

An Interview with Han S. Park

Interviewer: Park Jai-In
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About the Interviewee Professor Park Han-sik holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and teaches international relations at the University of Georgia, focusing on the problem of peace. In 2002, he was director of the Institute for International Studies, and is currently professor emeritus at the university. Professor Park is the one who has personally practiced and proved that the inter-Korean mutual respect, dialogue, and engagement policy on the Korean Peninsula are the most effective. In recognition of his lifelong work, he was awarded the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize in 2010. Among books written in Korean is *Thinking Beyond the Line: About the Twelve Biases that Separate the South and the North* (Bookie, 2018).

About the Interviewer Park Jai-In earned a doctorate in literature with a focus on classic narrative and literary therapy, and became a research professor at the Institute of Humanities for Unification at Konkuk University in 2015. Currently, she is conducting research on emotional empathy and healing program development through integrated narrative, with a focus on social practice of the spirit of humanities for unification.

This interview was carried out at the office of the Director of the Institute of Humanities for Unification, Konkuk University in 2014.

Suggestions for Peace and Unification on the Korean Peninsula by a Korean-American Intellectual

What Unification Scholar Han S. Park Has to Say

Park Jai-In

In the past, when you talked about how you felt about being born in China and experiencing the North, you said, “I am an international person by birth, and I am a person who encompasses the South and the North by birth.” Your statement had a profound impact on me. I wonder about the processes and adversities you have had to endure to be here as a renowned unification scholar.

I'm a scholar through and through. Nevertheless, the experience of going to Pyongyang about sixty times was not just meaningful to me as a scholar. Of course, I am interested in North Korean society and have many questions, so I went because there was a scholarly desire to examine it more closely. However, I couldn't help but think of peace, as we have seen the inter-Korean relations proceed in an undesirable direction from division until today. At a time when I was unable to rule out a second Korean War, in the worst case scenario, in addition to the existing problems of separated families and military expenses, I vowed, as a scholar, to contribute to peace rather than focus on personal academic interests. But this isn't necessarily the role of a scholar. As a human being, and one of a divided country, I see both South Korea and North Korea my own homeland. Unification will not be difficult if both South and North Koreans become friends, but this is not easy to achieve. In Korea, the way of thinking is often divided into us versus the enemies, and such dichotomous thoughts and values have become entrenched in the culture. After liberation, the military culture became prevalent in this society as the war broke out. I went to the United States fifty years ago to study, and worked as an American scholar for fifty years. I didn't teach Far East problems there either. I taught philosophy of science and political philosophy for forty-five years, and in the first four to five years, I was extremely busy completing my master's and doctorate. That's why I'm returning to my homeland, to retire this year. I've been to North and South Korea, so I have experienced problems that come from living in said societies. So, when I look back on my life as a scholar, I have to define why I've walked this path. In retrospect, I need to discuss the living environment, the Korean War, and why I studied political science in the U.S. In addition, sixty years have passed since we communicated with North Korea, which is a very important problem in my life. If I hadn't become interested in the North Korea problem, I would have lived comfortably as a scholar in the United States. It's extremely difficult to go to North Korea. It's not just the South Korean government's attitude. One has to avoid arrows from all over the place. As I received anticommunist education, I

