. To compel them to be exactly alike in everything is an impossible and foolish policy.<sup>731</sup>

Just as Yun was opposed to the formation of “a synthetic faith” in inter-religious relations, so he emphasized the respect of different cultures and languages in inter-racial relations. Regarding the issue of adopting Japanese names, Yun met his extended family members and exchanged opinions about the colonial policy. Most clan elders and members were in favour of adopting Japanese names for the sake of their children. Concerning whether or not the policy of changing names was compulsory,<sup>732</sup> Yun clearly mentioned,

---

<sup>729</sup> *YD*, 26 July 1938.

<sup>730</sup> See, *YD*, 1 January 1938 and 1 January 1939. His prayers in the New Year have a similar pattern: “Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all Creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” These lyrics are the last verse of a longer hymn, “Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun” written by Thomas Ken (1637-1711).

<sup>731</sup> *YD*, 4 January 1940.

<sup>732</sup> Though colonialists advertised this policy as optional, many disadvantages were forced on the Koreans.

The authorities from Governor-General down all emphatically declare that the matter is altogether left to the choice of the individual and not compulsory at all... But we all know only too well that the authorities do want the Koreans to adopt the Japanese names and that they will frown on those who refuse to do so.<sup>733</sup>

The official newspaper of the colonial government also argued that those who opposed this policy would be dealt with by the authorities with an “iron club.” Therefore, Yun thought that the colonial government would regard those who denied Japanese names as “anti-Japanese” nationalists.

On 29 April, Yun’s General Clan Meeting unanimously decided to approve of the adoption of the Japanese family name.<sup>734</sup> But Yun took one further step to keep his Korean name. He personally met General Governor Minami and persuaded him to extend the deadline of the adoption of Japanese names by six or ten months.<sup>735</sup> He argued that while keeping Korean names, the Koreans were able to be “loyal Japanese citizens,” but his request was denied.<sup>736</sup> On 18 May, the Clan’s committee decided to adopt the Japanese family name “Ito.” It should be noted that the Chinese character of “Ito” still had the Korean character “Yun.” It shows the desperate efforts of Yun and his clan to keep Korean identity. The newspaper soon announced his decision to the public. On 17 June, Yun changed his Korean family name, “Yun” to the Japanese name, “Ito” by submitting his decision to the Mayor’s Office for the Census Record.<sup>737</sup>

The local police and magistrates were using various strong measures to exert strong pressure on Koreans to adopt Japanese names. The Japanese authorities prevented those who did not adopted Japanese names from building or buying houses. Children were not allowed to enter primary school before their names were changed

---

<sup>733</sup> *YD*, 1 February 1940.

<sup>734</sup> It is worth noting that most Koreans followed their clan meeting’s decision rather than chose names individually.

<sup>735</sup> The policy was announced on 11 February, 1940 and its deadline was 10 August, 1940.

<sup>736</sup> Due to the lack of support, the government extended its due into 1941. About eighty percent of the Koreans changed their names in Japanese style.

<sup>737</sup> Though his name was pronounced in Japanese style, “Chikau,” Yun didn’t change his given name, which reflects his hesitant attitude to colonial policy of changing Korean names.

to Japanese names. Yun interpreted changing names as one method of the colonial policy of the Unification of Japan and Korea into One, saying,

To encourage or even press the Koreans to adopt the Japanese names is one of the means and ways to grab the Korean race into or onto the trunk-race of Japan. Having so decided, the authorities will see to it that Koreans shall adopt the Japanese names. They will black-list any prominent Korean who refuses to do so as being anti-Japanese. I can't afford to make my boys black-listed. Hence [this is] my decision. Besides, under circumstances it will be best for the Korean race to be unified with the Japanese race as Scotland was unified with England for the good for both.<sup>738</sup>

After changing his name, Yun took on an active role of supporting the colonial government. Yun gave an English address through the radio about the situation in Choong-king [Chongqing], China.<sup>739</sup> In 1937, Choog-king was the capital city of China just before the Japanese captured Nan-jing. His address seems to have supported the Japanese colonial expansion into East Asia. Yun was also invited to give lectures to a Japanese audience at the Japanese Cultural Association in the summer. Though he didn't intend to go to Japan, Yun accepted their invitation with hesitation.<sup>740</sup> He spent around two weeks (from 15 July to 2 August) in Japan in giving a paper on the *Korean Attitude to Annexation and Unification*. Realizing that his movements were under strict surveillance, he avoided meeting Japanese politicians. After he came back to Korea, he reported his trip to the Vice Director of the Foreign Section. While a Japanese identity was being imposed on Koreans by colonial education, policy, and media, Korean Christians endured their suffering by seeking hope through religious gateway.

---

<sup>738</sup> YD, 25 May 1940.

<sup>739</sup> See, YD, 29 June 1940. Yun made it clear that the speech was forced by colonialists: "I had to say Yes, especially as the speech was to be furnished by the Army." On 30 June 1940, His radio address was broadcast and a Chinese translator interpreted it into Chinese.

<sup>740</sup> YD, 8 July 1940. His hesitation was reflected by this remark: "I have consented to go just to show the rulers that I am not shirking or evading to do what they want me do."

### 7.7. *Faith and Religions: “One Step Enough for Me”*

If Hitler succeeds in his awful demoniacal career, many a fair man’s faith in an all mighty and all wise and all loving God would be shaken.<sup>741</sup>

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Yun had a pessimistic view of the world and its history. Ongoing wars and natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and fires seemed to darken the future of Korea. The death of his friends and families and the factional conflicts in Korean churches caused him to doubt the ability of the church to reform society. How can we explain the fact that Yun did not attend church services except on several exceptional occasions? He regularly paid respects to the Shinto Shrine, which colonialists forced the Koreans to visit.

First, within Korean churches, where he intended to unite, Yun found serious conflict and corruption caused by factionalism among the Koreans. It seemed to him that Korean churches themselves had lost the power to reform the intellect and improve morality because of the deteriorated integrity of Christian leadership. He said,

In this cesspool of ingratitude and dishonesty I have found pastors, elders, and Christians so called no better than non-believers. No hope for the Koreans getting on equal treatment with the Japanese until they have learned to do as well for others as they do for themselves.<sup>742</sup>

Yun believed that the Christian Church should be a church for others through evangelism and education. But the two main Protestant denominations, Presbyterianism and Methodism, were struggling with their own factional conflicts without reaching any consensus in regard to the colonial policy. He described the situation of Korean Protestant churches as follows,

The Christian churches, Presbyterian under the evil intrigues of self seeking elders and pastors and Methodist writhing under the same evils are mere dens of ungodly plots and shameful factional quarrels. Jung In Kwa [Jeong In-gwa] is the leader of intrigues in the Presbyterian Church while Hugh Cynn has wrecked the united Methodist Church of

---

<sup>741</sup> YD, 19 September 1939 and see also chapter 6.

<sup>742</sup> YD, 26 October 1940.

Korea by his positive league trickery and treachery. These two born intriguers have succeeded in winning the confidence of the police and they are having their slummy plots forced on the churches by sheer terrorism.<sup>743</sup>

Colonialists used the divided churches an instrument to control the Koreans. In this process, several Christian leaders, including Jeong In-gwa<sup>744</sup> (1888-1972) and Hugh Cynn, supported colonial policy.

Secondly, colonial oppression and persecution made Christian believers leave their churches. In the 1940s, only the four gospels were allowed to be used and preached in the churches, while the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament) and the rest books of the New Testament were forbidden altogether, for colonialists thought they offered a biblical rationale for resisting colonial powers.<sup>745</sup> The services and meetings in Korean churches were under severe surveillance of the police and spies, and Christian leaders were often arrested during the service. In May 1938, after leading a public prayer, Kim Chang-jae, one Korean Christian leader was summoned to the West Gate Police Station. He was reprimanded “for having ascribed the success of female education in Korea to the grace of Christ instead to the benevolence of the Japanese Emperor.”<sup>746</sup> Enforcing the participation of so-called “patriotic” civil gatherings on Sundays, colonialists made it hard or impossible for Christians to attend religious services. On Sundays, the students of Christian schools were forced to attend services at Shinto Shrines under the name of “patriotism.”<sup>747</sup>

Thirdly, in the process of distancing himself from church affairs in order to avoid possible colonial oppression, Yun was more involved in the administration of Christian education. In July, 1938, due to colonial intervention in the curriculum, the Presbyterian Missionaries in Korea decided to withdraw from educational work in

---

<sup>743</sup> YD, 7 December 1940.

<sup>744</sup> After he trained at Princeton Theological Seminary and Columbia University in USA, Jeong became one of Pro-Japanese leaders of Korean Presbyterianism in the 1930s and 1940s. Supporting Japanese colonialism, he argued that Korean Christians should collaborate with colonialists by offering donation and praying for the victory of colonial powers.

<sup>745</sup> Jeong-min Seo, *Ilbon Gidokgyoui Hankukinsik* (Japanese Christianity and its Understanding of Korea) (Seoul: Hanul Academy, 2000), 109-112.

<sup>746</sup> YD, 3 June 1938.

<sup>747</sup> YD, 26 September 1939.



Korea. They argued that “no Presbyterian missionary should teach in any school anything outside the Bible.”<sup>748</sup> In spite of his sympathy with Western missionaries, Yun thought that complete withdrawal from education was a “wrong” decision for it would cause the Korean people to suffer, especially young students. Yun wrote,

Considering the fact that a missionary engaged in educational work has to do many things that may hurt his conscience and pride, we can't blame him for his complete withdrawal from all sorts of school work. But by so doing the Presbyterian missionaries will lose thousands or tens of thousands of young people from their church activities. They should have taken the less of the two evils – a compromise with the present situation or the sacrifice of young people.<sup>749</sup>

Regarding a compromise with the Japanese colonialists as “the lesser evil,” Yun urged the mission to educate young Koreans. Instead of closing or giving up the educational institution, he made his priority the running of Christian schools, not that of their churches.

In the 1940s Yun did not attend church services, but his visits to the Shinto Shrine became more regular. When visiting Japan, Yun paid respects to the Meiji Shrine, while not attending Christian service. In 1938, Yun was surrounded by “fears and anxieties, living an atmosphere charged with injustice, suspicion, espionage, and oppression.”<sup>750</sup> Since the colonial control became stricter in the 1940s, things did not become better. In January 1943, Yun prayed by quoting the first verse of the hymn of John Henry Newman.<sup>751</sup>

Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!  
The night is dark, (and the way is unknown); lead Thou me on!  
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

---

<sup>748</sup> Yun was opposed to this position of Presbyterian missionaries, recognizing the importance and necessity of educational and medical missions.

<sup>749</sup> *YD*, 23 July 1938.

<sup>750</sup> *YD*, 10 June 1938.

<sup>751</sup> *YD*, 10 January 1943. Instead of the original second line, “I am far from home,” Yun used an alternative line, “the way is unknown.”

The verse reflects the hardships which Yun experienced under colonial rule, particularly during World War II. Recognizing the status of the Koreans as outsiders in the process of colonial politics,<sup>752</sup> he compared the role of the Japanese to that of a stepmother. Despite such a pessimistic view of colonial life, Yun was convinced that God was “all loving, all wise, and all powerful”<sup>753</sup> as well as “Giver of all good gifts.” Attributing his safety itself to the grace (of God), Churches as institutions seemed to him to be corrupted and his experience of health, blessing, and security<sup>754</sup> strengthened his personal faith in God. It should be noted that Yun criticized institutionalized Christianity as corrupted or misguided, with similar logic to that which he had used for attacking Confucianism and its failures to realizing ideals in believers’ daily life.

### **7.8. Conclusion**

In the late 1930s and early 1940s Korean Christians were isolated from international communities and finally lost their voices by assimilating their religious institutions into Japanese counterparts.<sup>755</sup> As a result, colonialists controlled the Koreans more easily and systematically. Collaborating with colonialists in public after the *Heung Eop* Club Incident, Yun seemed to have identified himself as a “Korean-Japanese” in the sense that the Koreans had to live in the Japanese Empire.

After all the American missionaries evacuated Korea in 1941, the management and property of Christian schools were turned over to the Koreans for a while. For Yun, the era of self-determination and self-government seemed to begin there, but soon the leadership of Christian education was passed from the Korean Christians to the Japanese, even non-Christians. As the oppression and control became stronger, most Koreans, including Christians, were forced to collaborate with the Japanese colonialists. The imposed identity caused incurable wounds in the heart of Korean Christians and divisions among Korean Christians, even after liberation.

---

<sup>752</sup> *YD*, 1 March 1943.

<sup>753</sup> *YD*, 20 January 1940.

<sup>754</sup> *YD*, 24 May and 1 June 1943.

<sup>755</sup> Colonialists did not allow the Korean representatives to attend the third World Missionary Conference, held in Tambaram, India in 1938.

Falling far short of his expectation that Korea should be “a Scotland of Japan,” Korea was not united with Japan. In 1945 when Allied nations defeated Axis nations, Korea became independent of Japan. But his prediction was likely to be partly right, for as “an Ireland of East Asia,” Korea was once again divided into North and South Korea after experiencing civil wars from 1950 to 1953.

## CHAPTER EIGHT THE LEGACY OF YUN CHI-HO: MISSION AS TRANSFORMATION

### 8.1. Introduction

[A] religion can be viewed as *a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought*. It functions somewhat like a Kantian a priori... or a symbolism expressive of basic attitudes, feelings, or sentiment... Rather it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, feelings, and sentiments. Like a culture or language, it is a *communal phenomenon* that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjective. It comprises a vocabulary of discursive and non-discursive symbols together with a distinctive logic or grammar in terms of which this vocabulary can be meaningfully deployed. Lastly, just as a language ... is correlated with a form of life, and just as a culture has both cognitive and behavioral dimensions, so it is also in the case of a religious tradition. Its doctrines, cosmic stories or myths, and ethical directives are integrally related to the rituals it practices, the sentiments or experiences it evokes, the actions it recommends, and the institutional forms it develops.<sup>756</sup>

Seeing religion as “a cultural-linguistic system,” George Lindbeck argues that to become a religious person or a member of religious community is not only to learn the languages and symbols of a religious system, but also to accept the worldview which these particular vocabularies and religious symbols construct. In other words, through the process of internalizing “a set of skills by practice and training,” a person learns how to be religious in a particular way, “how to feel, act, and think in conformity with a religious tradition.” Therefore, what is important for becoming religious is not a religion’s truth claims. Rather, it is “the conceptual vocabulary and the syntax or inner logic” that determine “the kinds of truth claims the religions can make.”<sup>757</sup>

As has already been examined in the previous chapters, Yun lived in a transitional period, in the midst of a rapidly changing world, surrounded by different world religions such as Confucianism, Christianity, and Shinto. Just as he spoke

---

<sup>756</sup> George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine – Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 33, my italics.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

different languages such as Korean, Chinese, English, French, and Japanese, so Yun understood the different worldviews of Confucian, Christian, and Shinto traditions. It is clear that these different religious worldviews influenced the formation of Yun's early life and the development of his later thought. His religious identity had been formed and transformed, shaped and reshaped by his continuous encounters with different religious worldviews.

