

## ***A Study on the Christian Characteristics of North Korean Juche Ideology***

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### **I. Introduction**

In 1995 two years after the Korean War ended, North Korea started talking On the Juche ideology. Before the Korean War, it was unimaginable for Kim Il Sung to claim autonomy because the Soviet Union maintained advisory government over the North. Since the Soviet Union put up 33 year old Kim Il Sung from guerrilla partisans as a leader of North Korea and gave a full support to him, the Soviet Union had a great authority and influence over the North. Out of his gratitude, Kim Il Sung praised Stalin as a benefactor for Choson's independence and followed Russia's commands and policies in earnest.

Kim Il Sung, however, became independent from the Soviet Union and was able to raise his voice due to the Korean War. The Soviet Union's attitude and support toward the North during the war was enough to make Kim Il Sung disappointed. When UN armed forces retreated most of his land he was in desperate need but Stalin denied his asking for help. Out of the fear that they might have a conflict with the US, Stalin rejected his help, while Mao Zedong dispatched the forces to help him. The Chinese army helped rebuild the North even after the Korean War and it was withdrawn in 1958. This affected Kim Il Sung's attitude toward China and the Soviet Union.

Kim Il Sung had an absolute military authority as the commander in chief and laid a strong political foundation during the Korean War. When the war was in stalemate near the 38 parallel, he started removing his opponents with the support of the Soviet Union. Against this backdrop, he started claiming Juche ideology in 1955 when he had a down on the Soviet Union and good feeling for China.

By then, North Korean's Juche ideology was one of policies and the target of the ideology was limited to North Koreans as well as their political leaders. However when Juche was elevated as a universal view of the world, its target expanded to the global people not only North Koreans. It became good news that should be spread into the end of the world.

Time went by, Juche became norms of life style in North Korea and they showed unusual behaviors that outsiders couldn't understand. When Kim Il Sung passed away, they mourned just like they lost their parents and they paid homage to the Kim Il Sung statue collectively, which reminded outsiders of very religious people. On the contrary of our idea that the vacancy in the commander in chief is unthinkable, we witnessed that North Korea had been run by so called instructions of the departed without official election for the leader for three years. Even they accredited ambassadors to foreign countries in the name of the late leader Kim Il Sung. They named Kim Il Sung's birth place as a sanctuary and designated every place connected to his revolution activities as holy grounds. Those works started while he was still alive. In 1998 constitution amendment, the phrase that Kim Il Sung is the eternal head of the state was added. The North Korean government created their own Juche chronological year designating Kim Il Sung's birth year as the first year. His birthday of April 15 was designated as Sun holiday and it became the biggest holiday in North Korea. They also built eternal towers across the country with a slogan inscribed that "the great leader Suryong Kim Il Sung will be eternally be with us!", Wishing that his political leadership will be eternal even though he died physically. North Koreans carry Kim Il Sung's portrait badge on their clothes' and in every single home, they put up his portrait on the wall and deal with it very carefully. Kim Il Sung has become make-believing god to be worshiped. All of these phenomena in North Korea show that, Juche ideology has changed into a religious faith not just a governing ideology.

Post cold war brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe socialist states. However North Korea still sustains despite difficulties within the country due to the post cold war. When outside observers looked at this phenomenon, they started thinking the sources of durability of the North system comes from Juche ideology as a religion. Generally speaking, the more persecutions they got and the more they struggle, the more immensely religions are to grow.

In this respect, this study compares Juche with other religious modalities, in particular Christianity and tries to explain its phenomena

and meaning on the assumption that Juche is no longer a political ideology or one of the North's policies but a religious faith that defines the norms of North Korean life and offers the ultimate meaning to North Koreans.

## II. Religious Phenomena

The lexical meaning of religion is "a spiritual culture system with which people acknowledge God or the absolute power and then believe and worship it under a certain form in order to achieve peace of mind in their faiths."<sup>2</sup> However it's not easy to define what it is in a word since different people have different views on that. Some view it as a collective phenomenon while others see it as individual beliefs. Some consider it related to the Absolute, God while others think that religion without the absolute being is also possible. Some divide it into hard and soft ones. The former is such religions with tight system as Judaism and Christianity and the latter is ones with lenient organizational system such as Confucianism and Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, there exist diverse ideas about religion and religious phenomena continue to change. Therefore, it is not simple to define what religion is generally.

Despite the dispute over the nature of religion, scholars generally explain the nature of religion in terms of the sacred, ultimacy and power. According to Eliade, religious people believe in the absolute and holy being that makes the world sacred and real by rising above the world in which whatever situations it faces, it represents itself in front of man.<sup>4</sup> More simply put, an incident that the sacred penetrates into the profane is said to be religion. Durkheim and Otto define religion as "experience in something sacred" or "absolute another being."<sup>5</sup> However the difference between the sacred and the profane doesn't exist in certain beings or, behaviors, places, times or things themselves but in the way man views these things inside of his minds. In other words, human beings impose the holiness on those things. Things are not different superficially but whether they become sacred or not is determined by people and their way to believe. Even for the same place, some think it holy while others never do so. There might be a level of difference but religious people are those who have experienced holiness.

In addition, religion is human's interest in what they believe the Absolute being is.<sup>6</sup> The beliefs of the Absolute being and its influence over human's life are essential part of religion. The Absolute being

could be supernatural or natural as an original determiner of life. It does not always exist separated from human beings. Not only it could be big or small but also it could be related to something human not God. Therefore, religion means interest in or commitment to what people believe as the Absolute being.<sup>7</sup>

There is another opinion about religion as a reaction to the ultimate power. Behind religion, there exists the absolute power and human's ritual ceremonies are to respond to the power. The fear in front of God-like being goes beyond human's natural experience. Here, we can see religion has an aspect of beliefs in culturally supernatural power or being.<sup>8</sup> To define religion based on arguments so far, it is beliefs in what people believe as something sacred, and it is also its carrying-out system.

Then, what roles does religion play for individual or groups? What is the function of religion? People try to have faiths in the ultimate being and impose meanings on values and norms based on the beliefs, and interact with the ultimate being. The function of religion has three levels. Firstly, religion is to be interested in ultimate problems. Answering these ultimate personal questions is religion. Secondly, religion is the ground of meaning that gives a general guideline for human behaviors, which becomes religious faith. Thirdly, religion is objective and it unites things morally, and it is human's ability to overcome their biological nature by creating universes that include everything. Therefore, religion plays a role to provide ultimate meaning to the individual and societies.<sup>9</sup> Ultimate meaning is something important and fundamental in one's life and so in this paper any phenomena that provide ultimate meaning to the individual and societies are considered to be religious phenomena. In this regard, not only traditional religions and newly emerging religions but also ideology can be seen as religious phenomena.

If religion is defined as beliefs and its carrying-out system in something supernatural and holy, which people believe, essential part of religion can be beliefs in its doctrine, practice or rituals as well as community.<sup>10</sup>

Beliefs lay a foundation for the concept of humans and the universe, and they function as a basic principle of human behaviors. Religious beliefs explain the nature and origin of the ultimate being and help understand the relationship between the ultimate being and the world, and patterns of man's existences. Nonetheless, the contents and the range of these beliefs vary depending on religions, societies and the phases of times. The second component of religion is rituals. Rituals are performing expressions related to beliefs. Beliefs provide meaning to

rituals and rituals strengthen and confirm beliefs. The religious people remind of their shared values, and strengthen their loyalty to the group by reproducing sacred times through rituals. Furthermore, rituals give the norms of behaviors and offer meanings to their daily activities. Likewise, rituals give meanings of life to individuals and help them to feel belongingness to the group and the feeling of solidarity in the group.

