

<Setting North Korean Human Rights Issue as the Agenda Doesn't Help Improving Human Rights in North Korea>**Korea University LIBERTAS****Se-young Hwang, Ji-ho Park, Seung-min Choo**

Mr. Thae Yong Ho, a former North Korean diplomat who defected to South Korea in 2016, once explained that North Korea is not a communist society, but a slave society inherited from the Kim's family. In other words, North Koreans always have to live under the orders from the Kim's family, with their freedom being deprived. Considering the seriousness of North Korean human rights issue, both the liberals and conservatives in South Korea have no dispute over solving such challenges. Yet, there is a difference between the two in terms of ways of solving the issue. In our introduction, we will first give a brief update on North Korean human rights issue in order to remind ourselves the severity of the problem. Then, we will offer two arguments as to why North Korean human rights issue should not be included as the agenda of the inter-Korean summit. Lastly, we would like to suggest an effective solution to improve human rights situation in North Korea.

Let's start off the discussion by looking at the current human rights situation in North Korea. As the totalitarians state, North Korea widely restricts the freedom of each individuals. For example, the state gives limits on the movement of North Koreans, even though the right to settle, move, and travel is prescribed on the constitution. Like the job placement, the right to settle and move is only allowed in specific occasions and one has no choice but to follow the state's decision since job placement is determined by the state. In principle, travelling is permitted within the cities or counties, but one has to get

permission from his/her affiliation in order to move to other places. Travelling to places like the border area or Pyongyang requires permission number.

Is there a right to vote in North Korea? Right to vote empowers people to take part in politics, express their intent or even get an official position through voting. Anyone has the freedom to choose whether to vote or not and has the freedom to vote for its preferable candidate. Interestingly, the law states that people can vote under the principle of direct election and it should be taken confidentially. However, in reality, voting takes place for the only candidate nominated by the Worker's Party. The result of the voting in North Korea shows that the candidate usually gets elected unanimously. Not only does the state completely regulate to ensure political intent is not expressed, but it also regulates the communication measures to block the influx of outside world information. North Korean has to report to the state once it obtains products like radio, recording machine, television and so on within a week and get them sealed. If the products are found unsealed, the state will consider the individual for watching and listening foreign broadcasts illegally and punish him/her as a political prisoner.

Freedom of religion is also restricted by the North government. Freedom of religion is superficially guaranteed under the constitution, but it is not allowed indeed. In fact, Kim stated on the religion as "Religion is a view of world which occurs resisting and non-scientific belief."

If people have any kind of religion, the class consciousness and willingness of revolution would be paralyzed. Eventually, religion is another name of opium.” Besides, Human Right Watch, which is an institution for human rights, also reported the reports ‘Facts of Rape Affairs in North Korea’. According to this report, it is prevailed that there are many females who are suffered from sexual assaults by the North Korean elites. In addition to this report, these females cannot accuse their situation to the government since the stigma and revenge must be followed, also there is no practical remedy system to protect them.

Therefore, considering the status quo of North Korean human rights, we must make an effort to improve the human rights of North Koreans regardless of the political camp.

Human rights nowadays have developed beyond civil liberties and the social rights and have reached up to solidarity rights. But in North Korea, even the civil liberties which are the most primitive Human rights, cannot be guaranteed by the North Korea regime and their political system.

In this regard, South Korea has to endeavor to improve North Korea's human rights, but it won't be an actual support for North Korean if 'human rights in North Korea' is proposed during the Inter-Korean Summit. The practical way to upgrade the human rights in North Korea is to make a fundamental environment to let North Korean recognize their rights by themselves.

Until now, we and the international society kept required North Korea to stop violating the human rights. But North Korea has no willingness to deal with the issue. We can easily know that by the attitude of North Korea, They keep asserting

that there's no violation of human rights in North Korea. When Otto Warmbier, who had fallen into a coma at North Korea, passed away at the United states, Warmbier's North Korean doctor interviewed every Warmbier's indexes related with life was normal. He came up with a conspiracy theory that the US government intentionally killed Warmbier under a political motive. They also never admitted the existence of prison camp. Like this, every single time when North Korean human rights issue makes headline, North Korea rebuts under the logic of they have their own human rights which is different with western human rights. They say that North Korea is a nation works like a big family, so violation of human rights never happens. Simultaneously they condemn the movement made by international society to solve the human rights of North Korea, saying that its ultimate goal is the collapse of North Korean government. This gives us a pessimistic view that although our government comes up with human rights issues at 'Inter-Korean Summit', things will never going to change.