In this chapter, I will examine Yun's contribution to Korean society and Christian community by analyzing his last works, *An Old-Man's Ruminations* and a revised patriotic hymn, *Aegukga* (the song of love for the country).<sup>758</sup> Focusing on his views on peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness, I will deal with the Confucian influence on Yun's proposal of a "benevolent government" and the main themes of his model of Christian mission as transformation. I will also argue that his legacy was that he successfully connected nationalism with the Christian message, politics with religion, and the Korean identity with Christian faith – not by words but by actions.

In the midst of post-colonial (or new colonial) turmoil,<sup>759</sup> Yun proposed an idea of a new government and advocated the reconciliation of divided Koreans, especially between democrats and communists, or patriots and collaborators. I will conclude that as a Christian reformer and a lay theologian, who was concerned with public issues, Christian education, and missions, Yun contributed significantly to the tradition of social engagement in Korean Christianity and its missions. I will also claim that Yun offered an alternative model of Christian mission, which I call the "transformation-oriented approach" of indigenous Christians, instead of the "conversion-oriented approach" of Western missionaries, which he disagreed with and even criticized. Then, I will argue that Yun as "a religious man" attempted to correlate traditional Korean religious worldview with a new Christian perspective by responding to both Western missionaries and Japanese colonialists. His vision of reconciliation and forgiveness in post-colonial Korea will be revisited in the light of Christian education and mission.

---

<sup>758</sup> Original words of this patriotic song were written in 1907 and published twice in 1907 and 1908.

<sup>759</sup> Though Japanese colonial power withdrew from Korea in 1945, the SSSR and the USA occupied Northern and Southern Korea, respectively.

## 8.2. Yun Chi-ho's View on Peace and Reconciliation

At Yun's sudden death, he left the form of letters and a hymn. Two letters, which Yun titled *An Old-man's Ruminations*, and a revised hymn, *Aegukga*, are likely to have been written in October, 1945. By writing his *Ruminations* in English, Yun intended to give advice to General John Hodge, Commanding General of U.S. Occupation Forces in Korea. Hodge received these letters through Earnest E. Fisher who taught at Chosen Christian College during the colonial period and later became Councilor of American Occupation Forces.<sup>760</sup> Yun also left to his family a revised patriotic hymn, *Aegukga*, which he had already published in his hymnal, *Chanmiga* (Songs of Praise, 1907).<sup>761</sup>

It should be noted that both *Ruminations* and *Aegukga* are the only resources accessible for understanding Yun's perspective in 1945, just before his unexpected death. One month after he completed these documents, Yun fainted on his way home from the dentist for treatment of a toothache. He was immediately taken to his house, and placed under the care of Dr. Heo Yeong at Korea Hospital, but he did not recover consciousness. He remained in a coma for about a week, before he died in Song do on 6 December 1945.

In the midst of political turmoil between demagogues and communists in 1945, Yun argued that what Koreans needed after liberation was a "benevolent Paternalism," which seems to be based on his Confucian upbringing and his interpretation of the Christian parable of the prodigal son.<sup>762</sup> This Christian narrative already affected his earlier life and played the role in the development of his strategies for dealing with conflicts and crises through his life. When Yun arrived in

---

<sup>760</sup> Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 136. Kim argues that another copy of Yun's *Ruminations* was given to Rhee Seung-man, future President of the Republic of Korea, when Lee arrived in Korea on 16 October 1945. Rhee sent his response letter to Yun, but it didn't reach him.

<sup>761</sup> Tae-jin Jeong, "Yun Chi-ho and Patristic Song," ed. Jwaong Yun Chi-ho muhwasaephui, *Yun Chi-houi Saegaewa Sasang* (Yun Chi-ho's Life and Thought) (Seoul: Ulyomuhwasa, 1998), 293-303. According to Jeong, *Aegukga* was written in 1904, when British Fleet of Far East visited Korea. Britons suggested to Korean King that they would perform the national anthem of Korea in return of hospitality. He ordered Yun, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs to establish the national anthem. Therefore, he wrote a patriotic song to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*. After liberation in 1945, his fifth daughter, Mun-hi, asked Yun to write the lyrics of *Aegukga*. This document with his diaries are now located at the Library of Emory University.

<sup>762</sup> See, *YD*, 23 August and 3 September 1896

Paris in 1896 after attending the coronation of Tzar Nicholas II, being overcome by guilt, he confessed his sins and experienced the divine grace. He wrote:

Of late I have reached the lowest point of religion, or rather irreligion. By the mercy of God may I not become a better Christian than I have ever been? O Jesus, thou who gave the world the beautiful story of the prodigal son, do thou forgive my unbelief and sins and take me into thy favor and grace!<sup>763</sup>

Experiencing the renewal of his faith after being in the depths of desperation, Yun continued to draw inspiration from the story of the prodigal son. Concerning the new Christian phase of his life, Yun commented,

By the help of God, I shall turn a new leaf in my life – for the better. Christ who gave the sinful world the parable of the prodigal son will not cast me away if I return to Him in sincere repentance.<sup>764</sup>

Yun's previous Confucian education of self-cultivation was revived through the Christian doctrine of sanctification. His *Rumination* reached not only General Hodge but it also fell into the hands of Rhee Seung-man, the future President of the Republic of Korea. The first letter was written on 15 October, and the second letter was dated 20 October 1945. It is not easy for researchers to identify who the "strong man" in his letter indicates, though Rhee has often been regarded as one of the leaders of the new government after independence. Rhee Seung-man was one of Yun's pupils at Baejae School, a Methodist mission school and they both joined the Independence Club and its democratic activities. While Yun was in exile, Rhee was imprisoned for his involvement with the Independence Club. In prison, Rhee was converted to Methodism and began a prison school where he taught other Korean nationalist leaders. After he was released, Rhee went to the USA and was educated at Harvard and Princeton Universities. He became President of the Provisional Government in Shanghai and continued to lead the independence movement in the USA. As has been seen already, Yun and Cynn, two pillars of YMCA movement, formed a Korean society in Seoul to support Rhee's independence activities in the

---

<sup>763</sup> YD, 23 August 1896.

<sup>764</sup> YD, 3 September 1896.

USA. This activity later gave Japanese colonialists leverage to force Yun and other cultural nationalists to collaborate with them in public.

### 8.3. *The First Letter for Reconciliation*

In this period the Korean majority suffered badly at the precise time that a minority was doing well. This minority acquired the taint of collaboration and could never shuck it off. Korea from 1937 to 1945 was much like Vichy France in the early 1940s: bitter experiences and memories continued to divide people, even within the same family; it was too painful to confront directly, and so it amounts now to buried history. Nonetheless, it continues to play upon the national identity.<sup>765</sup>

After liberation from Japan, serious tensions and conflicts emerged between Korean supporters of democracy and communism. After experiencing “the colonial pressure cooker,”<sup>766</sup> as Bruce Cumings terms it, Koreans sided with one of the great powers of the age – the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviets supported a newly founded Korean government and its People’s Committees in the countryside. The Americans backed exiled nationalists and some domestic conservative Koreans because they feared the expansion of Soviet communism. Just as Gaeseong (or Songdo), where Yun stayed during his last months, was cut in half by the thirty-eighth parallel, so Yun stood between democrats and communists. As a historical actor in this period, Yun proposed his ideas to the leaders of the occupational forces. Like most Koreans, he did not support the national division of North and South Korea, but wanted to reconcile both sides.

In the first letter, Yun clearly rejects both democratic and communist forms of government because the Koreans were not ready to adopt these radical governmental systems, especially immediately after colonialism. He was more convinced that a gradual reform through education and moral improvement was a much more suitable plan to rebuild the Korean nation and to unite divided Korean hearts than radical revolution. He seems to have worried about the political chaos

---

<sup>765</sup> Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 183.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.



and violence that had spread all around the country. Recognizing the potential dangers of the post-colonial era, Yun said,

We, Koreans, are not yet politically prepared for pure democracy or radical communism. We are in great danger of mistaking unbridled license for liberty and brigandage for communism.<sup>767</sup>

First of all, Yun argued that the hasty application of democracy in Korea would promote license and chaos. Pointing out the immaturity of Koreans in handling the democratic procedure, he compared the demagogues to “a child of six talking about driving an automobile or piloting an airplane.” Though he did not reject the ideals of democracy or socialism, Yun insisted that Koreans needed more education and experience to reach a state of political preparedness. He illustrated his point as follows:

England and the U.S. of America are [the only] two countries in the world, which have made a success of democracy. The Germans with their wonderful civic virtues and the French with all their logic and learning haven't got to the standard of democracy state. Korea is today no better prepared for democracy than China or Manchuria.<sup>768</sup>

This comment does not mean that Yun denied the ability of Koreans to deal with the post-colonial situation. But he did hope to remind political leaders to engage in thinking about alternative ways to heal the division between two extremes.

Secondly, like the case of “pure democracy,” Yun asserted that the introduction of communism and socialism, especially without the proper development of the minds, might result in great political problems. He was convinced that communism could be introduced into a developed democratic society, where citizens could handle elements of socialism. Indeed, his criticism of communism was not only theoretical, but also practical, because he witnessed disorderly and violent communist revolutions in Northern Korea and China. As Principal of Songdo School, he himself experienced the riots of peasants and students in the late 1920s and early 1930s. After the Soviet Union army arrived at Song Do on

---

<sup>767</sup> Yun Chi-ho, *An Old-man's Ruminations (1)*, 15 October 1945.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*.

23 August,<sup>769</sup> Yun seems to have heard the news that Seo Byeong-hi and his family members had been murdered.<sup>770</sup> Seo was President of the Korean Community Society in Tianjin. But, accused of having been a pro-Japanese traitor, he was murdered, and his wife and three children were kidnapped. Later, their bodies were found at the home of the suspects. When Yun was Mayor of Deokweon, Seo's father, Seo Sang-jin was Mayor of Incheon. Therefore, they both had known each other very well. Moreover, as President of the Korean Sports Association, Yun had also known Seo Byeong-hi very well. His biographer, Kim Eul-han, contends that Yun had been deeply shocked by the case of murder of Seo and his family.<sup>771</sup> Fearing violent communists, Yun argued that the radical communism would be no better than the Japanese militarism, saying as follows:

Between the loving kindness and tender mercies of the plundering, raping, and slaughtering brand of communism and the repressive, suppressive, and oppressive Japanese militarism, between the devil and the deep what is there to choose?<sup>772</sup>

Even in post-colonial Korea, Yun felt that he was still surrounded by the similar evils he had experienced during the colonial period. He had to choose the lesser of the two evils, between collaboration with colonialists and abandoning of Christian education. But, it is clear that the external pressure of communist terrorism partly caused Yun to collaborate with colonialists though he recognized the negative impact of collaboration on his reputation. Yun rejected the use of violence, even when its intention was justifiable.

Thirdly, rejecting both "pure democracy" and "radical communism," Yun proposed an alternative form of government, which he termed "a benevolent Paternalism." In this respect, Yun's religious creativity connected the Confucian worldview with a Christian perspective to make a viable model of government. On

---

<sup>769</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 186. The Soviet began fighting the Japanese in Korea on 8 August, and some soldiers came south of the thirty-eighth parallel though they withdrew after 15 August.

<sup>770</sup> Kim, *A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho*, 131-135.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, 133 and 135.

<sup>772</sup> Yun, *Rumination* (1), 15 October 1945.

the one hand, his idea of “a benevolent Paternalism” reflects a Confucian ideal of government, based on virtue and morality, where a righteous leader rules her/his subjects by virtues. On the other hand, the “Paternalism” reflects methods of Western missionaries, who had seen Korean indigenous converts as their spiritual “children.” Therefore, newly formed indigenous churches had been regarded as “daughter churches” of Western churches, while Korean churches regarded Western missionaries as spiritual “parents.”<sup>773</sup> Though he strongly criticized the Western missionaries for their arrogant attitude to indigenous culture, he attempted to solve this by adding an additional dimension, to the paternalism, emphasizing its “benevolence.” Therefore, Yun’s earlier criticism of paternalistic Western missionaries seems to have been mitigated by the element of benevolence that he believed was also present.

It is important to notice that Yun’s proposal of “a benevolent Paternalism” was based on his own Christian experience, which gave paternalism a new meaning. Concerning organizing the new government, Yun emphasized the necessity of a “strong man” with “a firm hand and unselfish devotion.” For example, he admired Mussolini’s ability to unite divided Italians, but he was afraid of the advent of Hitler and his triumphal expansionism to neighboring nations. According to Yun, the emergent task of the new leader in Korea was to protect “the uneducated and undisciplined masses of Korea” from radical demagogues and communists. Though Yun recognized the power of the masses, at the same time he was aware of the lack of discipline and education among Korean peasants. As Cummings points out,

The problem was that Korean society had no base for either a liberal or a democratic party as Americans understood it; it had a population the vast majority of which consisted of poor peasants, and a tiny minority of which held most of the wealth: landowners, who formed the real base of [Korean Democratic Party]. The elite of Korean society during the colonial period, nearly all of them were widely perceived to have fattened under colonial rule while everybody else suffered.<sup>774</sup>

---

<sup>773</sup> See, Michael Hollis, *Paternalism and the Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

<sup>774</sup> Cummings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 193.

Concerning the shortage of reforming agents and government officers, Yun advocated the importance of gradual transformation as follows:

Whatever form of the new government to be set up in Korea may assume, let the Koreans keep their ancient custom and usage, introducing new ones, when and where it is necessary, step by step.<sup>775</sup>

Adopting new knowledge of the West, Yun attempted to preserve ancient Korean traditions, which helped to keep Korean identity. Koreans should remain Koreans in terms of culture, language, history, and even religion. In this sense, Yun wanted to translate Christian message into Korean culture. Instead of adopting Western Christianity, which he claimed was philosophical and secular, he attempted to create Korean Christianity, which connected Korean identity with the Christian message.