Religion is a collective phenomenon as well as personal phenomena so that a religious group of people has a nature of community. Religious beliefs should be common in the community and the community must carry out rituals related to its religion. In other words, the community, which performs the same rituals with the same ideology, is religion. Thus, the nature of community is a component of religion. This nature provides "we-feeling, role-feeling and dependency-feeling" to individuals.<sup>11</sup> Religion has a social function that members feel a sense of belonging by offering the community. In sum, in order to become a religion, there must be an object of beliefs, those beliefs must be confirmed through religious rituals and community relationship among its members must be formed. In this regard, Juche ideology has all of components of religion since it has become norms of North Koreans' behaviors.

### III. Marx's View of Religion and Religious Policy in North Korea

Marx understood that religion was an ideological illusion that unjust human societies produce, and it is an ideology and the response to a hierarchical society. Therefore, it serves hierarchical rules. So, he defined religion as opium that paralyzes people's criticism of state affairs. His view on religion is closely connected to the intellectual atmosphere in the society of those days. While attending university, he was affected by Hegelian dialectic that explains historical developments. When the Hegelians divided into two parts of the right and the left, he became a pupil of Bruno Bauer who belonged to the left Hegelians. However he had a different idea from Bauer who suggested political liberty from religion. He believed a society itself should be dependent in order to achieve true freedom and liberty and thus he ended up being separated from his teacher, Bauer.

After he left Bauer, he became interested in Feuerbach's view of religion based on materialism. Feuerbach mentioned in "The Essence of Christianity" that religion is the only something that projects

human's highest desire into God-like objects. He changed theology into humanics, arguing that man created God not vice versa. Marx agreed with his atheism but he criticized that Feuerbach didn't care about social and economic reason why people projected their highest desire into God-like objects. He criticized that religion was ideology serving to maintain a hierarchical society not just alienated people's ideological illusion. While Feuerbach searched for the cause of religion from human's consciousness, Marx tried to find the cause in society pattern not in man's consciousness. Even though Marx criticized side effects and negative aspects of religion, he never insisted overthrow of religion. He believed that religion was a product of a sick and alienated society so that it would naturally disappear<sup>12</sup> when the society became healthy through revolution.

Religion in North Korea is not much different from communist religion. The North defines "religion as a view of the world or an organization in which they preach a super natural being or power like God who has a control over nature and human so that people count on the God and dream about happy life in heaven."<sup>13</sup> Therefore religion in North Korea is the opium that paralyzes people's consciousness of revolution and enhances the principle of nonresistant that make people submissive to deprivation and to oppression. The North suggests that "religion is not only used as a tool for capitalist to exploit workers more easily and to prevent workers' from fighting for revolution but also used a key weapon for invaders to invade in weak countries and exploit the colonies"<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, The North allowed freedom of religion in the article 14 of the constitution, 1948 stipulated that "people have the right of faiths and freedom of carrying out religious rituals." Before the Korean War, the North didn't regulate religion in name but in fact oppressed indirectly through controls over the foundation of religion.

Aftermath of the Korean War, North Korea implemented a policy to liquidate religion in its judgment that religion had been used by the ruling class as a tool to exploit and as a weapon to invade by the imperialists. In particular, the Workers' Party of Korea started checking personal idea in 1958 and the freedom of religion virtually disappeared. In 1959, the North Korean government published a paper titled "why we are objected to religion" in which they listed evil of religion and they also claimed that religion could be erased only through a long fighting against religious thought. The article 54 of revised constitution in 1972 said that "people have the freedom of faith and they also have the right to propaganda against religion and thus they laid a legal foundation to antagonize the freedom of religion."



When the western world criticized that North Korea didn't have the freedom of religion in the 1980s, they loosened anti-religion policy and propagated their freedom of religion, by building Pongsu Church, Chilgol Church and Changchun Cathedral in Pyongyang. The article 68 Amendment of the Constitution in 1992 stipulated that "people have the freedom of faiths. This right allows building churches and performing rituals. No one can use religion to attract foreign force or to harm the nation's order." Omitting the phrase of "the right to propaganda against religion" and adding the words of allows to build churches and perform rituals showed further improvement in the freedom of religion. However, they made it clear that they can regulate the freedom of religion on the condition that no one can use religion to attract foreign influences or to harm the national order. Later, 1998 Constitution was inherited from 1992 Constitution but it showed improvement in the freedom of religion. Marx said "criticism for religion is a prerequisite of criticism for all"<sup>15</sup> in the sense that religion is used for a weapon by existing social and political power. Ironically enough, North Korea was established based on Marx's theory defining religion as opium, but now it has become the most religious regime.

#### IV. Developments of Juche Ideology

As we saw earlier, Socialism has denied religion but ironically, socialist ideology functions as religion in the sense that it requires people's devotion to their political leaders or groups. The nature of socialist religion shows not only in its intrinsic dogma but also in its norms of behaviors. Socialism could be a sort of religious movements that substitute the traditional religion.

North Korea is sort of religious because people are under the influence of Juche ideology and worship the founding father, Kim Il Sung. They made every remains sanctuary and think his revolution activities holy to worship him. In this regard it is very meaningful to review how Juche has developed.

Regarding when Juche was formed, North Korean official documents indicated that Kim Il Sung proclaimed the initiation of Juche ideology in his speech titled "the direction of Choson revolution" at a leader's meeting for communist youth in China in 1930.

Our founding father was against the stubborn nationalists, pretending Marxian, flunkies and dogmatists and explored a new path of revolution. While doing so, he found the truth of Juche idea

and finally he proclaimed Juche principles and self-direction of Choson revolution at the leader's meeting of the communist youth and anti-imperialists group in June, 1930.<sup>16</sup>

However, the North's argument has no truth at all. His Gelun speech, "the direction of Choson revolution" appeared in a book published in 1978. The speech was even not in 1977 publication *On the Juche*. Most speeches they said he did during his revolutionary movements before Korea's independence, showed in publications for the first time since the 1970s. The name of Gelun meeting appeared first in "History Dictionary" in 1971. In this respect, it is hard to take all of the North's arguments.<sup>17</sup>

It is generally known that Juche idea was initiated while emphasizing self-reliant line in the mid 1950s aftermath of the Korean War. When the North embarked the Korean War, they admired the Soviet Union and Stalin as the nation of workers of the world and God father of North Korea respectively. However, when Kim Il Sung was in desperate need near Amnok(Yalu) River due to UN forces' counteroffensive, Stalin didn't send his troops. Instead, Mao Zedong listened his calling for help. While rebuilding North Korea aftermath of the War, the Soviet Union was different from China. Kim Il Sung who got help from China couldn't help but consider differently the relations with the Soviet Union. Under this circumstance, he strongly responded to those who had power backed up by the Soviet Union. His emotions then were involved in the background why he suggested Juche.<sup>18</sup>

Kim Il Sung first mentioned Juche in his speech titled "On eliminating dogmatism and formalism and establishing Juche in Ideological Work" delivered to propaganda leaders of the Workers' Party of Korea on December 28, 1955.<sup>19</sup> His speech was intended to be dependent from the Soviet's control while counting on strengthened Chinese influence after the Korean War.<sup>20</sup> He exemplified Pak Chang-ok, a member of Soviet-Korean faction, and criticized him for praising the Soviet Union's works, not acknowledging works of Korea Artista Proleta Federatio. He also said that he saw a picture of Siberian snow scene at people's holiday resort but it was nothing compared with the beauty of Mt. Keumgang or Mt. Myohyang in North Korea. He pointed out that they easily saw the portraits of Mayakovsky and Pushkin but not any of North Korean poets in any schools, arguing that how they could promote their national pride among young students. He indicated examples of imitating the Soviet Union blindly; he said they needed something like Chinese rectification campaign.