was very scared when I first went to Pyongyang. I thought to myself, “What if I die? I have a wife and children.” I felt so threatened and frustrated beyond what words could describe. Nevertheless, the painful experience of steadily concentrating on North Korea despite all the risks seems to be a significant achievement now. Hwang Sök-kün once said, “The history of the two Koreas seen through meaning,” but perhaps we should call it “division and the task of unification seen through meaning”? It’s a theme that I’m interested in. The problem of division should not be seen through political and institutional aspects, but through the perspectives of the humanities such as *mentalité* and culture. This is the standard for unification. We will feel it year by year, but if we don’t look at division in the manner I have just described, we don’t need unification. I have much to say about the desirable attitude toward the challenge of unification. And I would like to talk about how to view the two Koreas as well as heterogeneity and homogeneity of the two Koreas. I’m a person who doesn’t have a hometown. I’m a displaced person, forever. I’m honored to give myself the nickname a “man of peace.” A man for peace, a man of peace, a man who knows nothing other than peace. Because without peace, we become completely depleted. Then what is peace? How did I come to long for peace? The North Koreans were very kind to me and treated me as their friend. Why did they treat me as a friend? And why did I come to regard them as friends? What is a friend? After all, it all depends on my perspective and logic. In this regard, I would like to talk about dialectical unification. Thesis and antithesis are each South and North Korea, respectively, and the synthesis is unification. If we create peace, then we can achieve synthesis. But losing just one factor will lead to a failure to achieve the synthesis. Therefore, I think the two Koreas should be as when the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis meet at a higher level *vis-à-vis* peace. What should we do to achieve this? I often talk about the “house.” Unification is to go into a house and go under the roof together on a rainy day. But the people in the house use different rooms, separate kitchens, and separate bathrooms. In this type of living situation, there will be group expenditures. For example, if there is a hole in the roof of

the reception room and the snow is falling, we should help to fix it together. That's how real problems arise, and we need to work together to solve them. Therefore, if the two Koreas do not resolve and overcome their mistakes, there will be no thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. We have to start by finding a solution within ourselves, discovering and solving our own inherent contradictions. That's dialectical evolution and development. That's why we have to approach unification in such a way. It is my opinion that finding inherent contradictions in the two Koreas within South and North should be considered in humanities; without the humanities, it would be difficult. So what is the methodology based on the humanities? It is essential to consider the appropriate way to compare the two Koreas. It is a question of what to see in North Korea and what points of comparison there may be in South Korea. Some might say that they can be friends with North Korea, and others might say that this is difficult. We need to think about why I became a friend and why I can't be a comrade. Unification becomes easy when people are good friends, despite the discrepancies in the ideologies and lifestyles of the South and the North. However, in Korea, the dichotomy is fixed by the military culture. As the common saying goes, one is either a comrade or an enemy, so it is difficult to communicate or engage in relationships in any meaningful way. In looking at this from the political science point of view, one may say this is political ideology. I am an outsider in the humanities, but from a humanities perspective, a dichotomy is not appropriate. People are all different; there are conservatives, progressives, or many others in the middle of that spectrum at the same time. This is democratic. That's why we want to think about adherence to a humanistic society by North and South Koreans. I think considering how to compare the two Koreas could be a project to build a relationship between North Korea and South Korea. Thinking about how to appropriately compare North and South Korea from a humanistic perspective is a crucial issue. The two Koreas should establish practical preparations for unification. The success or failure of unification is in the preparation for unification. That's why it is called a preparation. Shouldn't we have a vision of

what the outcome of the preparation will be? We need to establish what a unified country, the North and the South, and the Korean Peninsula will look like. And the definition of distribution should be determined so as to be consistent. This is all about the problem of distribution. In addition, finding answers in terms of how best to organize the relationships between groups and individuals to create a unified Korea and similar problems is preparing for unification.

A Perspective on North Korea: A Family State Centered on Kim Il-sung as the Head of the Family

Park Jai-In

I think the starting point in comprehensively understanding the Korean Peninsula policy, inter-Korean relations, and nuclear issues is how to understand North Korea. Don't we need to pinpoint what the reality of North Korea is like so that we can find a solution? How do you think we should look at North Korea?