By the same token, in the political area, a revolutionary introduction of democracy or communism seemed to be a great danger in Korea. Rather, a gradual change would be more suitable to revive Korean politics and unite divided Koreans. For Yun, both “the mere forms and slogans of democracy” and “the atrocities and absurdities of communism” seems to have been supported by only small groups of radical supporters. Indeed, his reform through education focused on the majority groups in Korea, particularly the uneducated masses.

Concerning the direction of Christian education, Yun asserted that Christian education should also cover the development of science and art, the flowering of technology, the conquering of disease, and the expansion of means of communication and transportations. Yun agreed with the Christian missionaries that Christians should preach the gospel, but his methods of evangelism were different from the majority of Western missionaries and even Korean Christian leaders. He wanted to overcome “one-way evangelism,” which focused on individual converts and church planting. According to Yun, Christians should preach the gospel, not by words, but with actions. Christians should practice Christian life by participating in changing the world and improving its moral and social environment. For Yun, society, culture, and politics couldn’t be separated from Divine salvation. Christians

---

<sup>775</sup> Yun, *Rumination* (1), 15 October 1945.

are not called to leave farming or the work place. Rather, they are required to use the gifts and talents that God has given them in practical ways – by cultivating strawberries, tilling the land, and practicing their trades. This vision motivated Yun to start the first industrial Christian school in Songdo, which now belongs to North Korea.

It is important to notice that Yun was a realist not an idealist when he was analyzing the Korean political situation in 1945. He analyzed history and events, and tried to learn the lessons from the past. According to Yun, “pure democracy” or “radical communism” might be an ultimate goal or a political ideal of the future, but it was not an agenda of the post-liberation situation in 1945. Therefore, he contended that Koreans should learn what the West and Japan had learned from their past experience. Their culture should be analyzed and critiqued from a Korean point of view. Therefore, Koreans should not simply isolate themselves from the West, nor to accommodate themselves to it completely. “Ancient custom and usage” seems to refer to Korean religious and cultural traditions, including Confucian virtues such as loyalty and filial piety, which Yun wanted to promote among Korean youth. As has been examined in the analysis of *Chanmiga*,<sup>776</sup> Yun attempted to construct a common identity, a contact point, between Korean traditional worldview and the Christian message, despite its complexity.

#### ***8.4. The Second Letter for Embrace and Forgiveness***

While the first letter focuses on the political reconciliation of a divided Korea by proposing an alternative way of rebuilding Korean society, the second letter deals primarily with the issue of forgiveness for “pro-Japanese” collaborators during the colonial period.

Soon after liberation in 1945, landowners, including Yun, were often accused of being “traitors,” “betrayers,” or “collaborators.”<sup>777</sup> Despite the persuasion and request of nationalists, Yun didn’t join the March First Independence Movement in 1919 and even publicized his reasons for rejecting its ideas in the press. As most

---

<sup>776</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>777</sup> After liberation, Rhee Seung-man and other nationalist leaders seem to have avoided meeting Yun because of his collaboration with colonialists during the colonial period.

Koreans did, he changed his name into Japanese style and even supported colonial foreign and domestic policy. He clearly collaborated with colonialists, which nobody can deny. He was at first forced to collaborate with them, but he later modified the intention of colonial power in a positive way. Therefore, Yun believed that he himself was also a (cultural) nationalist, at least a patriot in a real sense.

In the second letter, Yun vigorously defended collaborators by explaining why the so-called “pro-Japanese” Koreans had to collaborate with Japanese colonialists, and how the new government should deal leniently with these collaborators in a post-colonial situation. He criticized the so-called, “patriots” for their hypocrisy, because he saw liberation from Japan as a gift from God. Rather, he emphasized the need for a united effort to rebuild Korean society “with gratitude and humility.”<sup>778</sup>

First of all, Yun made it clear that collaboration was not a voluntary decision but a coerced action. Min Gyeong-bae confirms that collaboration was not a matter of small numbers of anti-national Koreans, but of most Koreans, even including major nationalist leaders and prominent Christians who had contributed to the early formation of the independence movements and later to the rebuilding of post-colonial Korea.<sup>779</sup> According to Yun, most Koreans, including even denouncers, had been “pro-Japanese” in some sense until Independence came in August 1945. Defending the so-called “pro-Japanese” collaborators by using situational ethics, Yun contended that those who were condemning the collaborators as “traitors” were “the self-righteous denouncers.” They also seemed to Yun not to have been free from the stigma of collaboration. He pointed out the reality of collaboration among Koreans as follows:

Most of [the self-righteous denouncers] are the very fellows who, up to the “Noon of the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945,” bowed the East, repeated the Japanese Oath, shouted banzai [hurrah] for the Denno [emperor] in public, on every public occasions in schools, in churches, in factories, in government and great business offices, in department stores and in

---

<sup>778</sup> Yun, *Rumination (II)*, 20 October 1945.

<sup>779</sup> Min, *Korean Church History*, 478-511.

wedding and funeral gatherings. Most of them Japanized their names.<sup>780</sup>

Yun asserted that Koreans had no choice but to collaborate with colonialists, saying, “Why did they do these pro-Japanese things? Simply, they had to or go to jail.” The tragedy of Korean collaboration was enforced under tremendous Japanese pressure. Yun himself spent three years in jail due to the conspiracy case immediately after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910. Therefore the accusations of collaborators seemed to Yun to have been absurd and even false. Furthermore, Yun pointed out the underlying motivations of denouncers,

Who, then, throw first stones at others? For two reasons: (1) to throw dust into the eyes of people to cover up their unsavory past, and (2) to extort money from the fears and worries of certain persons for party and personal pockets.<sup>781</sup>

As Yun indicated, the discourse of “pro-Japanese” or “anti-Japanese” had been utilized for political attacks and economic exploitations in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>782</sup> Yun himself suffered many accusations for being a pro-American, pro-Japanese, or even, pro-Russian politician. During the colonial period, about forty or fifty percent of the National Police were Koreans, and under Japanese supervision, these Koreans played an important role in intimidating fellow Koreans and mobilizing forced labour projects. Therefore, Koreans could no longer blame just the Japanese for this atrocity. He often felt as if he had been marginalized by both Japanese colonialists and his fellow Koreans on political and religious issues, causing him to lose many close friends.

Secondly, Yun legitimized the forced collaboration in terms of situational ethics. As he claimed, Korea had not been an independent state, but a colony of Japan, which most nations in the world recognized and even supported. Koreans lost their national sovereignty, so it was hard for the Koreans to live in their own land. Arguing that Koreans would not have survived without conforming to aggressive

---

<sup>780</sup> Yun, *Rumination (II)*, 20 October 1945.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>782</sup> Yun himself had to leave Korea in 1885, since he was regarded as a “pro-Japanese” politician.

colonial policies, Yun commented on the complexity of national identity as the 'Korean-Japanese,'

During the 34 years of Japanese annexation (from 1911 to 1945), what was the status of Korea? Was she an independent Kingdom? No, she was a part of Japan and so recognized by other Powers including America. If so, the Koreans were Japanese, willy nilly. Then, as the subject of Japan, what alternative could we, *who had to live in Korea*, have but to obey the orders and demands, however arbitrary, of the Japanese regime?<sup>783</sup>

Yun paid more attention to the suffering of Koreans as a community by pointing out compulsory conscription and labours in the midst of the war: "If we had to send our sons to battle fields and our daughters to factories, could we refuse to do anything that the militarists commanded?" The Japanese forced young Koreans to labour in Japan, Northern Korea, and Manchuria. Holding these forced labourers as hostages, colonialists succeeded in preventing nationalist Koreans from organizing large-scale resistance against colonial powers. In 1941, some 1.4 million Koreans were forced to work in Japanese camps as constructors, manufacturers, miners, and farmers. About half a million more were sent to Japan, and by the end of the war Koreans comprised one third of the industrial labour in Japan. Though Yun failed to recognize the problem of the "comfort women," around 200,000 Korean women were used as sexual slaves by the Japanese army.<sup>784</sup> This slavery was often disguised as factories, and under the Japanese supervision, Korean men were also involved in mobilizing these Korean women.

Just as he asked colonialists to forgive the participants of the March First Independence Movement, so Yun advocated the forgiveness for collaborators to political leaders in the post-colonial era. In order to establish justice and make peace in new Korea, Yun proposed a general amnesty for collaborators as follows:

As a stroke of statesmanship and an act of common justice, a general amnesty... should be promulgated to enable so-called pro-Japanese to live in peace and to save them from the blackmailing "patriots" who

---

<sup>783</sup> Yun, *Rumination (II)*, 20 October 1945, italics is original.

<sup>784</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 179



believe (and act) that liberty is lawlessness and communism [is] brigandage. Many of these ostracized Koreans have learned efficiency and discipline from their former taskmasters in various capacities. Their talents and knowledge of the rural conditions and needs of Korean masses will be highly useful to the leaders of the new Korean government to be.<sup>785</sup>

In order to rebuild Korea as a sovereign nation, Yun argued that, instead of condemning collaborators and their previous activities, new Korean leaders should embrace them and use their talents and knowledge to rebuild Korean society. It is certain that most “pro-Japanese” collaborators were suffering from ongoing criticisms, blame, and occasionally from the physical attacks of the nationalists and socialists, whom Yun called “the self-appointed saviours of Korea.” Yun hoped that Koreans would “live in peace” under “common justice.” He believed that it was only forgiveness that would make this common justice possible.<sup>786</sup> Maintaining his pragmatic view on the possible contribution of collaborators to the process of rebuilding the nation, Yun prioritized the establishment of peace and justice over settling the old scores of political ideologists.

Yun attempted to answer a question, “Who saved Korea from Japan?” He recognized that the liberation of Korea was accomplished by the victory of the Allied Nations against Japan, not by the efforts of Koreans themselves, so he criticized the “swaggering and bragging patriots.”

[I]t is really amusing to see some of the self-appointed saviors of Korea and their satellites swagger about everywhere talking big as if, by their own might and valor, they had saved Korea from the Japanese militarism. They are too stupid or too shameless – likely both – to realize that they had no more to do with the liberation of Korea than the man in the moon. It – the Liberation – just happened to come to us as one of the side issues of the allied victory.... These braggarts talk very much like the silly fly, in a fable, which perched on a running car and exclaimed that it, by its own power, made the wheels move.<sup>787</sup>

---

<sup>785</sup> Yun, *An Old-man's Ruminations (II)*, 20 October 1945.

<sup>786</sup> After the MFIM, Yun argued that Japanese colonialists should give amnesty to imprisoned Koreans.

<sup>787</sup> Yun, *Ruminations (II)*, 20 October 1945.

Though Yun had long advocated the importance of self-strengthening and self-autonomy, Christian missions, and colonial education, it was foreign powers that finally “saved” Korea from Japanese colonialism. Such liberation by foreign powers reminded Yun too much of past tragic events after Korea had recovered national sovereignty from China in 1895 with the help of Japan. Within one decade, Korean politicians were divided into pro-Chinese, pro-Japanese, and pro-Russian camps, the Queen was murdered, and the Korean Emperor was forced to resign. Yun didn’t want Koreans to repeat the same mistakes, which caused them to lose their national sovereignty to foreign powers.

Thirdly, Yun emphasized the necessity of gratitude and unity among the Koreans. He believed that happiness lied in satisfaction and gratitude. Despite possible dangers of post-colonial era, he suggested that Koreans should celebrate liberation with gratitude and unity rather than by accusing one another.

Let us frankly admit and thank the stars that the liberation was a Gift. With gratitude and humility let us accept the Gift like a lost jewel re-found, and try our best not to lose it again. Let us sink all petty personal ambitions, factional intrigues, and sectional hatred, and pull together for the common good of our suffering country. Korea, from her geographical situation, popular ignorance, and factional discords, faces no roseate future. Let us hang together lest we be hanged separately.<sup>788</sup>

This statement revealed Yun’s concern in the autumn of 1945. Yun wanted to unite divided Koreans and to rebuild the Korean society. Since conflicts and tensions amongst individuals and parties worsened, Koreans faced political chaos. By comparing this letter with earlier diaries, we can see an example of Yun’s inclusive attitude to the traditional worldview in that he considered the stars as objects of gratitude. When he entered a speech contest at Vanderbilt University in 1890, Yun used these terms, “stars” and “gift.”

When I was in mother’s womb, she prayed to *stars and gods* that the child might be a thing of beauty to be her joy forever. But, alas! When she brought me forth, I proved to be a monster of ugliness.... Finding

---

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid.*

that ‘the prophet is not without honor except in his own country,’ with a heavy heart and a very light purse, I bade farewell to my native land, went over to Japan, and then to China. These two wide empires, though they had room enough for dudes, dunces, hogs, rogues, had no room for my ugliness, my natural *gifts*. I say natural *gifts* because I firmly believe that god-given ugliness is as natural to a man as hand-made beauty is artificial to a woman.<sup>789</sup>

Yun’s parents seem to have remained Confucians. On one occasion, his mother warned her son Yun not to mention Christianity in public.<sup>790</sup> Since indigenous Koreans prayed to the stars (and gods) as the objects of worship,<sup>791</sup> Yun encouraged Koreans to celebrate independence by giving gratitude to the stars. It is clear that Yun considered that the majority of his readers in *Ruminations* would be non-Christian Koreans. So, instead of giving up either his own Christian identity or his Korean identity, Yun made use of common ground between the Christian and indigenous worldviews in order to unite people and celebrate liberation from Japan.

The parable of the lost coin in Luke 15 helps us to understand Yun’s view on liberation as a “lost jewel.” Korea seems to him to have lost its sovereignty and finally became a colony of Japan due to the carelessness of Korean leaders and the ignorance of the Koreans themselves – just as the woman who lost her coin. When the liberation was regained, it was the time for joy and unity, not for judgment and blame. Though his diary said that all blessings and gifts came from God in a mysterious way, *Rumination* reveals Yun’s creativity in correlating the traditional Korean worldview with Christian perspective, and his desire to embrace Koreans, Christians or non-Christians, in rebuilding a new government. He ascribed the problem of divisions and conflicts within Koreans to individual selfishness and factional desires. Addressing unity among divided Koreans, Yun argued that “all petty personal ambitions, factional intrigues, and sectional hatred” should be overcome.

---

<sup>789</sup> *YD*, 26 May 1890.

<sup>790</sup> On his return to Korea in 1895, Yun’s parents were disappointed about his conversion and Western theological education.

<sup>791</sup> Korean folk religions regard stars as objects of worship and prayer, while Christian believe that God created the stars (Genesis 1:16 and Psalm 8:3, 33:6, 136:7).