At first, Kim Il Sung emphasized initiating Juche but he didn't use the word of Juche ideology. It is not clear that who and when the word of 'Juche Ideology' was first coined. However on Dec. 19, 1962, "Our party's Juche ideology" showed in an article of the *Nodong simun* (newspaper) so that it is predictable that the word was naturally used by then. Kim Il Sung hadn't mentioned Juche at all until June, 1963 since he talked about it in 1955. He first mentioned *chaju* (political independence) and *charip* (economic self-sustenance) at the celebration to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army in February, 1963 and *chawi* (military self-defense) in Kim Il Sung Military Academy in October, 1963. Likewise, the basic concept of Juche was not founded fully but was established after adding more concepts as time went by. It was 1965 when the basic system of Juche ideology was revealed in a speech at the Ali Atcham Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia in 1965. Kim Il Sung visiting Indonesia said, "Ideological self-reliance, political independence, economic self-sustenance, and military self-defense are our party's consistent stance." Even then, Juche was a just newly created idea inspired by Marx-Leninism not a totally different idea from Marx-Lenin's.<sup>21</sup>

Due to the Second Party Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea in 1966, North Korea has dramatically changed. China blamed Kim Il Sung as a revisionist while going through cultural revolution, he set up the policy with which he would complete Choson revolution on his own not relying on the Soviet Union or China. Since then he had strengthened dictatorship, eliminating any democratic components and raising the degree of worshiping himself.<sup>22</sup> The Workers' Party of Korea proclaimed Juche as the only idea at the Sixteenth Plenum of the Central Committee from the late June to the early July, 1967. They proclaimed Juche as a guiding idea of any policies, announcing "Political Creed of Democratic People's Republic of Korea" at the Supreme People's Assembly in December, 1967. Then, they adopted Juche as the Party's leading idea at the Fifth Party Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in November 1970.

Systematic work of Juche was carried out in earnest in the 1970s. Juche ideology faced new changes when the "idea of revolutionary leader of the state, Suryong" in which the relationship between the leader and the public was organized. According to the idea, the creator of history is the public but without the leader the people is simply unconscious crowd, and revolutionary movements without leader's guide ends up being inattentive. Therefore leader's guide is essential and absolute factor in order to win in fighting to build

proletarian dictatorship. In 1972, Kim Il Sung clarified Juche ideology. According to him, Juche is "the idea that the people are the master of revolution and construction of Socialism and the driven power of revolution and construction come from the people." Afterwards, in 1974 he revealed that Juche is based on the idea that "man is the master, and he decides all matters."<sup>23</sup> Since then Juche has emerged as a universal ideology based on philosophical principles alienating from the past policy line. In particular, "10 principles to establish the monolithic ideological system" was promulgated by Kim Jong-Il in 1974 and then Juche Ideology was spread across the country.

Systematization of Juche was established in 1980. In 1982, Kim Jong-Il dealt with Juche's basic nature of self-reliance, creativity and consciousness through a paper titled "On the Juche Ideology", and tried to systematize, suggesting philosophical principles, social and historic principles and guiding principles. In 1986, he suggested theory of socio-political life and the idea of Choson nation as number one through an article titled, "About several questions raised from teaching Juche ideology."

In this way, Juche gradually elevated its stance, alienating from the earlier policy line. It also shows in Kim Jong-Il's argument that "Juche should not be regarded as a simple succession of Marx-Leninism but as a new and creative ideology".<sup>24</sup> 1972 Constitution stipulated that "DPRK adopted Juche, which applies Marx-Leninism creatively to our situation, as our nation's guideline of its own activities". Until then, they hadn't denied Juche's relations with Marx-Leninism. However 1992 Constitution stipulated that "DPRK takes Juche, which is the world view centered on human being and revolutionary idea for realizing people's self-reliance" and thus they declared Juche as guiding idea of DPRK in its name and reality, eliminating Marx-Leninism in the former Constitution. This article continued without any revision in 1998 Constitution.

Juche ideology started from a simple policy and elevated to a universal ideology and even developed into a religious faith through North Korean government's thoughtful socialization.

## V. Contents of Juche Ideology

Juche was originally a policy guideline in order to pursue independent line, eliminating revisionism of the Soviet Union and China and their intervention in North Korea. North Korea needed to introduce Juche to adopt Marx-Leninism in accordance with the North's situation,

objecting to toadyism and dogmatism. This brought about four approaches like Juche in their thought, political self-determination, and economically self-sufficient and military self-defense. In short, they adopt an independent and creative idea for their basic policy. Kim Il Sung created the basic concept all alone.<sup>25</sup>

Later, human-centered philosophy was added to Juche ideology in addition to the four approaches. They argue that the basic proposition of Juche, "man is the master, and he decides all matters" means human plays a key role to change the world and explore one's life. They also claim that it is human-centered philosophy that clarifies human's position and role in the world.<sup>26</sup>

Human-centered Juche is different from Marx-Leninism in the sense that it emphasizes an active role of consciousness. Marx, based on materialism, concluded that only one's material and social conditions determined his type of consciousness but not the other way around. On the contrary, Juche includes such concepts as self-determination, creativity, and consciousness and suggests the necessities of nature's rebuilding, social reform and revolution, which show its stance of idealism.<sup>27</sup> Juche has emerged as a universal theory with philosophical principles, not any longer simple political guideline. However, its system and content was not fine even after philosophy was added into it. It was finally systematized when Kim Jong-Il published a article titled "On Juche Ideology" on March 31, 1982. The article described its origin, philosophy, social and historic principles, guiding principles and historic meaning. It indicated under its philosophy that man is not a simple material being but the most developed and special product of the developments in the material world so that he is already a special being. Here, man has self-determination, creativity and consciousness. Self-determination is one of human nature with which man tries to live and develops independently as the owner of the world and his own life. With self-determination, he makes everything else work for himself, opposing to any oppression and nature's restriction. With the creativity, man reforms the world and explores his own faith. He changes nature and the society more useful for himself, reforming old things and creating something new. Consciousness is a characteristic that helps human understands the world and oneself and regulate any activities to be transformed. With this nature, he figures out the law of the world and its development and then reforms and develops nature and the society suitable for himself. However, Juche just acknowledges human as a social being not an individual person. It sees man in the relationship with others rather than natural being.

'Juche's social and historic principles' are called "new socio-historical view." It indicates: ① The people is a major player of the society and history. ② Human history is the history of fighting for people's self-determination. ③ Socio-historical movements are the public's creative movements. ④ The public's self-determined thought plays a key role for revolutionary struggle. According to the principles, workers were oppressed and subjugated by small ruling class and they didn't take up the deserving status as the owner of the society in the past. Yet, they could be free from deprivation and oppression and become the owner of their faiths only through building up socialistic institutions. However they must need right guidance of the Party and the Suryong if they fulfill their roles and enjoy their status as a key player in the history.

'Juche's guiding principles' are "the guidance of putting up a subject in every field including the Party, national activities, revolution and construction". It indicates: ① Self-determination must be pursued. ② Creative method must be established. ③ Thought must be under control. The phrase ① includes those four approaches of "Juche in thought, political self-determination, economic self-sufficient, and military self-defense", which was suggested when Juche was the political guideline earlier. The phrase ② divides into two ways. One is the way "based on the people" and the other is "the way suitable for real situation." In the former, "leaders share life and hardship with the people and they become a good role model for the people. They should be humble, frugal and generous so that they encourage the people to use their creativity." In the latter, "in accordance with the situation they face they carefully consider subjective and objective conditions for revolution and define the road map and political tactics and strategy accordingly." If they blindly follow others, they mistakenly fall in flunkeyism or dogmatism. The phrase ③ suggests "preceding of changing thought" and "preceding of political work." The former suggests that thought reformation is "to transform people to true communistic people" and "the basic concept of changing thought is to put up subjective view of revolution whose core is fidelity to the Party and Suryong." The latter argues that political work to teach and motivate people must precede any business in order to complete the revolutionary assignment. Political work is related to people's idea so that when they promote workers' conscious enthusiasm of their role in revolution, the superiority of socialism could show.