If South Korean government propose the issue of human rights in North Korea during the summit, North would blame the South government on 'infringement of their sovereignty'. By any chance, because of this backlash, if the North Korean Government cancels the conference, it could further worsen the human rights situation in North Korea. It would be helpful to neither the relationship of each governments nor the human rights in North Korea.

Although it could be inferred that the North is not a sovereignty state under the Korean Constitution, but under this current condition, South Korea should regard North as the sovereignty state, in order to achieve the conference and making a peaceful cooperation.

In 1991, South and North joined UN at the same time, and under the UN Charter, it is not allowed to interfere in domestic affairs of each state. In addition, when South and North made Inter-Korean Basic Agreement in 1991, both agreed not to make any interference in their domestic affairs. In those regards, posing a problem on human rights in North Korea, cannot be freely done by South Korean government. There are limitations.

The official name of North Korea is Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Unlike the aristocracy and monarchy, in terms of the democracy, all authority in the state has to belong to the people and all governing has to be conducted for the people. But the political system in North Korea resembles with the monarchy because they allow the class distinctions under the privileged class and origins and the utmost privileged class Kim's family rule the whole state. This has been done by democratic centralism, which might allow the dictatorships under the name of people. But if the civil liberties which is the primitive version of human rights flows into the North Korea, class distinctions and monarchy would not be allowed and would lead to regime shift.

The first condition of cooperation is to maintain Kim's regime in North Korea, therefore improving human rights in North Korea would be huge threat to them since it is the sufficient condition for the regime shift. Proposing the issue of human rights would be sensed as justification for the North Government to breakdown of cooperation. After that, they would fortify the controlling system on the people in order for the country's survival from being isolated by the international society. Hence the human rights in North Korea would be much endangered than before.

Following these reasons, raising the issue of human rights in North Korea during the conference has to be treated very carefully. The best way to improve the human rights in North Korea is to develop the quality of life of the North Koreans, so that they could strive to find their rights themselves. South Korea needs to help North Korean to recover their rights, through making an adequate environment which they could consider their status in the state, by flowing the liberalism with cooperation, not making dissonance of cooperation due to the proposing the issue during the conference.

The way is to help and induce North Korean economic development and innovation. Of course, reckless economic support for North Korea will only lead to the fixation of North Korea's failed and exclusive economy. So the main goal of the economic support or cooperation should be the change of North Korean economic system. If we take a look at what actually is causing the violation of human rights in North Korea, we can find out that those things are happening to retain the vested rights of the privileged classes in North Korean society such as Kim families, Labor Party, the military authorities, etc. But after 1990s, when North Korean economy faced with serious economic hardship and letdown, this system also began to collapse. North Korean defector, Jin-Sung Jang said that at this time North Korea has fallen into a conflict of the ideal of protecting the absolute authority of Kim family and the reality of the increase of people who are adapting to the market system. North Korea chose the former, which is way far away from the reality. So North Korea chose the suppression and violation of human rights to keep the vested rights.

So, we can infer that inducing North Korean economic innovation is the fastest and the most

effective way to solve North Korean human rights problem. The thing that supports this hypothesis is 'Jangmadang (장마당)'. Jang, who was previously mentioned, also said that North Koreans only knew the worth of loyalty before. However, since Jangmadang (장마당) started to appear in North Korea, they started to know the worth of materials. So, people started to fall into the individualism. They started to require the payment with the government's mobilization. Also, the study 'The relation between North Korea's marketization and human rights' made by Korea Institute of National Unification shows that the development of North Korean internal market caused the advancement of the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter. It also caused the expansion of people's willingness of self-development.

If we consider the attitude of North Korea regarding with the human rights issue or the controversy related with the sovereignty, raising the human rights issue at the Inter-Korean Summit cannot be a practical means of solving the problem. Though North Korea had accepted some of the demands from the international society, it actually was not very helpful in solving the human rights issue in North Korea. Now we should stop daydreaming that North Korean government would deal with human rights issue by itself. Rather, we should help North Koreans to be enlightened and find their own human rights through economic reform in North Korea.