Recalling previous failures in reforming society and rebuilding the nation, Yun seems to have emphasized the importance of unity once again. Seeing Korea as a suffering community, he appealed to love and unity: "Let us hang together lest we be hanged separately." Recognizing the danger of exploitation from other foreign powers, as well as of internal conflicts between Koreans, Yun stressed the importance of education to overcome popular ignorance.

It is certain that Yun anticipated that Koreans, at least Korean political leaders, would read his writings. But Yun also wanted to focus his ideas on a certain group of intellectuals; this may have reflected his unpopularity amongst the Korean masses in 1945. It is interesting that contrary to his expectation, Korea soon divided into North and South Korea. Instead of "one strong man," two political leaders, Kim Il-Seong and Rhee Seung-man applied communism and democracy respectively even though Yun strongly rejected in his *Rumination* the application of both systems to the post-colonial Korea.

### 8.5. *Aegukga (The Song of Love for the Country) as a Patriotic Hymn*

Along with his *Rumination*, Yun left in his personal note the lyrics of *Aegukga*.<sup>792</sup> It had often been accompanied by the Scottish folk tune *Auld Lang Syne*, which was popular among missionaries and indigenous leaders. During the Japanese colonial period, this song was banned, but the Koreans, who lived outside of Korea, continued to sing it, because it expressed their hope for national independence. In this song, Yun connected Korean nationalism with Christian faith. After colonialism ended, he changed his earlier version to meet the needs of post-colonial Korea.

Ahn Eak-tay (An Ik-tae, 1905-1965), who then lived in Spain, composed a new tune to go with the lyrics, replacing the Scottish melody. The Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea adopted *Aegukga* officially as the national

---

<sup>792</sup> Yun published the lyrics of *Aegukga* in 1907. Though the first edition book of 1907 is still missing, he left the new edition of *Chanmiga*, a hymnal including *Aegukga* under his name, in 1908. Before he died in the winter of 1945, Yun informed his family that he was the original writer of *Aegukga*, leaving his own written piece of the song. In 1955, the National Institute of Korean History convened a special committee to decide who the writer of *Aegukga* was. Out of eleven votes, there were nine in favour of Yun Chi-ho. The committee, however, decided that *Aegukga* was anonymous on the basis of the principle of unanimous vote. The debate is still controversial, but Yun is still believed to have written the lyrics.

anthem in Shanghai in 1937. The Koreans outside the country sang the anthem to the new tune, while those at home continued to use *Auld Lang Syne* till Korea was liberated in 1945. After *Aegukga* was sung at a ceremony celebrating the founding of the Republic of Korea on 15 August 1948, the Korean Government in the same year adopted the song as the national anthem. In 1982, however, a committee was formed to compose a new national anthem, criticizing the contents of *Aegukga*.<sup>793</sup> It was dissolved without any result due to the strong public opposition, so *Aegukga* remained the national anthem. By analyzing the verses of *Aegukga*, I will examine Yun's theological and political thought, which are manifest in this love song. It should be noted that the original lyrics of *Aegukga* were written in 1907 or before, but Yun revised it in 1945, when this lost song could be sung in public again.

[1]

Until water of the East Sea and Baekdu Mountain are dry and worn out,  
*Hananim* protects us so that our land may be forever.<sup>794</sup>

In the first verse, Yun wished that *Hananim*<sup>795</sup> would watch over the land of Korea until the East Sea's waters are dry and Mt. *Baekdu* worn away. The East Sea is the deepest of the three seas surrounding the Korean peninsula, and is located between Korea, Japan, and Russia. *Baekdu* (white head) Mountain is the highest mountain covered with snow, located between Northern Korea and China. In this sense, Yun hoped that God would protect Korea as a land and a nation eternally, even though it went through the political turmoil and the oppression of foreign colonial powers. He loved to stay at his home in Korea. According to Yun, to become "a real patriot" was to preserve and cultivate the land. Even noble causes such as raising independence

---

<sup>793</sup> Ahn Ho-sang, Han Gap-su, Na Un-yeong, Yu Jin-ho, Lee Hi-seung, and Yu Dal-yeong supported this scheme, but they didn't receive public support.

<sup>794</sup> Translation is mine. In order to understand literal meaning of the song, I translated it word by word.

<sup>795</sup> The Korean terms for Heaven are *Haneunim* and *Hananim*. *Nim* is an honorific suffix, meaning person or being. Protestant Christians prefer the term *Hananim* to *Haneunim* in that *hana*, meaning one, shows the monotheistic belief of Christianity. On the other hand, Catholics prefer to use the term *Haneunim* in that it indicates *Cheonbu*, "Father in Heaven." Other believers and non-believers prefer to use the term *Haneunim* in that the term *Hanue* includes a secular view or traditional worldview.

funds or participating in independence movements were not reasons enough to leave the land or sell it to foreigners.

Yun's faith concentrated on a God-centered Christian life and his prayer was for the protection of the land and the renewal of the fragile country. But his concept of God was not narrow and exclusive. Rather, adopting the indigenous concept of God, Yun translated the Christian God into terms that were compatible with the indigenous religious worldview.

[Refrain]

Rose of Sharon covered at every corner of beautiful rivers and mountains. People of Korea, preserve our land as Korea forever.

In the refrain, Yun expressed his hope that the Rose of Sharon<sup>796</sup> (which became the national flower of Korea in 1948), would spread all over the nation, with the praises of the beauty of rivers and mountains in Korea. Encouraging Koreans to guard the land of Korea with their hands, he inspired patriotism in the hearts of Koreans.

This verse was used for the first time celebrating the foundation of the Independence Gate in 1896. Subsequently, Yun seems to have adopted this verse as the refrain of *Aegukga*. This reveals that Yun's love of the land was connected to his desire for independence. After liberation in 1945, Yun reconfirmed the importance of self-reliance and self-determination, particularly in preserving the land and protecting its sovereignty.

As the thistle has symbolized Scottish identity, the Rose of Sharon played an important symbolic role in the resistance against Japanese colonialists. Yun's Methodist friend, Nam Gung-eok (1865-1939), (whose daughter married Yun's second son, Kwang-seon), devoted himself to the diffusion of Rose of Sharon plants. In 1933, Nam was arrested because he organized the so-called "Cross Party," a secret political party, and distributed this plant to Korean schools and churches. The police confiscated around eighty thousand plants and destroyed them by fire. In the place of

---

<sup>796</sup> Its scientific name is *Hibiscus syriacus*. In the Hebrew Bible, the term "the rose of Sharon" is used to refer to the beauty of woman (The Song of Songs 2:1).

the Rose of Sharon, the colonialists planted there cherry blossoms, which were Japanese national flowers.<sup>797</sup>

[2] That pine tree on the top of South Mountain looks iron-armored.  
It is unchangeable in the midst of wind and frost. It's our spirit.

In contrast to the first verse, which focused on national territory and its preservation, the second verse paid attention to the internal dimensions of human patriotism. Yun compared Korean ethnic ethos to the pine tree on South Mountain, which was standing still against wind or frost in all seasons. During the Joseon dynasty, the pine tree had been regarded as a symbol of Confucian fidelity and integrity as well as longevity. South Mountain was located in Seoul, so colonialists moved *Guksadang*, the Korean National Shrine, to another Mountain outside Seoul and built the national Shinto Shrine for Sun Goddess *Amaterasu* and Emperor *Meiji* on the South Mountain. Koreans were forced to attend these Shinto ceremonies. Using the symbolism of the pine tree, Yun celebrated the perseverance and integrity of Korean spirit through history.

[3] Autumn sky is empty, wide, cloudless and high.  
Bright moon is like our hearts, *Ilpyeondansim* (singleness of heart).

In the third verse, Yun used Confucian virtues of loyalty when he described the love of country. *Ilpyeondansim* literally means “a piece of red mind” and refers to loyalty to the King in Korean traditional society. Jeong Mong-ju (1337-1392), the Korean politician and poet, wrote a poem, *Dansimga* (song of loyalty), where he said that his loyalty would be unchangeable even if he died several times and even if his bones became dust. This theme of loyalty was once again emphasized in the final verse, but Yun changed original verses slightly to account for change over time.

[4] With this spirit and this mind, *show devoted service*.  
Let's love (our) nation in grief or joy.

---

<sup>797</sup> “Christian Cross Party Incident during Colonial Occupation,” *The Religious Herald*, 7 September, 2005.

In the last verse, Yun mentioned that Koreans should love their country, Korea, whatever situation it may face. Instead of the original expression, “serve King,” written in the first version of 1907, he made it clear that the focus of love should be on the nation itself, not on the king as an individual, by omitting the term, “king.” This change shows us that “a benevolent Paternalism,” which he suggested in his *Rumination*, no longer meant a traditional monarchy, absolute or constitutional.

### **8.6. Confucian Influence in Yun’s Model**

Yun’s model of Christian mission was a gradual transformation, not a sudden conversion. His Confucian education with its emphasis upon self-cultivation was strengthened by the Methodist concept of sanctification and the American holiness movement. Rejecting the transmission of theological and philosophical Christianity to the Korean community, Yun emphasized spiritual dimensions of the Christian message rather than repeating dogma which Western missionaries taught indigenous Christians to understand.

Instead of replacing all Korean traditions with Western religion and knowledge, Yun made a creative bridge between the Confucian tradition and Christian faith, which was manifested in his idea of “benevolent Paternalism.” First, I will examine the benevolent paternalism as a Confucian political and religious ideal by analyzing Confucian classics. Then, I will deal with the Confucian concept of harmony and peace, which influenced Yun’s idea of reconciliation.

#### **8.6.1. Benevolent Paternalism as a Confucian Political Ideal**

It is certain that benevolent paternalism, which Yun proposed as a viable model to rebuild Korean society after liberation, was influenced by Confucian political and religious ideals. It was written in *the Great Learning*,

As a sovereign, he rested in benevolence. As a minister, he rested in reverence. As a son, he rested in filial piety. As a father, he rested in kindness. In communication with his subjects, he rested in good faith.<sup>798</sup>

---

<sup>798</sup> *GL*, 3: 3.



Benevolence was believed to be one of the virtues which rulers should have in governing people. It is important to notice that Confucianism has been long misrepresented as only a political philosophy or ideology by Westerners, partly because it seems to them to offer secular politicians pragmatic strategies on government and administration in this world. Confucians revered Heaven and spiritual beings,<sup>799</sup> but they didn't articulate much about a spiritual world beyond this world.<sup>800</sup>

In order to govern a country in a right way from a Confucian perspective, “there must be reverent attention to business, and sincerity; economy in expenditure, and love for men, and the employment of the people at the proper seasons.”<sup>801</sup> Instead of making oppressive laws or regulations and strictly enforcing them upon people, a Confucian ruler was expected to have proper virtues to represent the hearts of his people and manage ethical and political issues according to the ancient wisdom of Yao and Shun.<sup>802</sup> Old knowledge of the ancients was cherished and practiced, while new knowledge was continually acquired.<sup>803</sup> Confucian reformers attempted to cultivate ancient wisdom and then apply it to their own contexts. The sage Emperors Yao and Shun, and Confucius himself, have been models of emulation in words and actions: “Yao and Shun led on the kingdom with benevolence, and the people followed them.”<sup>804</sup> Mencius also taught his disciples to follow the way of Confucius, saying:

---

<sup>799</sup> *CA*, 6: 20.

<sup>800</sup> *CA*, 7: 20.

<sup>801</sup> *CA*, 1: 5.

<sup>802</sup> See, *CA*, 2: 3, The Master said, “If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame.” “If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.”

<sup>803</sup> *DM*, 23: 6, “[T]he superior man honours his virtuous nature, and maintains constant inquiry and study, seeking to carry it out to its breadth and greatness, so as to omit none of the more exquisite and minute points which it embraces, and to raise it to its greatest height and brilliancy, so as to pursue the course of the Mean.” See also, *CA*, 2: 11.

<sup>804</sup> *GL*, 9: 4 and *DM*, 6: 30: 1-3.

When it was proper to go into office, then to go into it; when it was proper to keep retired from office, then to keep retired from it; when it was proper to continue in it long, then to continue in it long; when it was proper to withdraw from it quickly, then to withdraw quickly: - that is the way of Confucius. These were all sages of antiquity, and I have not attained to do what they did, But what I wish to do is to learn to be like Confucius... Since there were living men until now, there never was another Confucius.<sup>805</sup>

Contrary to the democratic idea that common people rule themselves, Confucian government may be settled by one benevolent person.<sup>806</sup> The benevolent person is believed to benefit all peoples through his virtuous government.<sup>807</sup> The importance of benevolence as a political virtue is emphasized in all four Confucians books, including *Confucian Analects*,

The Master [Confucius] said, "Shan, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity." The disciple Tsang replied, "Yes." The Master went out, and the other disciples asked, saying, "What do his words mean?" Tsang said, "The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others – this and nothing more."<sup>808</sup>

Though scholars still overlook its religious dimension, Confucianism as one of the new religions was introduced from China into Korea.<sup>809</sup> In contrast to Taoism and Buddhism, which both encouraged their believers to renounce political and worldly affairs, Confucians are taught to have great concern to reform human communities, by cultivating virtues from individuals, to the family, and to the nation.

There has been no clear division between private and public sectors, particularly in the light of government. Confucians saw all personal virtues as the foundation of political actions and social relations. Social units such as family, the state, and the kingdom consist of individuals, so individuals are the basic elements of

---

<sup>805</sup> *WM*, Book II, Part I, 2: 22-23.

<sup>806</sup> *CA*, 1: 12 and *GL*, 9: 3, The Master said, "He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."

<sup>807</sup> *DM*, 20: 8.

<sup>808</sup> *CA*, 4: 15.

<sup>809</sup> *DM*, 16-19, indicates the importance of rituals and spiritual beings.

larger social units. Though they are distinguished from one another, they cannot be totally separated. The secular became sacred, so Westerners (and even Western-educated Asians) are easily blinded to the religiousness of Confucianism. Therefore, the relational virtues such as filial piety, fraternal submission, and kindness, which had been emphasized in family education, were thought of as requirements of those who intended to govern higher social orders virtuously, more clearly speaking, in a Confucian way.<sup>810</sup>

According to Mencius, rulers should play the role of “parents” to their people in taking care of their needs and concerns.<sup>811</sup> “When a prince loves what the people love, and hates what the people hates, then, is he what is called the parents of people.”<sup>812</sup> People were not regarded as objects to be governed but as subjects to govern in the sense that the people were believed to reflect the will of Heaven: “Heaven sees according as my people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear.”<sup>813</sup> In return for a ruler’s benevolent government, people should serve their superiors or rulers out of gratitude and respect as children serve their parents. According to *the Great Learning*,

It is not possible for one to teach others, while he cannot teach his own family. Therefore, the ruler, without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for the state. There is filial piety: therewith the sovereign should be served. There is fraternal submission: - therewith elders and superiors should be served. There is kindness: - therewith the multitude should be treated.<sup>814</sup>

Virtues support various relationships, making boundaries of individual actions within communities. Though Confucianism has been criticized as patriarchal and misogynistic, it should be noted that female metaphors are employed in describing the attitude of Confucian rulers to their subjects. For example, seeing people as

---

<sup>810</sup> CA, 2: 5-8.