Last but not least, under 'Juche's historic meaning,' they claim that there has been diverse views of the world, but there hasn't been any human-centered view of the world. They also emphasize that Juche



put up human as the master of the world not just part of the world so that it established true worldview.

In 1985, "10 series publications of great Juche Ideology" were published. The series commentate 1982 "On the Juche Ideology" but it includes Juche's revolution theory and guiding system. Revolution theory includes democratic revolution of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, socialistic revolution theory, construction theory of socialistic communism, human transformation theory, construction theory of socialistic economy, construction theory of socialistic culture and so on. Human transformation theory argues that the objectives to transform human are to raise human as a social being with self-determination, creativity and consciousness and as a true master of nature and the society. Main content of changing idea that the theory argues includes teaching Juche, the Party's policy, revolution tradition, and communism. The way to change idea includes explanation, persuasion, influence through positive role modeling and an ideological battle. Juche's guiding method mentions guiding system and guiding arts. The core of guiding system is the Suryong's only guiding system, which is to carry out revolution and rebuilding under the Suryong's only guideline of revolutionary idea and to make the whole Party, country and military go one direction under the Suryong's command and instruction.

Suryong has remarkable wisdom, communistic noble character, limitless generosity and outstanding leadership and he is the commander in chief leading revolutionary fighting for people's self-determination. He has absolute authority and dignity thanks to abundant experience in various fields and imperishable achievements during administrating revolutionary struggle, and he is a true leader of people from whom he earns unsparing trust and respect.<sup>28</sup>

Centering the Suryong based on his absoluteness, and uniting the whole people is the core of guiding system.

Kim Jong-Il created the theory of socio-political life and the doctrine of Choson nation as number one in 1986. The theory of socio-political life means that political life is based on the Suryong, the great leader, the Party as mother, siblings of nations and the society is a revolutionary large family system united organically as a key player of revolution. When man dies, his physical body disappears but his socio-political life as a member of the society will be eternal as long as the society remains. In socio-political life, brain that orders his behavior is important and he can't function without the brain, Suryong. The major player of revolution is a unity of Suryong-the Party-People so that they share life and death with revolutionary camaraderie and

loyalty. In this society, every socio-political organization, which links Suryong to his people should be led by the Party and no one can connect with Suryong or become a member of the eternal socio-political organism without the organization.

The Doctrine of Choson nation as number one indicates why North Korea is number one country. It has an excellent ethnicity because it created remarkable ethnic culture from the dawn of the human history. It won in fighting against Japanese forces and in the battle of the national independence under Kim Il Sung's leadership. It established its own socialism. Therefore North Korean people are very proud of living in the most superior socialistic system, having the great Suryong, being guided by the Party under its great leading idea of Juche Ideology. Here Choson nation doesn't mean everyone in Korean peninsula but only North Koreans. Like this, North Korea put its nationalism in order to differentiate the North from other socialist countries at the late 1980s when socialist states started collapsing. Before then, they took the same Stalin's concept of a nation and used it critically. That is, "a nation is a solid group of people that were formed through history based on the commonness of language, territory, economic life and psychology."<sup>29</sup> In North Korea, nationalism was described very negatively because of socialistic ideology, but they criticized Stalin's idea about a nation and then they define a nation like the above. This change appeared from when Kim Jong-Il argued the Doctrine of Choson nation as number one.

## VI. Juche Ideology viewed by Unification Thought<sup>30</sup>

### 1. Philosophical Principle

North Korea argues that "man is the master, and he decides all matters" in Juche ideology so called human-centered idea, and it claims that Juche is "new philosophy" and "the most righteous world view in our times." If so, it should have pointed out the problems of existing worldview and alternatives to solve the problems. If they had introduced different scholars' ideas on what human nature is and pointed out their problems and thus human-centered Juche was the only alternative view, they could have been more persuasive. Nonetheless, they didn't explain Marx's view of human regarding Juche but only emphasized it as a new philosophy. Not only that, Juche idea doesn't mention the ultimate being of universe even though a view of the world integrate human and universe. Regarding

the ultimate being of universe there are two ideas. One is the materialism that material is the ultimate nature of the universe, and the other is idealism that sees spirit is the root of the universe. They said that "Juche dealt with the relationship between material, and consciousness, between being and thought as the basic philosophy in the past, and Marxian's materialism provided scientific answers to these questions"<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Juche advocates Marx's materialism. Nevertheless, when we see the arguments that Marx's materialism responded to the need of those days but in the new era in which workers emerged as the master of history, new world view must appear, which is human-centered Juche, it is not in the stance of materialism.<sup>32</sup> However Juche doesn't advocate idealism either because it denies idealism arguing that dialectical materialism overcame idealism and metaphysics. Therefore the stance of Juche is not either idealism or materialism. Nonetheless it argues that it is human-centered view of the world, which is its problem because the worldview can't be established without mentioning the ultimate being of human and the universe. It should have gone through the process of building new materialism and then building a view of human accordingly to become a new world view. As a matter of fact, Juche suggests human-centered idea and takes idealistic approach. It puts up self-determination, creativity and consciousness as human nature and focuses on consciousness among them but if consciousness is able to change socio-material conditions, it is not longer materialism but idealism.

## 2. Socio-historic Principles

Juche argues that "the masses are the subject of society and history"<sup>33</sup> under socio-historic principles. Here, the masses are expanded and adapted concept of human in history. In Juche idea, the concept of human is so ambiguous that the idea should have defined man either as natural being or as hierarchical being. If man is "outstanding being in the material development,"<sup>34</sup> man means natural being but when explaining historical development, man is dealt with as hierarchical being without suggesting any logical foundation. In other words, in Juche, the mass of people is dealt with as ruled class and it is described as driven power of historical development. Juche idea emphasizes "human history is fighting history for self-determination of the masses."<sup>35</sup> According to historic development of communism, human history has developed from non-class society of primitive community to a hierarchical society of slavery, feudalism

and capitalism. In the primitive community, there was no ruled class, the masses or class strife. The logic of human history being the history of fighting for the public's self-determination applies to a hierarchical society not the entire human history. Furthermore, the logic that "self-determined thought plays a key role in revolution to achieve self-determination of the masses"<sup>36</sup> accepts positive human consciousness for activities to think, which makes Juche idealism. In conclusion, Juche verbally advocates materialism and denies idealism but actually it tries to have both ways of idealism and materialism.

## 3. The Theory of Revolutionary Suryong and the Theory of Socio-political Life

Juche idea suggests that the masses including workers can carry out their duties and historic mission in revolution "only if they are guided by the Party and Suryong."<sup>37</sup> It is contradictory to Juche's philosophy that "man is the master, and he decides all matters." Philosophical principle must be universally valid anytime and anywhere. Otherwise, it is not a universal truth. If the masses are to be guided by Suryong, the masses are not subject but Suryong, which is contradictory to human nature of self-determination, creativity and consciousness that Juche suggests. The theory of revolutionary Suryong in Juche assumes Suryong's faultlessness, which, as a result, makes the masses stuffed human troops even not to mention that the Suryong exists realistically. The theory of socio-political life emphasizes loyalty and filial piety, camaraderie and loyalty to Suryong, and it is the foundation of the logic to manage a class system such as unity and socialistic large family. It says camaraderie and loyalty to Suryong; the very brain of the socio-political organism is absolute and unconditional. Here is no room for Juche's philosophy, human-centered idea.