Han S. Park

First of all, I think it is not comprehensive to see North Korea as a republic, a simple hereditary state, a dictatorship, or a military state. North Korea should be regarded as a "family state." The concept of a family state is unknown to the world because the family and the nation have always been treated as discrete entities. However, I believe that by combining the two concepts of family and nation, "North Korea became a nation by expanding the family unit." To see the nation, we need to see the family culture, the family system, the relationships within the family, and the economic structure of the family. And we need to understand North Korea in such a light. North Korea's perpetuity, or unchangedness, is that it began as a family state and will continue to be a family state for a considerable period of time. Then, what is a family state? And why did this system become established in North Korea? We'll have to analyze this. A family state should be seen from a Confucian perspective; it should be considered

as a family that can be found in traditional Confucian societies, not in Western industrial, superindustrial, or urban societies. In Confucianism, the order of the family is very clearly established. Confucianism proposes a desirable, appropriate social order, which can be seen in its tenet of the Three Bonds and Five Relationships. The Three Bonds and Five Relationships defines relationships and delineates what a virtuous relationship is. This is done also in numerous Confucian texts, which discuss relationships between father and son, husband and wife, ruler and ministers, friends, and different hierarchies. In other words, Confucianism defines all relationships in society that we can possibly imagine. If we look at the family state from the perspective of Confucian culture, we need to examine the laws governing the family as well as the impact of family culture or Confucian culture on the family. The Confucian family is an extended family, so hierarchy is important. Hierarchy here is not simply determined by physical age. For example, an uncle is above me even if he is physically younger than I. So, if we were to bring together two people in a large family, we have to decide the hierarchy between the two: this is Confucianism. There's no confusion. In this regard, the fact that North Korea has followed or implemented the family system of Confucian culture means that the desirable relationship among all people in North Korean society is conceptualized. In the manifestations of the family in North Korean society, the most important is that it originated from Kim Il-sung. Kim Il-sung was born in 1912. His position as the father of North Korea has accumulated deep history and achievements. I think it is more than appropriate to establish that North Korea is a family state with Kim Il-sung as its patriarch. However, the family state exists beyond Kim Il-sung's lifetime. Family lasts forever in Confucian society through ancestral rites. In North Korea, a nation-wide ancestral rite is held on April 15, the birth date of Kim Il-sung. They celebrate, hold ancestral rites, and participate in all kinds of events. We have a mythical story that the Korean people are descendants of Tangun, and even after thousands of years, we are symbolically conscious that we are descendants of Tangun. In such a way, "North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) is a nation

for Kim Il-sung, created by Kim Il-sung, and where Kim Il-sung lasts forever, just as Tan'gun does." The idea of Juche was created to give legitimacy to this. Was Juche ideology created to guide politics? Of course, that's an element, but the main purpose of Juche ideology is to establish the culture and hierarchy of the family state. The founder of Juche ideology that North Koreans are aware of is Kim Il-sung. Also, leaders such as Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un are those who implemented the idea of Juche according to the needs of the times. People ask me the following questions frequently because I go to North Korea often and know North Korea well. "Did Kim Jong-un take power through proper means? Did Kim Jong-il take power by legitimate means?" The key to North Korea's power and political dynamics is Kim Il-sung even at this time. North Korea is still the nation of Kim Il-sung. Outsiders do not clearly understand this. If we think of Kim Il-sung as George Washington or South Korean President Syngman Rhee, we cannot possibly understand North Korea. Therefore, when it comes to understanding North Korea, the status of Kim Il-sung should be assumed as the head of the family. Kim Il-sung is referred to as *öböi suryöng*, literally Parent-Leader. In the Confucian family culture, parents are not leaders, per se. China's turbulent times also had some Confucian aspects. However, no place has a Confucian family system as strong as that of the Korean Peninsula. And it is our task to analyze that culture. However, Kim Il-sung is said to live forever in the family state. Living means changing. It's not stagnant. Then we should see how the spirit of Kim Il-sung as Juche ideology has changed, and how the next generation plays a role in the change. That change is an important issue.

The Background of the Establishment of the Ideological Foundation—Juche—of North Korean Society

Park Jai-In

In other words, it is difficult to fully understand North Korea unless we accurately understand the locus of Kim Il-sung

in North Korea. The ideological foundation that constitutes the current North Korean society is Juche ideology, and a family state centered on Kim Il-sung was established on this foundation. Could you elaborate on the meaning of Juche ideology in such a structure?