<sup>811</sup> WM, Book I, Part II, 7: 6.

<sup>812</sup> GL, 10: 3 and DM, 20: 13.

<sup>813</sup> WM, Book 5, Part I, 5: 8.

<sup>814</sup> GL, 9: 1.

“infant,”<sup>815</sup> Confucians claim that rulers should have the heart of a mother: “If [a mother] is really anxious about [her infant], though she may not hit exactly the wants of her infant, she will not be far from doing so.”<sup>816</sup> Confucians expect that their rulers should have the hearts of parents, particularly, of a mother, at the same time, assuming that a ruler “as a father, a son, and a brother” should become “a model” to people.<sup>817</sup> Therefore, “the ruler must himself [or herself] be possessed of the good qualities.”<sup>818</sup> This requirement is also extended to his ministers in government like this:

Let me have but one minister, plain and sincere, not pretending to other abilities, but with a simple, upright, mind; and possessed of generosity, regarding the talents of others as if he himself possessed them, and where he finds accomplished and perspicacious men, loving them in his heart more than in his mouth expresses, and really showing himself able to bear them and employ them: - such a minister will be able to preserve my sons and grandsons and black-haired people, and benefits likewise to the kingdom may well be looked for from him. But if it be his character, when he finds men of ability, to be jealous and hate them; and, when he finds accomplished and perspicacious men, to oppose them and not allow their advancement, showing himself really not able to bear them: - such a minister will not be able to protect my sons and grandsons and black-haired people; and may he not be able to be pronounced dangerous to the state?<sup>819</sup>

In order to govern the states and the kingdom virtuously, Confucian rulers should first understand the people and gain their hearts rather than enforce offensive rules upon them violently. Rather, a ruler should show a virtuous model of “loving benevolence” to his people, while the people in return love righteousness.<sup>820</sup>

“Benevolence is the characteristic element of humanity, and the great exercise of it is in loving relatives.”<sup>821</sup> Mencius also claims, “A benevolent man does not lay up

---

<sup>815</sup> *WM*, Book III, Part I, 5: 3.

<sup>816</sup> *GL*, 9: 2.

<sup>817</sup> *GL*, 9: 8 and *DM*, 20: 12, 30: 1.

<sup>818</sup> *GL*, 9: 4 and *DM*, 31: 1-4.

<sup>819</sup> *GL*, 10: 14.

<sup>820</sup> *GL*, 10: 21.

<sup>821</sup> *DM*, 20: 5.

anger, nor cherish resentment against his brother, but only regards him with affection and love.”<sup>822</sup> Therefore, the moral self-cultivation of rulers is not only the improvement of individual virtues, but also the foundation of political security and economic growth in a wider relation.

[T]he ruler will first take pains about his own virtue. Possessing virtue will give him the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory. Possessing the territory will give him its wealth. Possessing the wealth, he will have resources for expenditure.<sup>823</sup>

In summary, the Confucian tradition seems to have had a strong impact on Yun’s idea of Christian education and mission. Like Confucian education, Yun put a priority on moral education over economic and political independence in Christian education: “The virtue is the root; wealth is the result.”<sup>824</sup> Regarding moral education of virtues as the foundation of government, Korean Confucians sought to recruit virtuous men in government administration and they warned of possible disasters such as “calamities from Heaven and injuries from men”<sup>825</sup> in case virtuous ministers were not employed properly. In this sense, moral education was for wider communities, not just for individuals themselves, as Confucius argued, “[the superior man] cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people.”<sup>826</sup>

### ***8.6.2. Confucian Harmony and Peace in the World***

Along with his idea of a benevolent paternalism, Yun sought peace and harmony in the world as well as in Korea, by recovering virtuous relationships among divided people and renewing a new Korean identity. Due to the terrors of history and war, it was not possible for Yun to secure himself and his family from external dangers. Seeking for a peaceful home, Yun was often frustrated by terrors, tortures, and persecution. Then, how did Confucian tradition affect Yun’s idea of peace?

---

<sup>822</sup> *WM*, Book V, Part I, 3: 2.

<sup>823</sup> *GL*, 10: 6-7.

<sup>824</sup> *GL*, 10: 7.

<sup>825</sup> *GL*, 10: 23 and *DM*, 33: 5.

<sup>826</sup> *CA*, 14: 15.

Mencius emphasized the importance of peace through the benevolent government as follows:

The principles of Yau and Shun, without a benevolent government, could not secure the tranquil order [or peace] of the empire. There are now princes who have benevolent hearts and a reputation for benevolence, while yet the people do not receive any benefits from them, nor will they leave any example to future ages; - all because they do not put into practice the ways of the ancient kings.... It is said in the Book of Poetry, 'Without transgression, without forgetfulness, following the ancient canons,' never has any one fallen into error, who followed the laws of the ancient kings.<sup>827</sup>

In theory, Confucianism sought harmony without uniformity by embracing different individuals and communities and at the same time by overcoming conflicts and tensions.<sup>828</sup> Rather than the simplification of particularities and the generalization of uniqueness, Confucians encouraged individuals to celebrate differences as their own identities or ways of life. In contrast, the application of the Confucian ideal to Korean society was a different matter to Yun. The paternal relation of rulers and common people became the oppressive relation of dictators and slaves. The masses were exploited and oppressed by heavy taxes and corrupt government officers. Due to the discordance between ideal and real in Confucian tradition, Yun became disillusioned with Confucianism. But in order to understand Yun's point of view, we need to explore Confucian ideas of peace and harmony.

The *Doctrine of the Mean* addresses two main concepts, *Jung* (equilibrium) and *Yong* (harmony), which Yun claimed was a common teachings of both Jesus and Confucius. First, equilibrium denotes "being without inclination to either side" and "the correct course to be pursued by all under heaven."<sup>829</sup> "When there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of equilibrium." The equilibrium is "the great root" from which all the human actions in the world grow.<sup>830</sup> Secondly, harmony is "admitting of no change" and "the fixed

---

<sup>827</sup> *WM*, Book IV, Part I, 1: 1-4.

<sup>828</sup> *CA*, 8: 23.

<sup>829</sup> *DM*, Introduction.

<sup>830</sup> *DM*, 1: 4.

principle regulating all under heaven.”<sup>831</sup> When emotional feelings are stirred and they act in their due degrees, this state may be called “harmony.” It is “the universal path which they all should pursue.”<sup>832</sup> When the Mean exists perfectly, “a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth and all things will be nourished and flourished.”<sup>833</sup> It should be noted that Yun believed that both Confucius and Jesus taught their disciples the doctrine of the Mean for peace though their followers failed to practice these teachings in daily life.

According to Confucius, Emperor Shun “took hold of their two extremes, determined the Mean, and employed it in his government of the people.”<sup>834</sup> The virtuous person or the superior person should stand firm in the middle of two extremes and cultivate a friendly harmony without compromising with either side. Yun’s efforts to make peace between colonialists and nationalists, missionaries and indigenous Christians, and communists and demagogues reflected this Confucian virtue of the Mean.

Confucius claimed that the Mean had been long overlooked and abandoned because it was difficult to actualize in life. It is only the virtuous person who chooses the Mean and implements the course of the Mean. The Mean doesn’t remain an abstract principle. Rather, it is clearly manifested through real action of humankind, so it cannot be separated from the person herself/himself.<sup>835</sup>

According to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, Confucians should respect others by making space in oneself for others: “What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others.”<sup>836</sup> This golden rule supports the Confucian view of harmony and peace based on the emphatic understanding of others with their different contexts. Recognizing the flexible application of Confucian ideals to different situations, Confucians sought harmony as follows:

---

<sup>831</sup> *DM*, Introduction.

<sup>832</sup> *DM*, 1: 4.

<sup>833</sup> *DM*, 1: 5.

<sup>834</sup> *DM*, 6, 17: 1-5.

<sup>835</sup> *DM*, 13: 1.

<sup>836</sup> *DM*, 13: 3, See also, *CA*, 5: 11, “What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.”

The superior man does what is proper to the station in which he is; he does not desire to go beyond this. In a position of wealth and honor, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honor. In a poor and low position, he does what is proper to a poor and low position. Situated among barbarous tribes, he does what is proper to a situation among barbarous tribes. In a position of sorrow and difficulty, he does what is proper to a position of sorrow and difficulty. The superior man can find himself in no situation in which he is not himself. In a high situation, he does not treat with contempt his inferiors. In a low situation, he does not court the favor of his superiors. He rectifies himself, and seeks for nothing from others, so that he had no dissatisfactions. He does not murmur against Heaven, nor grumble against him.<sup>837</sup>

Such an ethical dimension of Confucianism can be interpreted in the light of “situation ethics.”<sup>838</sup> In this sense, Yun’s pragmatic strategy grounded in Confucianism also helped him to accept the Christian message, Confucian ancestor veneration and even Shinto Shrine visit at the same time. An action is said to be right or correct if it works. A thing should be evaluated to be wrong, not by principle, but by situation. Yun legitimized Western mission works and Japanese colonial expansion by pointing out their positive benefits to Korea. Therefore, benevolence was the ultimate ethical norm of Yun’s life.

Though Heaven confers the nature,<sup>839</sup> it does not seem to control the whole of human destiny according to a Confucian worldview. Examining her/his heart, therefore, the superior person seeks the cause of her/his failures in herself/himself, waiting for the appointment of Heaven.<sup>840</sup> Therefore, it is only the virtuous person that is able to achieve the peace in the world: “the superior man being sincere and reverential, the whole world is conducted to a state of happy tranquility [or peace].”<sup>841</sup>

---

<sup>837</sup> *DM*, 14: 1-3.

<sup>838</sup> See, Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966).

<sup>839</sup> *DM*, 1: 1.

<sup>840</sup> *DM*, 14: 4-5.

<sup>841</sup> *DM*, 33: 5.



### ***8.7. Yun Chi-ho's Model of Christian Mission as Transformation***

As has been examined in previous chapters, Yun's concept of Christian mission was very different from his contemporaries in that he rejected sudden conversion through understanding theological dogma or preaching the Christian message without social engagement. By emphasizing spirituality and faith in action, he advocated gradual transformation through Christian education and unity in the Church. Yun correlated Christian mission with education and attempted to improve moral and economic standards for ultimate political independence.

Yun was not only a Christian activist but also a contextual theologian, because, applying it to a Korean context, he created an alternative model of mission as transformation, against the dominant missionary model of mission as sudden conversion. His contribution to Korean Christianity was distinctive in advocating Christian education for life, uniting divided Koreans in reconciliation and forgiveness, and creating a constructive and open attitude towards other religions and cultures.

#### ***8.7.1. Christian Education for Life***

Yun wanted to change Korean society with the help of the spiritual power and authority of Christianity to transform the moral and economic foundation of Korean society as well as to inaugurate political and intellectual advancement. Yun was a Christian educator who believed that the education of the masses, particularly children and women, was part of Christian mission. Though he remained a layman within the Christian community, he was committed to the development of Christian higher education. Instead of following the dominant missionary view that Christian education should contribute to evangelism and literary education, Yun advocated industrial and agricultural education. He asserted that Koreans should utilize the talents and gifts that God had given them, and serve others in society. To him, Korean Confucianism seemed to have long despised the value of labour and the service of others.

Most prestigious higher education institutes, including Ewha Women's College, Bosong College, and Chosen Christian College urged him to accept the post of President, though he denied these offers (except for the CCC). Rather than

achieving personal benefit and fulfilling selfish desires, Yun first considered the big picture of the destiny of his nation. Therefore, his vision of Christian education was not parochial training but a holistic and pragmatic transformation of individual and social life. Despite theological differences and missionary competition, Presbyterians and Methodists were united in support of the CCC. It is clear that it was schools not churches that occupied the centre of his whole reform project. For example, when he planned to build a model Christian settlement in Songdo in 1907, Yun considered that a school should be located at the centre, and then a church, a hospital, a farm, and a factory were added later. Schools were sacred to him because he was convinced that the education of Korean youths was the only hope of future Koreans who would achieve freedom from the historic domination of China and Japan.

Yun didn't simply follow the existing models of Western missionaries in Christian education, for he believed that the urgent needs of Koreans were at times different from the expectations of Western churches and mission societies. He criticized the missionary views of Christian education and instead emphasized not only evangelism but also social reform through Christian education. Both literary education and industrial/agricultural education should be balanced in Christian mission. Yun claimed that Koreans had long despised and overlooked the value of labour and the importance of industry and agriculture under the Confucian influence of civil administration. The overemphasis on literary education to prepare for the civil service examination seemed to Yun to have deteriorated Korean society significantly, particularly in the areas of education and international relationships, for which he had served as a government officer (1895-1905). Yun found the power of reform in Christian education, which had changed the direction of his own life after he had been in a long exile. After returning to Korea, Yun helped Christian education to equip Korean students for living a Christian life in the midst of political turmoil. Yun's unique view of Christian education was that it held the potential to empower the Christian life as transformation in the world.

First, the Christian life should be neither solely the life of the spirit, nor the life of the mind. Yun reconnected spirit and mind with body and culture in Christian education. He believed that just as a person had a spirit, a mind, a body, and clothes, so a society had the same components. Each element represents religion, morality,

intellect, economics, and politics. Yun was convinced about two things: religion and morality were the most important aspects of individual and social life, so they should be the starting points of all reforms and transformations. I see that the Neo-Confucian overemphasis on philosophy and Buddhist renunciation of social life also caused him to appeal to Christian education, particularly industrial and agricultural education. For Yun, the Christian life should cover the life of a whole person and Christian education should seek a holistic education of a human being. In Songdo School, science, technology, industry, agriculture, and even housework were added to school curriculum. He also emphasized education about Korean culture and language, though he didn't overlook the importance of foreign languages including Chinese and Japanese. His active leadership of the Korean Sports Association also represented his holistic vision of Christian education.