## VII. Christian Characteristics in Juche Ideology

Marx-Leninism is anti-religion and atheistic view. Marx was opposed to Hegelianism based on Christianity and he suggested human's liberation from the view of atheism and materialism. In particular, Marx witnessed workers' miserable reality in early capitalism and he strongly opposed to Christianity because he learned the Christianity helped the miserable reality. Marx's theory basically overthrows Christian view of the world. Considering that the North's



Juche idea stems from Marx-Leninism, it is easy to analogize the similarity between Juche and Christianity. Here, I am going to indicate Christian characteristics in Juche Ideology while comparing Christianity with Juche.

### 1. Ultimate Being and Kim Il Sung

Most of religions on earth have belief in the ultimate being. Different religions describe it differently but the characteristic of the being is beyond human's experience and it consists of the foundation of every being. By the way, religious experience of the ultimate being is different from daily experience and shows total physical response. People who have a powerful religious experience show their transformed behavior cold turkey. In Christianity, Augustine transformed from a man of pleasure all of sudden when he saw his mother praying, and Saul repented when he met Jesus on the way to Damascus. These are prime examples of religious experiences. We can see some similar Christian phenomena in Juche Ideology. North Koreans mourned when Kim Il Sung died. They hang on Kim Il Sung portrait each home and manage it very carefully. When they met Kim Il Sung in person they were moved to tears. All of these acts might have a level of difference but they are related to religious experience.

Juche Ideology does not have the concept of god. Juche inspired by materialism and evolution theory denies the existence of god. Juche criticized fatalism and biologic view of life for being unscientific and reactionary. In the former, God is the owner of the world and God decides everything, and in the latter, one's own faith is determined by the condition of material environment. In other words, man is everything's master and man decides everything. Juche assumes that human is material being, and argues that "man is the most advanced material being and superior product from the development of material world."<sup>38</sup> Unlikely from other religious views of God including Christianity, it worships God of Kim Il Sung who established it and makes its values materialized ultimately. 1998 Constitution of DPRK defined "Kim Il Sung the founding father of socialistic Choson" so that he in human body replaced God. They believe that Kim Il Sung is faultless and always righteous, which is similar to Christians' belief in God's faultlessness and ultimacy. Therefore, anything related to Kim Il Sung becomes sacred. Even though Kim is different from God in Christianity, it is sure that he plays religious God's role. Just like Christians call God their father, North Koreans call Kim Il Sung parents. Considering the North is theocracy in which they get the

authority from deity, we can also understand Kim Jong-Il's ruling based on the teaching left by Kim Il Sung.<sup>39</sup>

### 2. Messiah and Suryong

In Christianity, they talk about the importance of Messiah who connects God with people. Without God, either human salvation or eternal life is impossible. In Juche, Suryong must be needed for people to complete socialistic revolution. According to the theory of the revolutionary Suryong, the creator of history is the masses but without Suryong the masses are just unorganized crowd and revolution without Suryong's leadership becomes inattentive. "Suryong is the highest leadership among the masses in revolution and rebuilding and his position is absolute. This shows well in the phrase that Suryong is the most important brain and the core of the unity for reunification."<sup>40</sup> The Messiah in Christianity is Suryong in Juche. The North in the theory of revolutionary Suryong defines the main players in revolution is the unity of Suryong-the Party-Peoples. It also claims that "the masses acquire the eternal socio-political life by consolidating in its organization and thought under the leadership of the Party centering on Suryong." Suryong can't be the great leader without the masses and the Party can't be people's Party without the masses. However, more importantly, the masses must absolutely follow Suryong's command and the Party's policy.

### 3. Idea of Chosen People and Doctrine of Choson Nation as Number One

In terms of religion, God chose particular nation or people in order to save them, which is the idea of chosen people. Widely, it is the idea that particular nation or people think themselves superior. Prime example of the idea is the Jews. They have religious and ethnic superiority that God chose them to save mankind. This idea still continues in Judeo-Christian tradition.

North Korea advocated the doctrine of Choson nation as number one doctrine in July 1986. This Kim Jong-Il's idea is "pride of Choson's greatness, and noble thought and emotion that is materialized by self-awareness and willingness to increase the greatness of Choson nation."<sup>41</sup> It is also described that it is the pride of "having the great leader, Suryong and being guided by the great leadership of the Party and living in the most superior socialistic system."<sup>42</sup> The source of the doctrine is the victory in fighting against Japanese forces in the battle

of Korea's independence and the fighting against the United States in the Korean War under the Kim Il Sung's leadership, and the construction of socialistic system on its own. The greatness of North Korea lies in the greatness of Suryong and the Party.<sup>43</sup> Choson nation the North argues doesn't mean Koreans all but the North Koreans so that they are the only chosen people. Among them, Kim Il Sung emerged as the Messiah.

#### 4. Ten Commandments and Ten Principles to Establish Monolithic Ideological System

In Juche, ten principles to establish Juche ideology are applicable to the Ten Commandments. The principles were adopted in April 1974 and strict rules to regulate North Koreans' norms and behaviors. The content is as follows:

- 1) With the great Suryong Kim Il Sung's revolutionary idea, we must sacrifice ourselves to unite the society
- 2) We must worship and show him loyalty.
- 3) We must make the authority of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung ultimate.
- 4) We must make the revolutionary idea of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung our beliefs and keep his teaching in our mind.
- 5) We must keep the absoluteness while carrying out the teaching of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung.
- 6) We must unite in our minds and thoughts of the Party centering on the great Suryong Kim Il Sung and strengthen solidarity in revolution.
- 7) Following of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung, we must have socialist appearance, tactics of revolutionary work and people's attitude.
- 8) We must cherish political life that of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung gave us and appreciate his huge political confidence in us and his care and reward him with political awareness and technique in a faithful manner.
- 9) We must establish a strong rule to command all of the Party, the whole country and the entire military under the leadership of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung.
- 10) We must inherit and succeed the feat of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung generation after generation.

Each of the ten principles has detail guideline. In the detail guideline of number one principle, there is a phrase that "we must fight to the

end for winning of Juche in the world", which shows the target of Juche is not only North Koreans but the global people after Juche elevated to a universal ideology. It is similar to Christian words that preach the gospel to the end of the world. In the detail of number two principle, "We must consider having the great Suryong Kim Il Sung who is a talent of revolution, the nation's sun and legendary hero as the biggest happiness and the highest honor, and must respect and worship him forever." The claim that having Kim Il Sung is the biggest happiness and the highest honor is religious declaration of Juche in the sense religion gives the ultimate meaning or the highest meaning. The detail guideline of number three that "we must have a solid stance that we don't know anybody except the great Suryong Kim Il Sung" is similar to the words of the Ten Commandments: "do not worship any other gods." The detail guideline of number four "we must fight against all kinds of ideas that are against the revolutionary ones of the great Suryong Kim Il Sung such as capitalism, feudal Confucianism, revisionism, dogmatism and flunkeyism, and we must stick to the purity of Suryong's revolutionary and Juche ideology." The detail guideline of number eight "we must consider political life as the most precious life and not give in our political faiths to the end of life, and must learn to give away our physical life easily for the political life." This requires martyrdom in a religion. In North Korea, these principles are higher than Constitution so that they apply to people's daily lives. If they violate the principles they will be punished severely.