Han S. Park

As it is today, the most important issue after North Korea was established was to define its identity. This is the only way to establish a nation. Moreover, they were in competition with South Korea. It was crucial to establish a national identity that could gain an upper hand in a situation in which the North Korean system could be compared to the South Korean system. And this identity was Juche. South Korea had a pro-American liberal democracy in the Syngman Rhee government. In South Korea, there was an international foothold from the beginning of the nation's founding. Perhaps we could see it as a global nation? In any case, it began by relying on the U.S. to a certain extent, to understand it simply. While responding to the identity of the South, North Korea needed a national identity that could outperform that of the South. It was an identity that was emphasized "ourselves" or self-reliance in response to a foreign-influenced identity. Next, the main motivation for the establishment of Juche ideology is anti-Japanese thought, or resistance against Japan. Without knowing this strain, it is difficult to explain Juche. It has an absolute meaning in establishing the justification of Kim Il-sung's power. As we all know, Kim Il-sung organized a guerrilla group in Manchuria and led an anti-Japanese movement. Emphasizing this point, he said, "We have lost our country because of foreign influence, and so we can no longer rely on foreign power. Let us be self-reliant." This is Juche. And it has become an important driver of the establishment of the ideology.

Park Jai-In

So, what is the philosophical foundation of Juche?

Han S. Park

The first is human-centered thought directed to resist capitalism. Capitalism, in the North Korean view, is premised on materialism. As we know, Kim Il-sung was a devout Marxist. Marx's view of capitalism is determined by material

and by the market economy, so resistance against capitalism is to break away and escape from the market economy, which is Juche. There is a philosophical background of “human beings as the center of the universe.” The next important aspect in Juche is that it is collectivist by nature. The national system should be united, not divided by individualism, and the party leaders under the state all bear a collective meaning. Therefore, in Juche, individualism is verboten. “One for all, all for one.” This forms the core of North Korea’s ideological foundation. Juche ideology considers social structure as a political and social organization or a living body. The body must have a brain, nerves, and organs. And the brain is the core of the body because the brain determines everything. That’s why the organization system is operated wherein North Korea’s Workers’ Party can take the center stage so that the nation may move in unison. With the brain as the center, numerous organizations, including the military and bureaucracy, can function as a single organic entity. Next, the philosophical background of Juche ideology is ethnonationalism, an ideology formed for the Korean people. In a way, what is underlying Juche is the philosophical and subjective background of the superiority of the ethnonation. Therefore, all policies concerning international relations, economy, society, culture, and education are premised on Juche ideology. Then was Juche born overnight? No, the term “Juche” has been in use for a long time, but Juche ideology was systematized after the end of the Korean War as the power struggle became quite severe in the midst of the nation being organized. People from different sociocultural backgrounds organized the Workers’ Party of Korea in disparate places, and there was work from the mid-1950s to the late 1950s to organize the party to localize and consolidate power. At this time, Kim Il-sung emphasized the idea of ethnonationalism. From this philosophical foundation, a political slogan was born: “It must be Juche. We must be self-reliant. We must exclude foreign power.” It was only a political slogan, but over the years, it came to bear a complete philosophical background of human-centered thought in the mid-1960s. Based on such a philosophical foundation, Juche established three principles: (1) self-reliance in politics, (2) self-reliance

in military affairs, and (3) economic independence, precepts that have been promoted to the present.

The Process of Evolution from Juche to Military-First Ideology

Park Jai-In

You explained Juche, which is the ideological foundation of North Korean society. What are the processes that North Korea has experienced and become what it is today based on Juche? Please tell us about the political utility of Juche ideology and the political changes in North Korea over the three generations of leaders, Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un.