Secondly, the Christian life was a life of faith, not a life separated from faith. Criticizing faith based too narrowly upon theological dogma, Yun argued that Korean Christians should recover spirituality and a living faith by recovering the connection between faith and life. Yun was convinced that most failures of religions resulted from the lack of commitment of genuine faith, not from the lack of ideas themselves. He prioritized action and spirit over words and letters. Along with his strong criticism on theology and dogma, Yun's emphasis on social reform and moral transformation in Christian education was based on faith, which he tried to connect with daily life.

Thirdly, for Yun the Christian life was not the life of an individual, isolated from Christian communities or marginalized from the world. He did not hide his Christian identity in the dominant Confucian society or even hostile colonialists. As a member of the Christian community, he wanted to have open discussion about missions with other Christian leaders and missionaries, regardless of denominational boundaries. Yun was a member of American Southern Methodist Church, but he was willing to cooperate with Presbyterian churches and Northern Methodist churches. Witnessing the later conflicts between old and young missionaries, between Methodists and Presbyterians, and between Northern and Southern Christians, Yun advocated the recovery of unity in the Church. The Union of the Methodist Church in 1930 was in a large part a product of his ecumenical efforts to unite Korean Churches.

Yun's cooperation with leaders and missionaries of other Christian communities and even other faiths was more pronounced in his involvement in YMCA efforts, particularly organizing relief efforts and developing Christian education. Yun personally supported Han Kyeong-jik and Kim Jae-jun when they went to study theology in the United States. Though both were Presbyterians, Han later represented conservative theology, whereas Kim founded a Korean tradition of liberal and progressive theology, more in line with Yun's own theology.

It is clear that Yun played an important role in establishing the tradition of missions in the Korean Church. The early American missionaries, including Underwood, Appenzeller, and their successors, maintained close relationships with Yun and shaped their mission strategies following his advice during the colonial period. Through his work with the YMCA movements and Christian schools, Yun actively committed himself to uniting the Christian community and developing Christian education, and he even made himself unpopular among Koreans by playing a role in expressing the Korean need for colonial leaders in the late 1940s. Opposing Japanese colonialists and Western missionaries, he defended Korean concerns and attempted to meet their needs with Christian principles.

Yun formed ties with internationally active Christians. He often represented the Korean Christian community by participating in international religious meetings such as the World Missionary Conference in 1910 and YMCA conferences, and he played an important role of connecting Korean Christians with World Christians. Though he didn't create such international gatherings by himself, he explained the Korean situation to missionaries and Western Christians through existing links. This effort finally caused him to be arrested by colonialist and to spend three years in prison on charges of conspiracy.

Fourthly, the Christian life was to be lived with non-Christians. During the colonial period, Yun's relations with colonialists changed from a more neutral/moderate position to an active collaboration, which badly tarnished his reputation as Christian educator and democratic leader. It is important to notice that Yun attempted to engage in society when colonialists forced their notorious policy of cleansing ethnic culture on Koreans and destroyed Korean identity through colonial education. He believed that to take flight or to go into exile was to fail to live the

Christian life in the world fully. Rather, Yun lived a full Christian life in Korea, practicing Christian faith through education and ecumenical work in the midst of a Confucian society and later Shinto-dominated Japan's colony. He did not limit the boundaries of Christian mission to sending missionaries to the "heathen" world and teaching a set of dogmatic beliefs and ritual practices to non-Christians. On the contrary, Yun turned his eyes to other aspects of missions – away from "pure evangelism." Encountering arrogant missionaries and violent colonialists, Yun recognized the necessity of witness in the world through the transformation of life. Therefore, in his view, building schools to teach the ignorant and hospitals to heal the sick was much more important than setting up mission stations and churches. Yun argued that practicing the Christian life in the world was the best strategy of Christian mission.<sup>842</sup>

Fifthly and finally, Yun believed that the Christian life was a life active in assisting not only in reforming the church but also in transforming culture according to the teachings of Jesus. According to Yun, Christians were not foreigners in this world, but caretakers of the creatures created by God. His plan to build a model Christian settlement in Songdo revealed this conviction of transforming culture. Therefore, for Yun, there was no such clear dichotomy between Christ and culture, between the sacred and the secular, and between religion and politics. For this purpose, Yun encouraged students to study Korean language, history, and culture. At the same time he wanted to reform such weaknesses of Korean culture as early marriage and the subjection of women to men, with the Christian message. Yun was convinced that the Confucian tradition lacked divine authority in practicing religious ideals. Seeing culture as a way of life, Yun connected Christianity with Korean indigenous traditions and nationalism. Rather than rejecting both Confucian ideals and Korean culture, he intended to accomplish their ideals and reshape cultures with the power of Christianity and Western knowledge.

In brief, addressing the importance of practical learning and the necessity of social transformation, Yun presented Korean Christians with a challenge to live the

---

<sup>842</sup> For Yun, practicing Christian teachings in daily life was more important than preaching Christ. His pragmatic view on Christianity and his emphasis on industrial education reflected his conviction of faith in action.

Christian life. For him, the goal of Christian education was the Christian life, not Christian knowledge or thought. It is important to notice that Yun regarded Christianity as a school to teach “children” to live a new way of life and put Christian ideals into action. His effort to establish an ideal Christian village in Song Do failed due to political oppression from colonialists, financial shortage, and the lack of support from missionaries. It is clear, however, that Yun focused on Christian praxis in this world, not beyond the world. Yun seems to have believed that the kingdom of God was functioning among Christians in the midst of political confusion, at the same time keeping the hope of the kingdom of God beyond this world. In this sense, Yun should be regarded as an activist against pre-millennial missionaries and as a lay public theologian, correlating the Christian message with Confucian culture and political issues.

### *8.7.2 Constructing a New Korean Identity*

The issue of identity was one of the main themes that Yun reflected on in his intensive diary throughout his life. Encountering different religions and cultures, meeting different people of other races and continents, debating with nationalists, missionaries, colonialists, and non-Christian believers, and witnessing political and social situations within different parts of the world, Yun sought to create a new Korean identity. His commitments to this task revealed in his engagement with public issues, particularly, in his collaboration with Japanese colonialists in the 1940s.

First, for Yun, Korean identity was not static but dynamic, so he continued to engage with contemporary public issues, which Western missionaries largely ignored or avoided during the colonial period. Concerning politically sensitive issues, Yun also distanced himself from extreme nationalists who resisted colonialists by using violence and leading mass movements, but it doesn't mean that he had no concern about public issues. Rather than appealing to “illegal” methods such as bombing, assassination, and riot, Yun persuaded colonialists through “legal” channels such as lobbying and dialogue with politicians to treat Koreans as human beings like them, who had equal rights to access education, job, and justice

like other Japanese settlers. Indeed, being a Korean by itself had been a humiliation, when he studied in the United States dominated by racial prejudice, and when he represented Korea (or the Korean Church) at international meetings, he realized that it was only might that was right. Therefore, he wanted to create a new Korean identity by improving social and moral abilities through Christian education.

It is true that Yun saw Koreans as the “slaves” of China and later of Japan not only in the political and economic sense but also in religious and cultural terms. Their religions, Confucianism and Shinto, occupied the Korean consciousness, whether intentionally or not. Korean history and language had long been abandoned by the Confucian preoccupation with Chinese literature and history, so Koreans seemed to him to have lost their own history, language, and even self-confidence. The wide social discrimination against Korean women and children seemed to be legitimized by the Confucian concept of filial piety and loyalty. Therefore, Yun believed that Western missionaries rediscovered the three treasures of Korea – women, children, and the Korean language – that had long been forbidden and forgotten in public education. In this sense, Christianity was recognized as a liberator of Korean culture; it played an important role in rediscovering the values of Korean culture, language, and even Koreans themselves.

Secondly, Yun recognized Koreans under the rule of Japan as “Korean Japanese.” According to him, Scots had kept their own cultural identity despite the Union with England in 1707. Likewise, Yun claimed that Koreans would be able to retain their own culture and identity when at the same time they enjoy economic and political benefits from Japan through the annexation. Hoping for ultimate political independence from Japan, Yun expected that it would take a longer time to achieve this final goal.

Yun also argued that the weaknesses of Koreans needed to be seasoned by the strengths of the Japanese and vice versa. For him, Koreans were “peaceful people,” but this ethnic characteristic caused Korea to become an easy target of the aggressive colonialism of strong foreign powers such as China, Russia, and Japan, surrounding Korea. Therefore, he believed that

because of the corrupt Confucian government and its unbalanced education system Koreans had lost the “martial spirit,” which he believed was necessary to survive in the international competitions and wars and which was the spirit of the Holy Ghost.

Equating the Jews with Koreans, Judaism with Protestantism, Yun was convinced that the renewal of a religious foundation would secure ultimate political independence. Therefore, as Koen De Ceuster points out, Yun remained a “cultural nationalist,” not an extreme nationalist. During the colonial period, nationalism, whether extreme or moderate, was also strengthened together with the help of Christianity regardless of the intention of missionaries that distanced Korean Christians from the political agenda by focusing mainly on individual salvation and spiritual revival rather than on social engagement for justice and human rights. But, it was in 1938 that Yun was forced to collaborate with colonialists in public. In order to free Christian leaders from the tortures of colonialists, he finally compromised with them. It is important to notice that he didn’t collaborate for his own individual desires or benefits.

When Japan began invading China and other countries in the Pacific, colonial policies were invented to support the “patriotic” spirit in Japan’s colonies. In the 1940s, Korean names of persons and streets were changed into Japanese style under the direction of colonialists. Within the Korean churches, the Old Testament, Revelations, and all Paul’s letters in the Bible were banned from use in Christian services. Later the other books of the Bible, with except of the four Gospels, were forbidden and most hymns that might have potential to motivate the independent mood amongst Korean Christian were eliminated. Most prominent Christian leaders, including earlier leaders of the March First Independence Movements, finally collaborated with colonialists, collected offerings for military weapons such as fighting planes, and supported Japan’s expansion into East Asia and other Pacific areas. In order to control Korean Christians, colonialists also forced Korean churches to fuse together with Japanese organizations. Therefore,



many Christians, including Yun, didn't attend church services, because the secret police watched closely public services and prayers.

Concerning Korean relations with Japan in the late 1930s and the 1940s, Yun argued that Korea should become "a Scotland of Japan, not an Ireland." It should be noted that he argued that the aggressive assimilation policy pushing Korean distinctive identity into one Japanese entity was a great mistake which colonialists made. Therefore, Yun's appeal for reconciliation between Koreans and Japanese was a call for harmony and equality between different races with distinctive identities, for example, customs, languages, history, welfare, and religion.

Thirdly, though he was devoted to Christian mission and advocated modern education, Yun didn't imitate Western Christianity and its theology uncritically. Indeed, he attempted to create a new type of Christianity in a Korean context, Korean Christianity for Koreans themselves. Concerning the power relation with missionaries, therefore, he was very critical about their arrogant and insensitive attitude to indigenous leaders and culture. Witnessing such a lack of sympathy and respect of missionaries, Yun advocated the autonomy of the Korean church and Christian education, and the adjustment of missionaries in their attitudes and training. In this sense, the fact that he became the first Korean President of Chosen Christian College in 1941 was an example of transferring power from missionaries to indigenous Christian leaders. Moreover, his criticism also extended to Western Christianity, its theological position, and its mission strategies. As was earlier examined, Yun emphasized spirituality and faith in action, which was able to touch the hearts of Koreans, rather than dogma and theological preaching.

Yun sought to create a Korean identity independent from the dominance and control of China, Japan, and even of the West, though he didn't deny the importance of interdependence with other countries. He was more convinced that Koreans themselves should decide where the country ought to go. If necessary, they were able to cooperate with others. In his mind, Korean identity should be based on autonomy and self-strengthening, which he believed could be achieved through mission as transformation.

### ***8.7.3. Mutual Learning in Respect and Love***

Yun devoted his life to the independence movement and Christian missions, but he didn't remain a narrow-minded extreme patriot or an exclusive Methodist. Rather, studying literature and world histories, he had learned the lessons from the past and made international religious networks. Encountering more civilized races and developed societies, Yun expected that Korea would become a virtuously developed Christian country in the future. Witnessing the corruption of the government and the despair of uneducated masses, he participated in reforming society and morality rather than remaining an observer. In this sense, his faith sought mutual learning in respect and love.

First, Yun argued that people of the West and the East should learn lessons from each other. In the early twentieth century, Japan and the USA exhibited positive trends of modernization that could be utilized in Korea, but they were not absolute in all respects. Recognizing limitations and weaknesses of human society, whether the East or the West, Yun argued that people should learn from one another and practice religious teaching sincerely in their daily life. Travelling, reading, and overseas studies caused him to open his eyes to the common suffering of human beings: the oppression of the stronger races over the weaker ones.

Yun believed that inter-religious gatherings and inter-religious dialogues would help people to reduce racial prejudice and respect the values of different cultures. But, he didn't seek to synthesize different religions into one universal faith. Indeed, advocating Christian mission, he emphasized Christian commitment and inspired Christians to live a very practical Christian life.

Yun also argued that despite the colonial situation Koreans should learn Japanese virtues such as diligence and discipline instead of hating them. Despite their extreme military spirit of expansionism, he claimed that Japan played a role in challenging Koreans to improve their social and moral life. It was not hatred and animosity but love and respect that made this mutual

learning possible. For instance, Yun visited the Shinto Shrines as a sign of respecting the ancestors of the Japanese, but he didn't relate this issue to a religious idolatry. By the same token, he supported ancestral rituals as an expression of filial piety. In the YMCA and church affairs, he continued to make friends with Japanese Christians and politicians, and promoted justice and equality for Koreans. Though he criticized Western missionaries for their lack of respect for indigenous culture, Yun regarded them as best friends of Koreans and was willing to cooperate with them in Christian mission and education.

Secondly, Yun accepted the truthfulness of religions because he was essentially a pragmatist. But he was very critical about religions, because they had long been used (or misused) to justify horrendous wars and violence in history and in many cases legitimized injustice, colonialism, and "superstitions," which he himself faced in Korea. Yun argued that religious ideals should be realized in daily life in order to establish peace in the world. Recognizing the power of simple and sincere faith amongst Koreans and supporting the religious revival, Yun claimed that violence should not be used in any case. For instance, he didn't participate in the March First Independence Movement of 1919, because he rejected a political resistance against colonialists by Cheondokyo leaders, who he claimed exploited believers and threatened their innocent lives. His pacifistic position made him unpopular among Koreans, particularly nationalists, but he didn't give up this conviction until he died. It is also important to notice that Yun advocated the importance of reforestation and emphasized human responsibility for preserving the environment.