#### 5. Eternal Life and Socio-Political Life

According to Christian scripture, if man believes in Jesus who is savior of the world, he will earn the eternal life in heaven. Juche also has the theory of socio-political life like eternal life in Christianity. Man has two kinds of life: physical life and socio-political life. Physical life inherits from parents and limited life that ends within 100years. However, Suryong gives socio-political life and it is impossible without a socio-political organism of united Suryong-the Party-People and the life of the united masses is eternal. Therefore individual person can only have eternal socio-political life as a member of a group. Also, as the core of individual person's life is brain, the core of socio-political life is the greatest leader, Suryong so that the person can have eternal socio-political life only when he is united with the center of socio-political life, Suryong and share the destiny by organizing the Party with the same idea.<sup>44</sup>

Why a person is loyal to Suryong-the Party-People is not by anyone's

request but by the original request of his own socio-political life. It's not for anybody else but for himself. Juche sees life just fulfilling physical life's request is like animal's life and the life isolated from Suryong-the Party-People is worthless life contradictory to social human nature. Juche-type socialistic revolutionists are united with loyalty and friendship only under the leadership of Suryong and the Party, and they devote to fighting for common achievements to realize the masses' self-reliance. In this way, they feel accomplishment and happiness in life.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, Juche teaches people that it is worthier to live for eternal socio-political life given by Suryong than to live for limited physical life. The "spirit of becoming bomb and suicide bomb" for revolution in North Korea is also based on the idea that earning eternal socio-political life is more valuable. That is why in the ten principles emphasize that "we must learn to give away our physical life easily for the political life." The North argues that Kim Il Sung has already passed away but he is eternally alive in the hearts of North Koreans in socio-politically. They put up eternal towers all across the nation. On the tower, the words are inscribed that "the great leader Suryong Kim Il Sung will be eternally be with us!" Prime example of eternal tower is 92.52 meters at the entrance of Keumsong Street of Keumsusan Memorial Palace district.

## 6. Ideal World and Communistic Society

Christianity is based on eschatology. On the last day of the world, new heaven and earth will open in addition to the last judgment followed by the Second Advent of Christ. Juche also believes in ultimate victory of communism so that it is sure that communistic societies will advent. Marx argued that capitalism, in which class deprivation and oppression exist, will end up falling, and human's ideal communistic societies will necessarily advent. Kim Jong-Il also suggested that it is the necessity of historic rules and scientific for socialism eventually wins in his article: "socialism is science."<sup>46</sup>

North Korea expects the advent of communistic society and encourages people to overcome the difficulties in reality. Even in the times of arduous marching when a lot of people suffer from starvation, they asked people to be positive with a slogan: "Let us go laughing even though the road is rough." The North's books indicate that the arduous marching turn into marching of Paradise thanks to Kim Jong-Il's wise leadership based on the positive belief.<sup>47</sup> Bearing the current pain with hope and belief of the future shows that Juche works as a

religion..

From Christian's view, the power to prevent an ideal world coming is Satan but in Juche, the Satan is capitalism and imperialism. The latter is "the last depriving system that ignore people's request and effort for gaining self-reliance, and the worst oppressive system in which hierarchical rule and oppression on nations. Those with the ideas are enemies who are trying to reject Juche ideology and overthrow socialism so that we can exist together on earth."<sup>48</sup> As in Christianity Satan is the root of evil; imperialism is the root of Juche too.

## 7. Church and Research Center for Kim Il Sung's Revolutionary Thought

Church in Christianity is a place where people have worship or formal congregation. Likewise, "research center for Kim Il Sung's revolutionary Thought" offers gathering and learning. It is a place where they teach Kim Il Sung's immortal revolutionary idea, Juche ideology and brilliant revolutionary history and make them to be equipped with the teaching."<sup>49</sup> It is almost everywhere across the nation, in the Party, national organizations, factories, business centers, collective farms, educational and cultural centers, science institutes, military bases and garrisons. There are various materials to study Kim Il Sung's revolutionary history such as Kim Il Sung's instruction, materials to study revolution traditions, and many rooms to have congregation. In addition to learning, there are diverse activities such as oath meeting, delivering letters of loyalty and congratulatory letters to Suryong. The exterior of the buildings are way better than neighboring buildings and have best view. The research centers are considered to be sacred so that when they go in the buildings, they have to take off shoes or put on overshoes.<sup>50</sup>

## 8. Worship and Self-Reflection Meeting

As Christianity regularly has meetings or worship, they have meetings and congregation in North Korea. Something like Sunday service in Christianity is self-reflection meeting in North Korea. In accordance with period, they have daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual self-reflection meeting. Weekly self-reflection meeting takes place on Saturdays in small groups. They reflect themselves in the public and they are indoctrinated their ideology in a serious atmosphere. During the time, they first quote Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il's teaching and words and self-criticizes in line of the teachings,



and they also criticize their colleagues' wrongdoing. Through this, they obey the system and the ideology and in that sense, this function as a religion.

Besides that they have reading time in the morning, which is like Morning Prayer. Before they start working they read Nodong sinmun or Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il's teaching and then they determine to carry out those lessons.

## 9. Bible and Teachings and Books

As the Bible has authority to Christians as God's words, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il's teaching and words replace the Bible in North Korea. Kim Il Sung's teaching and books have been published in the title of *Selected Works of Kim Il Sung*, *Works of Kim Il Sung*, *Complete Works of Kim Il Sung*, *Along with the Century*. Kim Il Sung's teaching and books are quoted in North Korean's learning and writing and they show their faiths of the system in this way. Kim Il Sung's teaching is differentiated using bold type letters just like the words of Jesus are typed differently in the Bible. As it is written in the ten principles, Kim Il Sung's teaching must be carried out without any conditions so that it can't be revised even though it is not appropriate in reality.

## 10. Hymn Songs and Worship Songs

As Christians sing Hymn songs when they congregate in worship service, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il worship songs are sung at formal events in North Korea. When TV station starts broadcasting, those songs are always played right after the national anthem. While the national anthem tune is just played, those songs with lyrics are heard. This means the songs are more important than the national anthem. During self-reflection meeting over quarterly term, they start the meeting after those songs. When they finish the meeting, they sing to wish Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il's longevity. Likewise, they learn songs to admire Suryong at an early age and they actively deliver through small art groups. These verses are as follows:

### Song of General Kim Il Sung

1) Blood in every valley of Mt. Paektu, Blood in the flow of Amnok River.  
Holy feat that reflects the flowers of free Choson  
(Refrain) We miss our Great General, honored name of General  
Kim Il Sung

2) Talk to me, snowflakes from Manchuria, talk to me a long hours  
like night in jungle about who's an eternal partisan and who's the most  
patriotic

3) Savior of workers' liberty, the great sun over democratic Choson,  
Let us unite under 20 creed, then, new season of spring will come to  
all across the nation

### Song of General Kim Jong-Il

1) From Mt. Paektu to our land of samcholli,  
A shout of joy from admiring General Kim vibrates.  
The great leader of people who's completed a great feat like Sun  
(Refrain) Hooray! Hooray! General Kim Jong-Il

2) Ten millions of flowers on land show his love,  
The sea of east and west admire his feat,  
The creator of happiness who grows the garden of Juche

3) With his boldness, he protected socialism, so that he let the world  
know my nation and people. Indeed, he is the good the Shepherd of  
justice and a beacon of self-reliance

"Song of General Kim Il Sung" is inscribed in an Arch of Triumph  
and it is used for propaganda to North Korean and foreign tourists.