Han S. Park

Juche ideology was originally established as anti-foreign-power thought, but it is not necessarily intended to reject foreign powers. Currently, North Korea has reached the point where it actively selects and utilizes foreign influence. Juche began as anti-foreign-power thought, but it has now turned into the idea of taking the initiative, including in regard to foreign influence. I think we could expect some political utility in terms of Juche ideology, which is based on self-reliance, human-centered ideas, ethnonationalism, and independence from foreign power. There was some reaction to this even in South Korea in the 70s and the 80s, as we can see in the so-called Jucheists who gained some prominence. However, what we consider important is that this is only one aspect of Kim Il-sung's establishment of identity. In fact, Juche ideology did not lead to economic growth or strengthen national defense. After the Kim Il-sung generation, Juche ideology took root to a great extent in 1994, and while interacting with the South, Kim Il-sung claimed that he would attend a summit with South Korea because he had confidence that he would be able to communicate with radical progressives in the South. But he passed away in 1994. Then, what reasons did Kim Il-sung have to approve of holding a summit with

President Kim Young-sam? US President Jimmy Carter played a part, as did I. Was it not the Kim Jong-il regime that was based on such a foundation? What is the political purpose of the Kim Jong-il regime? It's not about establishing self-reliance. It was his father's job to establish self-reliance, legitimacy, and independence, and what Kim Jong-il needed to do was to continue the sovereignty of the state. North Korea believed that security was necessary to maintain the regime. For Kim Jong-il, national security was everything, and the center of every policy was security. But there was a lack of physical prerequisites. Now that I think about it, he had to advocate independent national defense for security. One needs weapons for security. But conventional weapons entail economic power. Also, there was no possibility that conventional weapons could be developed to a level equivalent to that of the weapons held by South Korea and the United States. In this situation, the emphasis fell on nuclear weapons development. Kim Il-sung was highly interested in nuclear weapons because Japan's militarism, which had proved mighty in Kim Il-sung's experience, was demolished overnight by nuclear weapons. Consequently, North Korea trained nuclear physicists. This already started during Kim Il-sung's regime. However, Kim Il-sung himself did not start actually developing nuclear weapons. The beginning is when Kim Jong-il took the helm. Kim Jong-il took power in 1994, but it was from 1980 that he actually had a leading influence on North Korean politics. He played a significant role in the party's propaganda policy for a long time. As such, after his father passed away, he was able to advocate the independent state and pursue nuclear weapons persistently as soon as he took power. Of course, nuclear weapons were developed while Kim Il-sung was alive, but it was done really under the leadership of Kim Jong-il. The actual political regime was already handed over to Kim Jong-il in the late 1980s. The idea that "In order to maintain independent national defense, we need nuclear weapons development imminently," was persistently embedded in Kim Jong-il's mind. Thus, Kim Jong-il stepped up his efforts to develop nuclear weapons despite all the risks. The sanctions by the United States and the United Nations posed serious economic and political

problems, but the Kim Jong-il regime closed its eyes on such issues and proceeded with nuclear development. During Kim Jong-il's reign, despite international opposition, North Korea conducted three rounds of nuclear testing. It also developed and tested long-range guided missiles, disguising them as satellites, and eventually succeeded in making them, in addition to the nuclear testing. It was in this context that Kim Jong-il passed away. The most significant thought during Kim Jong-il's reign is the so-called Military-First ideology, whereby the military is privileged above everything else. We need to understand this thoroughly. This ideology is not one in which all the people blindly follow the military. "The Military as the People, the Militarization of the People." This slogan is always attached to the Military-First ideology. The militarization of the people is based on the idea that the conscious and ideological preparations that the military must possess must be thoroughly practiced as well by the people, who must be able to use weapons. When one goes to North Korea, one sees that girls can maneuver all the large weapons. I saw that even the thinnest and gentlest girls could take guns apart and put them back together. This is the militarization of the people. In addition, the military as the people is based on the idea that the military should exist in the private sector. This means that the members of the military have to live serving the people in the civilian population. As such, there are numerous technical workers in the military. There are also engineers and scientists in the military as North Koreans must serve in the military for about ten years. These people in the military go to villages and serve the civilians there. Therefore, the numerical data that outsiders focus on in their analysis, namely whether North Korea's military is composed of one million or 600,000 troops, is meaningless. If any North Korean is old enough to hold a gun, he or she is a soldier. This was established not during Kim Il-sung's reign, but during Kim Jong-il's reign through the establishment of the Military-First ideology.