Yun respected early Christian missionaries and leaders, particularly Henry Martin, A. J. Gordon, D. L. Moody, John Ross, Young Allen, Joseph Neesima, Uchimura Kanzo, and Booker Washington. Instead of simply learning their visions and strengths of Christian mission and education, Yun created a moderate but progressive trend in Korean Christianity, which connected Korean values with the Christian message. In this sense, his

religious creativity was to make room for encountering two worldviews: old and new, and the East and the West.

Thirdly, Yun advocated the necessity of forgiveness in many historic occasions of politics and religion. His Christian conviction that all human beings are sinful before God developed two distinctive views: the importance of education and the necessity of forgiveness. The traditional Confucian view on human goodness was gradually replaced by a Christian view on human sinfulness, with which he explained his existential situation in the midst of political turmoil and colonial oppression. On the one hand, he argued that human sinfulness required people to participate in a consistent process of education through life, and Christians to sanctify their lives and improve the society around them. In 1906, he founded an industrial mission school and Yun committed himself to the development of Christian higher education, including the education of women and children. On the other hand, he recognized that forgiveness was necessary for the reconciliation and peace of Koreans divided in conflicts with different races of distinctive traditions and cultures. Therefore, he took the part of making peace between Northern and Southern Koreans, which resulted in the union of Korean Methodist churches in 1930.

It is clear that the Biblical story of the prodigal son influenced Yun throughout his life and offered Yun a Christian model of reconciliation and forgiveness. Though he strongly criticized arrogant and paternalistic attitudes of certain Western missionaries towards indigenous Christians, Yun was sympathetic to missionary endeavors that sought to help spiritual and moral growth on several occasions. When he had been abandoned in Paris by his ruler and countrymen in 1896, Yun recalled the story of the prodigal son. Recognizing himself as a sinner before God the Father, who forgave his sins and embraced him, Yun recovered his religious conviction.

Therefore, Yun proposed a generous amnesty for political criminals of events such as the murder of Queen Min, the March First Independence Movement, and pro-Japanese Koreans after liberation in 1945. In order to unite Koreans, Yun attempted to rebuild a new Korean identity through ecumenical and educational

efforts. In the process of keeping a moderate political position, however, Yun became marginalized from both sides and unpopular among the Korean masses. It is clear that the 1938 *Heung Eop* Club Accident was an important external force in changing the direction of Yun's political attitude to colonialists. But it should be noticed that Yun's Christian view on peace, which was central to his later thought, and his own interpretation of colonial policy as reconciliation, caused him to collaborate with colonialists.

### **8.8. Conclusion**

Yun continued to recognize the importance of gradual cultural transformation until he died of a stroke in 1945. Under Confucian and Christian influences, Yun created a Korean model of Christian mission as transformation in post-colonial Korea and also applied this model to the Korean context of rebuilding the nation after liberation. Seeking for a contact point between two different worldviews, Yun proposed to new political leaders "a benevolent Paternalism," an alternative political system to pure democracy and radical communism on either extreme.

When Neo-Confucianism encountered Western Christianity through Korean agents, they created a new form of Christianity, which I call Korean Christianity. Yun was one of the early Korean Christians who engaged in this process of creating a new Korean Christian identity. His Confucian education and reform mindedness offered Yun a fundamental worldview, which encouraged virtues and practical knowledge in daily life. Recognizing the lack of authority to accomplish Confucian ideals, however, Yun saw Christianity as the only hope to reform and transform corrupted Korean society and to save Koreans from foreign colonial powers.

In this sense, Yun was a creative thinker and progressive activist. Criticizing Christian missionaries and their arrogant attitude to indigenous cultures, Yun suggested that missionaries and indigenous leaders should cooperate with one another in missionary works and Christian education. Instead of using retributive violence against the colonial government, Yun chose to collaborate with them and preserve the existing Korean Christian community, particularly Christian educational communities, from further colonial oppression and persecution.

As was examined in the analysis of *Old-Man's Ruminations* and *Aegukga* (the Song of Love for the Country), Yun was convinced that Koreans should be united in one nation, one spirit, and one mind, with gratitude and humility. Rejecting extreme revolutions such as “pure democracy” and “radical communism,” Yun proposed a “benevolent paternalism,” which I claim was a contact point between the Confucian worldview and Christian value, and a transitional model towards democracy and socialism. Witnessing conflict and segregation amongst divided Koreans, including “patriots” and “collaborators,” Yun argued that “pro-Japanese” collaborators were forced to support colonialists and accept their policies. Encouraging forgiveness and its merits in rebuilding the nation, Yun advocated a general amnesty for collaborators.

It should be noted that for Yun both his Confucian worldview and his Christian faith contributed to the creation of a viable Korean model for Christian mission and education. Along with his emphasis on gradual transformation, Yun addressed the importance of reform after liberation and wanted to harmonize “old” traditions and “new” values, without excluding either side.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has examined the religious life and thought of Yun Chi-ho in a Korean context, which previous interpretations have largely ignored. Along with an analysis of religious, cultural, and historical context, this thesis has investigated Yun's personal and psychological development by analyzing his diaries and other works from a religious perspective that involves neither a confessional nor a reductive interpretation. In order to avoid the generalization or simplification of his religious creativity, I have divided his life into six stages (from chapter three to chapter eight) and analyzed the main religious themes of these periods. Contrary to previous images of Yun as "traitor," "hero," or "victim," the thesis concludes that Yun was a religious pilgrim who sought religious meaning in the midst of the complexity of personal difficulties and political terrors. Contrary to most early Korean Christians, who adopted Western Christianity as the absolute (and even the most orthodox) model of the Christian message, Yun responded to the West and Western Christianity in the following creative ways.

First, Yun's concept of the objective of Christian missions sought not sudden conversion but gradual transformation, which caused him to correlate religion with politics, the Christian message with Korean culture, and the sacred with the secular. For him, the symbolic centre of Christianity was the educational community, where believers cultivated their talents and gifts for the service of others. This community was distinct from the attempts of Western missionaries to copy their own culture as patterns in the hearts of indigenous Christians. Against the dominant belief in Christian mission that evangelism, particularly sudden conversion, should be the primary task of missionary work, Yun propagated a more balanced legacy of social engagement in Korean Christianity by devoting himself to the YMCA, Christian higher education, and ecumenism. According to Yun, Christians should commit themselves to realizing Christian ideals in their daily lives and changing society through the spiritual power of the Christian message. It was through Christian education that Yun attempted to improve the moral, intellectual, and economic standards of Korea and it was Christian education that was the linchpin for ultimate political independence.

Secondly, because of his emphasis on social reform, Yun didn't isolate himself from controversial public issues, from which Western missionaries isolated indigenous Christians. He instead sought a moderate path among extreme military nationalists and colonialists, and extreme transcendental religionists, by advocating positive cultural and intellectual movements amongst the Koreans. It should also be noted that Koreans had long struggled with not only the external exploitation of foreign power, but also serious internal divisions, particularly between Northern and Southern Koreans. Therefore, Yun was more convinced that the colonial period was an opportunity for Koreans to heal ethnic and geographic divisions by overcoming personal desires and recovering a public spirit. Contrary to the forced assimilation of colonialists – that Korean identity should be merged into one Japanese entity – Yun attempted to reconcile the Koreans and the Japanese by advocating the equality and diversity of Koreans in the name of justice and harmony. It is clear that such a unique interpretation of colonial policy has long been ignored or despised, especially within nationalist and ideological discourse. In this sense, Yun did not remain an armchair theologian but a contextual theologian, a Christian activist who had great concern about public issues in the light of the Christian message.

Thirdly, in order to meet the political and existential needs of Koreans, Yun resisted Western Christianity, dominated by theological dogma and racial arrogance. Instead of adopting the Western overemphasis on individual salvation, he advocated the importance of corporate spirituality and faith in action. It is often believed that Western Christianity played an important role as a liberator in motivating an independent spirit and educating future leaders among the Koreans. Along with its positive contribution, however, Yun's diary revealed the strong anti-missionary mood of indigenous Christian leaders and the hope of recovering the autonomy of Korean Christian communities.

Fourthly, Yun recognized the importance of inter-religious meeting and dialogue for challenging his own faith and reducing racial prejudice in society. Criticizing the creation of a synthetic religion and the lack of missionary spirit, he paid more attention to the particular distinctions of religions and more to the practice of ideals in life than to the universality of the religions and philosophical reflections. It is also important to notice that, concerning his appreciation of religions, Yun used



both substantive and functional definitions. On the one hand, defending the historical Trinitarian faith in God against the Unitarian position, Yun claimed that Christianity was “superior” to other religions in terms of its practical value. On the other hand, Yun emphasized the continuity between the traditional worldview and the Christian message and created a Korean alternative to Western Christianity. It is clear that his functional definition of religion and his pragmatic evaluation of religions made him retain a more open attitude towards other religious traditions than his contemporaries.

Fifthly and finally, Yun accepted the truthfulness of religions even though he strongly criticized them for their justification of war and violence and failure to reform society. Experiencing ongoing wars and horrendous violence, he was convinced that he had to choose the lesser among the evils surrounding him, for he accepted the Christian notion that the individual and the society were both sinful. In order to bring peace to the world, therefore, believers should practice their religious ideals more intentionally in daily life and in relation to society. Introducing new horizons to indigenous traditions, Yun argued that people of the West and the East should learn from each other with respect and love. Therefore, Yun advocated the necessity and use of religious renewal in achieving social and moral reform.

Instead of abandoning the traditional worldview, Yun transformed it in the process of accepting and practicing the Christian faith. Using his religious creativity, therefore, Yun contributed to making a viable model of Christian missions and education and sought a new Korean identity in the midst of the terrors of history.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## *A. Archival Sources*

### **1. Yale University Divinity School Library, Special Collections**

John R. Mott Papers, including Letters from John R. Mott to Yun Chi-ho, 1910-1911 and

Letter from Yun Chi-ho to John R. Mott, 1910.

George Sherwood Eddy Papers, including his letters and reports on Korea.

### **2. Yonsei University Library**

Letters from Yun Chi-ho to Young John Allen, 1888-1906.

Letters from Yun Chi-ho to Warren A. Candler, 1891-1910.

### **3. Drew University Library**

Korea File, Missionary File Series, United Methodist Church Archives

### **4. World Council of Churches Library**

Letters from Arthur J. Brown to Masanao Hanihara, 1912

Letter from Missionaries, including Samuel Moffett, to Count Terauchi, 8 January 1912

Arthur Brown, "The Japanese Arrests of Koreans," Statement to the Press, 16 February 1912.

Letter from Philip L. Gillett and J. L. Gerdine to John R. Mott, 22 May 22.

Letter from John R. Mott to J. H. Oldham, 1 July 1912.

Letter from Galen M. Fisher to John R. Mott, 3 August 1912.

Minutes of the Conference on the Situation in Korea, New York, 11 October 1912

Letter from George Macalpine to Arthur Brown, 6 March 1913.

Arthur Brown, "The Korean Conspiracy Case," 1 April 1913.

Letter from J. R. Fleming to J.H. Oldham, 18 August 1913.

Letter from Frank Herron Smith to Sidney Gulick, 10 January 1920.

The Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, "The Korean Situation," June 1920.

Letter from W. R. Foote to A. Oltmans, 30 October 1920.

Alex R. Mackenzie, "Account of Japanese Military Persecution of Koreans," November 1920.

## ***B. Newspapers, periodicals and reports***

### **1. Newspapers**

*Independent, The* 1896-1898; reprint. 3 vols. Seoul: Gapeul chulpansa, 1987.

*Illustrated London News, The*

*Religious Herald, The*

*Times, The*

### **2. Periodicals**

*China Weekly Review, The*

*Gospel in All Lands, The*

*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*

*International Review of Mission*

*Korea Journal*

*Korea Mission Field, The*. 1905-1941; reprint. Seoul: Hangukgidokgyosa yeonguhoe, 1986.

*Korean Repository, The*

### **3. Reports**

Centenary Committee, *China Centenary Missionary Conference*. Shanghai: Centenary Committee, 1907.

World Missionary Conference 1910. Report of Commission I, *Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910.

\_\_\_\_\_. Report of Commission II, *The Church in the Mission Field*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The History and Records of the Conference: Together with Addresses Delivered at the Evening Meetings*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910.

Yun, Chi-ho. "The School at Songdo," *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, Nashville, 1906.

#### ***C. Personal interviews***

Kim Heung-soo, Professor of Church History, Mokwon University, Daejeon, South Korea, 11 April, 2005.

Yun Chun-byeong, Bishop of Korean Methodist Church, Seoul, South Korea, 12 April, 2005.

#### ***D. Unpublished papers and theses***

##### **1. Unpublished papers**

Ahn, Shin. "Religion and Religions in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Korea," British Association of the Study of Religions, Oxford, England, September 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Strawberries or Shakespeare?: Mission and Ministry in Korea with Special Reference to Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945)," Methodist Missionary Society Conference, Birmingham, England, November 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Religious Interpretation of Yun Chi-ho as *Homo Religiosus*," PhD Seminar of Religious Studies, The University of Edinburgh, Scotland, December 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. "What is Religion Doing in War?: Religions in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Korea with Special Reference to Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945)," World Congress International

Association of History of Religions, Tokyo, Japan, March 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Beyond Conversion and Dialogue: A Korean Model of Christendom," British and Irish Association of Mission Studies, Belfast, Ireland, June 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945)'s International Religious Network: Dialogue or Mission?," British-Scandinavian Conference, Lund, Sweden, November 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "*Channmiga* (Songs of Praise) as a Korean Response to Missionaries," Yale-Edinburgh Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Korean Christian Vision of Reconciliation, Embrace, and Forgiveness – Yun Chi-ho (1865-1945), Christian Mission, and Education," International Conference on Peace and Reconciliation, York, England, August 2006.

Young, Richard Fox. "Softening the Light, Mingling with the Dust," Yale-Edinburgh Conference, New Haven, USA, July 2003.

## **2. Theses**

Cester, Koen De. "From Modernization to Collaboration, the Dilemma of Korean Cultural Nationalism: The Case of Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945)." Ph.D. thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1994.

Choi, Sun-il. "John Ross (1842-1915) and the Korean Protestant Church: The First Korean Bible and its Relation to the Protestant Origins in Korea." Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992.

Keum, Jooseop. "Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994." Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2002.

Koh, Moo-song. "Robert J. Thomas: A Historical Study of an East-West Encounter through his Mission." Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1995.