## 11. Clergy and the Party Leaders

Religion is a kind of community in which members share belongingness and fellowship. The Workers' Party of Korea is a North Korean agency to regulate communities. Through systematic ideology education, the Party realizes a society based on Juche idea. North Korea infuses collective values through education from nursery-kindergarten. From the early age when children are vulnerable in terms of value judgment, the government nurtures them to acquire a core value for them to grow to be the next generation of successors of revolution. After kindergarten, they provide different education in accordance with their target and level of schools such as moral education in elementary schools, history education in middle schools. They internalize the values North Korea requires through repetitive learning of diverse themes in their life. There are diverse organizational learning groups they study two-hour Juche ideology and learn about Kim Il Sung and

Kim Jong-Il. Learning textbooks are different depending on learners and they repeat learning every year and the texts change each year.

In order to become a leading member in any agencies of North Korea, they must be a member of the Party. To become the Party member, first, he/she becomes a candidate member. Those who want to become candidate members must submit the cell of the Party an application and two letters of guarantee from the Party members. The guarantor must be the Party member for more than two years. Admission to the Party is discussed and decided while the applicant presenting, and then the district party committee should ratify it.

In order to nurture, North Korea has Kim Il Sung Advanced Party School, People's Economy School, College of International Relations, Keumsong Political College, Kang Pan-sok Political College. There are also special schools for the children of core class, Mankyongdae School for Bereaved Children of Revolution and Kang Pan-sok School for Bereaved Children of Revolution. North Korea provides systematic education to maintain the community and socialize the collective values through educations at home and society. The Party leaders play a role in maintaining and managing the community like the clergy in Christianity.

## 12. Holy land vs. Historic Sites for Revolution, Year of Grace vs. Juche Year, Christmas vs. Sun Holiday

There are many remains related to Kim Il Sung's revolution in North Korea just like Christian holy land. Kim Il Sung's birth place is named Mankyongdae Home, and it has become their pilgrimage place. A hut called Paektu Milyong in Mt. Paektu where Kim Jong-Il was born has become an important pilgrimage place. The place where Kim Il Sung worked during his life is named Keumsusan Memorial Palace in which preservative treated Kim Il Sung's dead body is hold. On any important holidays, high-ranking leaders of North Korea visit the place and show their respect. When foreign leaders or celebrities visit North Korea, the North Korean government recommends them to visit these places and show their homage. Besides, major places and objects that Kim Il Sung stepped and touched are decorated as historical remains and they are especially cared as something sacred. International Friendship Exhibition Hall in Mt. Myohyang displays gifts that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il received from foreign leaders and celebrities. The North does not reveal their people that leaders exchange gifts in a diplomat between countries but they explain the gifts were donated because the donators admired and respected their

great leaders. In particular, they call the road from Badaogou in Manchuria, China to Kim Il Sung's hometown of Mankyongdae 'A Thousand Miles of Learning' in order to commemorate his event. When he was 11 years old in March 1923 he decided to follow his father, Kim Hyong-jik's lesson that he should learn his motherland and so he walked the path for 17 days by himself. Now they organize marching group of youth and have them take the field trip of the same path. Kim Il Sung pledged that "he wouldn't come back home unless his nation was independent" in February, 1925, and he left his hometown and walked to Badaogou. So the government named this path 'A Thousand Miles of Independence,' and it has the youth walk the same path regularly. This is so called North Korean pilgrimage.

As Christian counts years from the year of Grace, North Korea declared the Kim Il Sung birth year of 1912 as the first year of Juche. According to the North's historic awareness, the world changed totally before and after the birth of Kim Il Sung. The fact that Kim Il Sung was born among Choson nations and lit the beacon of the truth is a great gospel for the entire world. That why Juche ideology must be preached to the end of the world like Christian evangelism and thus they have established the research center for Juche Ideology all around the world. The center is similar to missionary center in Christian. Juche tower near Taedong River in Pyongyang was built with cornerstones sent by the research center for Juche Ideology and people involved in Juche around the world. Naturally Kim Il Sung's birthday has become a big holiday that people around the world should celebrate. Like Christmas and Buda's birthday, Kim Il Sung's birthday is called Sun holiday in North Korea and according to this logic, Kim Il Sung becomes the Sun of humankind beyond the nation's Sun.

## VIII. Conclusion

Kim Il Sung is the founder of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the founding father of socialistic Choson and eternal president of North Korea. He's eternally alive in the hearts of North Koreans. In this regard, Juche is beyond a simple ruling ideology and it is becoming religious doctrine, which is living in every corner of people's lives. Juche shows similarities to Christian components. That is something to with Kim Il Sung's Christian background. Kim Il Sung was born to Christian father Kim Hyong-jik and also Christian mother, Kang Pan-sok. His mother worked as a deacon of a church in

her hometown, Chilgol. She was a sincere Christian who never missed any congregation of church events such as early morning prayers, revival services. One testimony tells Kim Il Sung volunteered a Sunday school teacher in Pastor Son Chong-do's church while he stayed Jilin, China.<sup>51</sup> Kim Il Sung revealed that he went to church with his mother when he was little in his biography and he answered to people's doubt whether he was affected by Christianity while growing up, saying, "I didn't get influence of religion but I personally got help from Christians."<sup>52</sup> However, it is assumed that Kim Il Sung transformed to communist from a Christian when he met a communist teacher, Sang-wol while attending Yuwen Middle School. The person with the most profound influence on Kim Il Sung's understanding of communism was Wei Zhengmin, Kim's immediate superior during his guerilla days in Manchuria.

Presumably, his exposure to Christianity at an early age greatly affects his way of thinking. North Korea based on Juche ideology shows some similarities to Christianity, which might have something to do with the fact that Kim Il Sung himself had Christian background and Marxism that inspired Juche is based started from overthrowing Christian values. North Koreans had a tremendous damage physically socially and psychologically while going through the Korean War, and this situation might influence Juche on changing into a religion.<sup>53</sup> In this process, Kim Il Sung's charismatic leadership might play a great role.

North Korea that is built by Kim Il Sung based on Juche is a result of the millennium movement. The movement not only means peace of the millennium followed by the second advent of Christ in the Revelation of New Testament, but also means anti-systematic revolution happening when political system starts collapsing due to internal and external situations. It has the following characteristic.<sup>54</sup> Firstly, institutions start collapsing. Political power corrupts or evil is prevalent due to the outside pressure, and violence comes from power struggle. In these situations the millennium movement takes place. Choson ruined and Japanese Imperialism forced to occupy because of the collapse of Choson system. Secondly, players of the movement are a person or a group and they try to beat the evil. Japanese imperialism was the evil to Kim Il Sung and his anti-Japanese partisan activities was specific reaction to the evil. Thirdly, systematization follows. The oppressed think them good but the enemy is evil so that they try to proclaim widely to as many people as possible. This explains both trying to deliver communism during anti-Japan partisan activities and systematic socialization of Juche in the North. The fourth, during

transformation, they destroy the weak with the help of the ultimate being or kings. This describes that Kim Il Sung accepted communism and carried out anti-Japanese campaign using communist organization. The Fifth, holy war breaks out. They try to kill the evil completely to realize utopia. Kim Il Sung argued that he beat two: Japan and America in his life time. According to him, he beat Japanese Imperialism through anti-Japanese partisan activities and also beat American Imperialism through the Korean War. The Sixth, the world changes from the world of light to the dark world and again to the world of light in the experience of time and history. From the North's view, the dark world was the times when Japanese Imperialism and American Imperialism prevailed. The seventh, Utopia emerges. The North argues that new era when human is truly liberalized by Kim Il Sung.

They believe that the Millennium was completed by Kim Il Sung and his feat continues by his successor Kim Jong-Il in North Korea. Kim Il Sung is a profane Messiah. He suggested human independence and had a vision to change total society through enlightened guards, and to carry out self-realization of human being by being subordinated to organizations and the leader. As a result, today's North Korea shows. However if a religion can't give absolute answers to specifically physical and spiritual problems in life it will naturally disappear. If the North's religion can't offer enough and appropriate answers to questions in life, it will be hard to avoid disappearing just like so many make-believing religions once emerged in history.