The New Agenda of North Korean Politics: The People's Livelihood

Park Jai-In

Then, what kind of issue does the Kim Jong-un regime focus on?

Han S. Park

Any nation must achieve three goals to survive. Establishing identity and thorough security must be achieved. Security does not only include physical security, but also psychological and cultural security. With the generalization of the Military-First ideology, North Korea became united in one political system, wherein all the people and the military can unite to defend the nation. It also led North Koreans to believe that they developed nuclear weapons and guided missiles as part of their efforts toward national defense. Kim Jong-il gained confidence as he entered the later stages of his regime. The next essential factor is the people's livelihood. In the later stages of Kim Jong-il's regime, Kim began turning his attention to the people's livelihoods. Therefore, as Kim Jong-un took over the regime, he put political emphasis on this very issue. His grandfather established the national identity and Juche ideology, and his father secured national security through Military-First ideology and nuclear weapons development. Now that the Kim Jong-un regime has begun, the new regime cannot simply extend the previous achievements. The Kim Jong-un generation is expected to elicit significant changes in North Korean society because of the transformations in political and ideological dynamics. Kim Jong-un believes that he should focus on the people's livelihood, but the wealth and power of the nation are already concentrated elsewhere. Since ideological education had to be provided in all areas to establish Juche ideology, there was no room to accelerate economic growth. After that, North Korea could not concentrate on the economy as it was focused on establishing Military-First politics and weapons development; there were also international sanctions in the process. In contemporary society, a nation has to participate in the international market for economic growth. Finance, market, sales, and even profits are accessed by entering

the international market, but North Korea has been limited by international sanctions. International sanctions due to the development of nuclear weapons have caused great difficulties in North Korea's economy. When the Kim Jong-un regime began, North Korea was a still poor nation. There was a critical issue that he had to take over a poor nation and solve its economic problems, and yet he also could not neglect security and national identity; there is South Korea, and there is the United States. And security and national identity could not be neglected in light of the changes in socialist nations. Kim Jong-un, who became the head of the state at the age of twenty-eight, now has the task of at once maintaining national identity and security, and enhancing the people's livelihood. This is an extremely complicated and difficult situation for him. I participated in the centennial of Kim Il-sung's birth. At that time, Kim Jong-un gave an impressive speech about how the people must be offered a way out of their poverty-stricken lives. The remarks were a declaration to the world that the economic situation in North Korea was difficult. Now North Korea has to start fruitful diplomacy, but international sanctions are a stumbling block. The most important factor for any country, especially for developing nations, is to borrow from international lending institutions. This is a matter of using sovereignty as collateral to borrow large sums of money. This is impossible under international sanctions. While participating in the international market, the Kim Jong-un regime realizes it needs to establish relationships with the global financial market and reap its benefits, all the while resolving the international conflicts over the nuclear weapons issue. Kim Jong-un is paying attention to improving relations with the United States. He knows that, without so doing, it would be difficult to achieve economic growth and restore people's livelihoods. Of course, there are China and other power players aside from the US, but there is no place the US influence does not reach in the global economy. Economic issues are also more important than security. The goals of North Korea's top-priority foreign policies are now very clear; it is all about improving relations with the US. Therefore, there will be persistent efforts and policies to improve relations with the U.S. in the future. Claiming that it

will compete with the U.S. and that it will not give in even if a military conflict is inevitable for any sovereign state due to a certain domestic sentiment. North Korea's domestic sentiment is focused on the fact that it has grown into a nation with an outstanding national identity, an ideological superiority over South Korea, and strong national security. The main issue of the Kim Jong-un regime is to strengthen and maintain such consciousness and to enhance the quality of people's lives. Kim Jong-un cannot achieve this alone. Now North Korea faces the challenge of analyzing international affairs realistically and methodically, and responding to them in order to develop wise policies within the Workers' Party and within the system. South Korea is a big part of this problem, as North Korea-US relations and inter-Korean relations are directly related. It is a strategic contradiction to focus only on improving North Korea-US relations without South Korea. I believe that it would be wise for the Kim Jong-un regime to pursue improvement in inter-Korea relations at the same time; I think that the regime will in fact do so.