## *E. Printed books and articles*

### **1. Books**

- Anderson, G. H. ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998.
- Angell, Norman. *The Great Illusion*. London: Heineman, 1933.
- Arberry, A. J. *The Koran Interpreted*. London: Allen and Urwin, 1955, reprinted 1996.
- Ariarajah, Wesley. *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*. The Risk Book Series, 26, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1987.
- Barrett, David B., ed. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, A.D. 1900-2000*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Barrow, John Henry. ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions*. London : Review of Reviews Office, 1893.
- Berthrong, John H. *Transformations of the Confucian Way*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1998.
- Bird, Isabella Lucy. *Korea and Her Neighbours*. London: John Murray, 1898.
- Bolaji, Idowu. *Towards an Indigenous Church*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Brown, Arthur Judson. *The Korean Conspiracy Case*. Northfield, MA: Northfield Press, 1912.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *Chartism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Chapman and Hall, 1842.
- Cavendish, Alfred Edward John. *Korea and the Sacred White Mountain*. London: G. Philip & Son, 1894.
- Ching, Julia. *Confucianism and Christianity – A Comparative Study*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977.
- Chung, Chai-Sik. *Korea – The Encounter between the Gospel and Neo-Confucian Culture*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997.
- Clark, Charles Allen. *Religions of Old Korea*. Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1961.
- Commission on Theological Concerns, Christian Conference of Asia. ed. *Minjung Theology – People as the Subjects of History*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983.

- Comstock, Gray L. *Religious Autobiographies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Thomson, 2004 (1995).
- Continuation Committee, *The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia 1912-1913*, New York: n.p., 1913.
- Costa, Ruy O. ed. *One Faith, Many Cultures – Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization*. New York: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Cracknell, Kenneth. *Justice, Courtesy, and Love – Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914*, London: Epworth Press, 1995.
- Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun – A Modern History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.
- Curzon, George Nathaniel. *Problems of the Far East – Japan, Korea, China*. London: Longmans, 1894.
- Dallet, Charles. *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*. Paris : Palmé, 1874.
- Demonlins, Edmond. *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What Is It Due?*. New York: R. F. Fenno, 1898.
- Dickens, Peter. *Social Darwinism*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. trans. by Rosemary Sheed. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Sacred and the Profane – the Nature of Religion*. tans. by Willard Trask, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. trans. by Willard R. Trask, London : Arkana, 1989.
- Erikson, Erik H. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: International Universities Press, 1959.
- Fingarette, Herbert. *Confucius – The Secular as Sacred*. London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972.
- Fletcher, Joseph. *Situation Ethics*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966.
- Fosdick, Harry Emerson. *The Meaning of Prayer*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Student Christian Movement, 1916.
- Friesen, J. Stanley. *Missionary Response to Tribal Religions at Edinburgh 1910*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1996.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. trans. by Joel Weinsheiner and Donald Marshall, New York: Continuum, 1999.

- Gairdner, W. H. T. *“Edinburgh Conference 1910”: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910.
- Grayson, James Huntley. *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea – A Study in the Emplantation of Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Korea: A Religious History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Language, Culture, and Translation*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1999.
- Gross, Francis L. Jr. *Introducing Erik Erikson*. London: University Press of America, 1987.
- Hamilton, Angus. *Korea*. London : William Heinemann, 1904.
- Han, Woo-keun. *The History of Korea*. trans. by Lee Kyung-shik, Seoul: The Eul-Yoo Publishing, 1970.
- Hinnells, John. *The New Penguin Handbook of Living Religions*. London: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Hogg, William Richey. *Ecumenical Foundations – A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth-Century Background*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952.
- Hollis, Michael. *Paternalism and the Church*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- International Missionary Council. *The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems*. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *Hanguk Gidokgyoeui Yeoksa* (A History of Korean Church). 2 vols. Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1989-1990.
- Jensen, Lionel M. *Manufacturing Confucianism*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1997.
- Jeon, Taek-bu. *Ingan Sin Heung-u* (A Biography of Cynn Hugh). Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tobagi Sinangsanmaek* (Mountain Range of Indigenous Faith) 3 vols. Seoul: Gonghwachulpansa and Korean Christian Press, 1977-1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hankukgidokgyocheongnyeonhoiundongsa* (A History of the Korean YMCA movements). Seoul: Beomusa, 1994.
- Jeong, Byeong-jo and Lee Seok-ho. *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Buddhism and Taoism*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991.



- Jwaongyunchihomunhwasaepohoe. *Yunchihoui Saengaewa Sasang* (Yun Chi-ho's life and thought). Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1998.
- Kang, Wi Jo. *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea – A History of Christianity and Politics*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Keum, Jang-tae. *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Confucianism*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Yuhaksasangui Ihae* (Understanding of Confucian thought). Seoul: Jipmundang, 1996.
- Kim, C. I. Eugene and Han-kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.
- Kim, Eul-han, *Jwaong Yun Chi-ho Jeon* (A Biography of Jwaong Yun Chi-ho). 1978, reprinted. Seoul: Ulyumunhwasa, 1998.
- Kim, Hong-cheol, Kim Sang-il and Jo Heung-yun, *Hankukjonggyo Sasangsa* (Korean Religious History) – *Jeungsangyo, Won-Buddhism, and Shamanism*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1992.
- Kim, Kyoung Jae. *Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions*. Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1994.
- Kim, Tak. *Hankukui Gwanjesinang* (Korean Gwanje Belief). Seoul: Seonhaksa, 2004.
- Kim, Yeong-hi, *Jwaong Yun Chi-ho Seunsang Yakjeon* (A Short Biography of Yun Chi-ho). 1934, reprinted. Seoul: Jwaong Yun Chi-ho munhwasaepohoe, 1999.
- Kraemer, H. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. New York: Harper Brothers for International Missionary Council, 1938.
- Lamotte, Etienne. *History of Indian Buddhism – from the Origins to the Saka Era*, tans. by Sara Webb-Boin, Louvain: Universite Catholique de Louvain Institut Orientaliste, 1988.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christian Missions in China*. London: SPCK, 1929.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*. New York: Harper and Row, 1941.
- Lee, Jung Young. ed. *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective – Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988.

- Lee, Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*. trans. Edward W. Wagner, Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Lee, Neung-hwa. *Hangukdogyosa* (A History of Korean Taoism). 1958, reprint. Seoul: Boseongmunhwasa, 1996.
- Leeuw, G. van der. *Religion in Essence and Manifestation – A Study in Phenomenology*. trans. by J. E. Turner, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.
- Legge, James. Trans. *The Four Books*. Shanghai: The Chinese Book Company 1930.
- Lewis, James B. *Frontier Contact between Choson Korea and Tokugawa Japan*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine – Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984.
- Lull, Timothy F. ed. *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
- McCutcheon, Russell. *Manufacturing Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- McKenzie, F. A. *Korea's Fight for Freedom*. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co. 1920.
- McNamara, Dennis L. *The Colonial Origins of Korean Enterprise, 1910-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Min, Kyeong-Bae. *Hangukgidokgyohoisa* (Korean Church History), 3<sup>rd</sup>. Seoul: Yosei University Press, 1996.
- Mott, John R. *The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia, 1912-1913*. New York: Continuation Committee, 1913.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott*. 6 vols. New York: Associated Press, 1946-1947.
- Müller, Max. *On Missions*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873.
- Mullins, Mark R. and Richard Fox Young, ed. *Perspectives on Christianity in Korea and Japan – The Gospel and Culture in East Asia*. Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.
- Nam, Andrew C. *Korea, Tradition & Transformation: A History of the Korean People*. Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym, 1988.

- National History Compilation Committee, comp. *Yun Chi-ho's Diary, 1883-1906*. 6 vols. Seoul: Tamgudang, 1973-1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. comp. *The Collected Letters of Yun Tchi Ho*. Seoul: Sisamuhwasa, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. comp. *Yun Chi-ho's Diary, 1916-1943*. 5 vols. Seoul: Sisamunhwasa, 1986-1989.
- Neill, Stephen. *A History of Christian Missions*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*. Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1971.
- Nock, A.D. *Conversion – the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Oxford: Claredon Press, 1933.
- Paik, Jong Koe. *Constructing Christian Faith in Korea – The Earliest Protestant Mission and Ch'oe Byong-hon*. Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1998.
- Paik, L. George. *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1971.
- Palmer, Spencer J. *Korea and Christianity – The Problem of Identification with Tradition*. Seoul: Hollyim, 1967.
- Pals, Daniel L. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Park, Ung Kyu. *Millennialism in the Korean Protestant Church*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005.
- Peters, John Leland. *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1956.
- Potter, Philip and Thomas Wieser. *Seeking and Serving the Truth – The First Hundred Years of the World Student Christian Federation*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997.
- Rambo, Lewis R. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Rikihei, Inoguchi, *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978.
- Robinson, Michael Edson. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988.
- Ross, Andrew. *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

- Rouse, Ruth. *The World's Student Christian Federation – A History of the First Thirty Years*. London: S. C. M. Press, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. and Stephen Charles Neil. *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*. London: SPCK, 1954.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Sanneh, Lamin. *West African Christianity- the Religious Impact*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Translating the Message – The Missionary Impact on the Culture*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Encountering the West – Christianity and Global Cultural Process*. London: Marshall Pickering, 1993.
- Seager, Richard Hughes. *The World's Parliament of Religions: the East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Seo, Jeong-min. *Ilbon Gidokgyoui Hankukinsik* (Japanese Christianity and its Understanding of Korea. Seoul: Hanul Academy, 2000.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. London : S.P.C.K., 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *What is Scripture? – A Comparative Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Snodgrass, Judith. *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition*. Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Suh, David Kwang-sun. *The Korean Minjung in Christ*. Hong Kong: The Christian Conference of Aisa, 1991.
- Tatlow, Tissington. *The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland*. London: SCM Press, 1933.
- Thompson, T. Jack. *Christianity in Northern Malawi – Donald Fraser's Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture*. Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Touching the Heart – Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi, 1876-1888*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2000.
- Underwood, Horace G. *The Religions of Eastern Asia*. New York: Macmillan, 1908.

- Underwood, Horace H. *Modern Education in Korea*. New York: International Press, 1926.
- Underwood, Lillias Horton. *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots - Life in Korea*. Boston: American Tract Society, 1904.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History – Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History - Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002.
- Weber, Max. *The Sociology of Religion*. trans. by Ephraim Fishoff, London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1963.
- Wells, Kenneth M. *New God, New Nation – Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990.
- Whaling, Frank. *Christian Theology and World Religions – A Global Approach*. Basingstoke: Marchall Pickering, 1986.
- Yang, Heon-he. *Yun Chi-howa Kim Gyo-sin* (Yun Chi-ho and Kim Gyo-sin). Seoul: Hanul, 1994.
- Yu, Dong-sik. *Hankuksinhakui Gwangmaek* (The Vein of Korean Theologies). Seoul: Junmangsa, 1982.
- Yu, Yeong-yeol. *Gaehwagiui Yun Chi-ho Yeongu* (The Study on Yun Chi-ho in Early Modern Korea). Seoul: Hangilsa, 1985.
- Yun, Chi-ho. *Chanmiga*, (Songs of Praise), 1907, reprint. Seoul: Gwanghakseogwan, 1908.
- Yun, I-Heum. *Hyeondaeinui Samgwa Jonggyo* (Life and Religion of Modern Person). Seoul: Hanrimwon, 1993.

## **2. Articles**

- Alles, Gregory D. "Homo Religiousus," ed. Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York, N.Y. : Macmillan, 1987, 442-445.
- Catherine Cornille, "Double Religious Belonging: Aspects and Questions," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 23 (2003), 43-49.
- Ceuster, Koen de. "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 207-242.

- Courant, Maurice. "Korean Religions," ed. James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908.
- Cox, James. "The Harvest Field Controversy: The Roots of Mission and Christian Unity at Edinburgh 1910," *Missiology* 12, no. 2 (April 1984): 147-154.
- Cram, W. G. "Songdo North Circuit," *The Korea Mission Field*, vol.4, no.9 (Sep.,1907): 141
- Hirakawa, Sukehiro. "Return to Japan or Return to the West?," *Comparative Literature Studies* 37.2 (2000): 196-211.
- Hogg, W. Richy. "Edinburgh 1910–Perspective." *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* (October 1980): 146-153.
- Jeong, Tae-jin. "Yun Chi-ho and Patristic Song," ed. by Jwaong Yun Chi-ho muhwasaephoi, *Yun Chi-houi Saegaewa Sasang* (Yun Chi-ho's Life and Thought). Seoul: Ulyomuhwasa, 1998, 293-303.
- Jo, Heung-yun. "The Characteristics of Korean Minjung Culture." *Korea Journal*, vol. 27, no.11 (1987): 4-18.
- Kerr, David. "Islamic Da'wa and Christian Mission: Toward a Comparative Analysis." *International Review of Mission*. vol. 89, no. 353 (April 2000): 150-171.
- Kim, Sang-tae. "Iljeha Yunchihoui Naemyeonsaegewa Hankuk Geundaesa (Yun Chi-ho's Inner World and Modern Korean History)," *Yunchiho Ilgi* (Yun Chi-ho's diary). Seoul: Yeoksabipyongsa, 2001, 26-54.
- Kim, Y. H. "A Short Sketch of Dr. T. H. Yun's Life." *The Korea Mission Field*, vol. 31, no. 3 (March 1935): 45-50.
- Lee, Jung Young. "Korean Christian Thought," ed. Alister E. McGrath, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993, 309-313.
- Sanneh, Lamin. "Theology of Missions," ed. David Ford, *The Modern Theologians*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 555-574.
- Sawyer, Harry. "The First World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh 1910." *International Review of Mission* 67, no. 265 (July 1978): 271.
- Stackhouse, Max. "Missions: Missionary Activity," ed. Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan, 1987, 563-570.

Walls, Andrew F. "Missions: East Asia," ed. N.M. de S. Cameron, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1993, 587-589.

\_\_\_\_\_. "From Christendom to World Christianity: Missions and Demographic Transformation of the Church," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* vol. 22, no. 3 (2001): 306-330.

Yates, T. E. "Christian Approaches to Other Religious Traditions: The International Review of Missions 1912-1939." *Mission Studies* 6, no. 1 (1989): 41-50.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Edinburgh Revisited: Edinburgh 1910 to Melbourne 1980." *Churchman* 94, no.2 (1980): 145-155.

Yun, Chi-ho. "Confucianism in Korea," *The Korean Repository* (November 1895): 400-404.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Anglo-Korean School, Songdo," *The Korea Mission Field*, vol.4, no.9 (Sep., 1907): 142-143.