Meeting on a Higher Level vis-à-vis Peace: Dialectical Unification

Park Jai-In

Currently rampant is the black-and-white culture between South and North Korea, which has increased the hostility between the two Koreas. Peaceful unification is just an illusion in such a situation. What is the way to enable unification in this situation?

Han S. Park

One of the methodologies for unification that has been raised so far is, "Let the two Koreas restore homogeneity and unify based on homogeneity." Therefore, the task of unification is to restore homogeneity. There are many people and analysts who argue along this line of thought. However, I think it is wrong to find the way to unification in the restoration of homogeneity. If we set a standard for homogeneity, there may be competition, jealousy, and struggle. What South and

North Korea need more than restoring homogeneity is the acceptance of heterogeneity. I think there should be wisdom to recognize and accept heterogeneity between each other. What it means to accept heterogeneity is not to say that in face of heterogeneity, we must live together reluctantly. Acceptance means that we accept heterogeneity to make progress and develop ourselves. So the concept of accepting heterogeneity is that “by accepting heterogeneity, we form a harmony between us and what has been alienated, and through it, develop into a phase of harmony and progress that was not possible by ‘I alone’ in the past.” Of course, accepting heterogeneity doesn’t solve everything. But what’s important is that accepting heterogeneity means coexisting. It means overcoming the discord that comes from differences. Let’s consider this concept of *überwinden* (“overcoming”) philosophically and epistemologically. It is to overcome the heterogeneity between the two Koreas. For example, in the South, individualism and materialism are prevalent, and capitalism is the foundational system. The North, on the other hand, is not an externally materialistic society. Socialism based on Marx’s and Lenin’s ideas is that substructure, which is the basis of society, is material. However, North Korea’s substructure is not material. The foundation of the society that North Korea advocates is spirit and people. In such a way, even when the economy is in dire straits, it could justify the power of the state. In addition, South Korea tends toward being individualistic, but North Korea absolutely pursues a lifestyle centered on groups. Another significant difference from South Korea is that North Korea maintains a social order through family relations. As I said before, North Korea is a family state. The clue to solutions lies in this aspect. We cannot locate the truth about North Korea in socialism or Marxism. I believe the task of overcoming heterogeneity between the two Koreas is possible through dialectical means. Dialectics has its basis in the Yin/Yang thought in the East and was organized by Plato in the West, thus being formed into a philosophical system. The effort to overcome, to accept heterogeneity in relation to the unification of the two Koreas is based on a dialectical perspective. In dialectics, the progress of a society, group, and individual is seen as

overcoming the inherent weaknesses. Overcoming one's own vulnerability means first finding one's own vulnerability. It's impossible to evolve dialectically without introspection on existing problems. In this context, we need to investigate what is wrong with South Korea and with North Korea. And in so doing, we must sublimate such aspects. Moreover, we should be prepared to support the positive aspects. This is the dialectical method for unification. It is not that A and B are added physically to create A + B, but that adding A and B should yield C. It's qualitatively different from what previously existed, an evolution of true thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It isn't the thesis, it isn't the antithesis. No matter how much the thesis is expanded, it does not become synthesis. As such, if we want to harmonize the South and the North in the dialectical logic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, we need to create a new system in addition to different ideologies, values, and institutions. Accordingly, the dialectical methodology for unification should be devised in detail. What is dialectical unification at the economic level? Within policies? Thinking about such problems one by one is what scholars and experts aiming for a unified government should draw upon. The unification task is difficult but essential. If we unify in the manner we have examined thus far, we will leave a mark in history of the how to effectively solve relationships of division, fracture, and dissonance.