Unification Thought explains 'the law of the false preceding the true.' Satan steals God's will first and tries to put up his people to establish his utopia so that false utopia by false Messiah comes first.<sup>55</sup> Juche idea is false truth that has come before real truth and thus the Unification Thought should overcome it.

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## Notes

- 1) It is known to be more than 20 different portrait badges. See Thomas J. Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea's State Religion* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1999), p. 267.
- 2) Ki-cheol Sin, Yong-cheol Sin, *Sae wurimal keun sajón* (Big new Korean dictionary), (Seoul: Samsong chulpan, 1986.), p. 3030.
- 3) Jun-sik Choi, *Chonggyorol nomoson chonggyo* (Religion beyond religion), (Seoul: Toso chulpan sagye, 2005.), p. 28.
- 4) Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1959.), p. 202.
- 5) Kyong-whan Oh, *Chonggyo sahoehak* (Religious Sociology), (Seoul: Sogwang Press, 1990), p. 45.
- 6) Natural things are changed by time goes by and they die in the process of changing but the ultimate being is spuer natuiral, which never change or die.
- 7) Won-kyu Lee, *Chonggyo sahoehakui ihae* (Understanding of religious sociology), (Seoul: Sahoebipyong, 1997.), p. 47.
- 8) Won-kyu Lee, *Chonggyo sahoehakui ihae*, p. 47
- 9) Won-kyu Lee, *Chonggyo sahoehakui ihae*, pp. 50-51
- 10) Won-kyu Lee, *Chonggyo sahoehakui ihae*, p. 58.
- 11) Robert M. MacIver, , *Community*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951). p. 9.
- 12) Nicholas Lobkowicz, "Marx's Attitude toward Religion," *The Review of Politics*, 1964. pp. 319-352, cited by Institute of Christian Society of Sungsil University, *Makschuiwa kidokkyo sasang* (Marx's Ideology and Christian View), (Seoul: Tosochulpan Hanwul 1991). p. 13.
- 13) Kwahak paek kwa sajón chulpansa (science encyclopedia press), *Hyondae chosonmal sajón* (Modern Korean Dictionary), (Pyongyang: kwacha paek kwa sajón chulpansa, 1981). p. 1831.
- 14) Tae-woo Ko, *Pukhanui chonggyo chongchaek* (Religious Policy in North Korea), (Seoul: Minjok munwhasa, 1988), p. 1831.
- 15) Reinhold Niebuhr ed., *Maks engelsui chonggyoron* (Marx-Angels view of Religion), (Seoul: Tosochulpan Achim, 1988), p. 8.
- 16) Kim Jong-Il, *Juchecholhake taehayo* (On the Juche Philosophy), (Pyongyang: Choson nodongdang chulpansa, 2000), pp. 21-22.
- 17) Dong-chan Ho, *Kimilsong pyongjon: hoguwa silsang* (A critical biography of Kim Il Sung: fiction and reality), (Seoul: Pukhan yonguso, 1987), pp. 281-288.
- 18) Dae-sook Suh, *Hyondae pukhanui chidoja: kimilsong kwa kimchongil* (Modern leaders of North Korea: Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il), (Seoul: Eulyumunwhasa, 2000), pp. 128-129.

- 19) "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work," *Kim Il Sung: Works 9* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1989), pp. 395-417.
- 20) Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 306.
- 21) Jang-yeop Whang, *Nanun yoksau chinrirul poatta* (I witnessed the truth of history), (Seoul: Tosochulpan Hanwul, 1999), p. 370.
- 22) Jang-yeop Whang, *Kaeinui saengmyong poda kwijunghan minjokui saengmyong* (Nation's Life is more Important than a Man's Life), (Seoul: Tosochulpan Sidaejongsin, 1999), p. 137.
- 23) Kim Il Sung, "Answers to questions by Australian press reporters (1974, Nov. 4)," *Juchesasange taehayo* (On the Juche ideology), p. 564.
- 24) Kim Jong-Il, *Juchecholhake taehayo* (On the Juche Philosophy), p. 93.
- 25) Jang-yeop Whang, *Nanun yoksau chinrirul poatta* (I witnessed the truth of history), pp. 136-137.
- 26) Kim Jong-Il, *Juchecholhake taehayo* (On the Juche Philosophy), p. 23.
- 27) Unification Thought Institute, *Kimilsong chuchesasang pipan* (Critics on Kim Il Sung's Juche Ideology), (Seoul: Unification Thought Institute, 1989), pp. 52-53.
- 28) "Yongdo chegye" (Leadership system), *Chuche sasang chongso 9* (A series of the great Juche Ideology 9), (Pyongyang: Sahoekwahak chulpansa, 1985), p. 35.
- 29) Sahoekwahak chulpansa, *Cholhak sajón* (Dictionary of Philosophy), (Pyongyang: Sahoekwahak chulpansa, 1985), pp. 246-247.
- 30) This chapter refer mostly to the Unification Thought Institute, *Critics on Kim Il Sung's Juche Ideology*, (Seoul: Unification Thought Institute, 1989).
- 31) Kim Jong-Il, *Juchecholhake taehayo* (On the Juche Philosophy), p. 79.
- 32) *ibid*, pp. 78-79.
- 33) *ibid*, p. 28.
- 34) *ibid*, p. 23.
- 35) *ibid*, p. 32.
- 36) *ibid*, p. 43.
- 37) *ibid*, p. 31.
- 38) *ibid*, p. 23.
- 39) Sang-woo Lee, *Pukhan chongchi ipmun* (Introduction to North Korean Politics: Characteristics and working principles of Kim Jong-Il administration), (Seoul: Nanam chulpan, 1997), pp. 56-57.
- 40) Sahoekwahak chulpansa, *Cholhak sajón* (Dictionary of Philosophy), p. 376.
- 41) Kim Jong-Il, "Choson minjok cheiljuui chongsinul nopi palyangsikija" (Promote the spirit of the Doctrine of the Choson nation as number one), *Chinaehanun chidoja kimchongil tongjiui munhonjip* (Collection of Works

by honorable the great leader Kim Jong-Il). p. 248.

42) Kim Jong-Il, "Choson minjok cheiljuui chongsinul nopi palyangsikija," pp. 256-257

43) Ibid, p. 259.

44) Kim Jong-Il, "Chuche sasang kyoyangeso chegidoinun myutkaji munjee taehayo" (About several questions raised during teaching Juche ideology), Editorial Division, *Chuche sasang yongu* (Study on Juche Ideology) (Seoul: Tosochulpan Taebaek, 1989). p. 264.

45) Kim Jong-Il, "Chuche sasang kyoyangeso chegidoinun myutkaji munjee taehayo," p. 267.

46) Kim Jong-Il, "Sahoejuuinun kwahakida" (Socialism is Science), *Nodong sinmun* (Rodong Newspaper) (1994, Nov. 4).

47) Refer to Hyun-cheol Yoon, *Konanui haenggunul nakwonui haenggunuiro* (Turning from the arduous march into the march of paradise) (Pyongyang: Pyongyang chulpansa, 2002).

48) Kim Jong-Il, "Maks-leninjuuiwa chuchedsasangui kichirul nopi deulgo naagaja" (March forward under the banner of Marx-Leninism and Juche Ideology), Editorial Division, *Chuchesasang yongu* (Study on Juche idea) (Seoul: Tosochulpan Taebaek, 1989). p. 246.

49) Sahoekwahak chulpansa, Chongchi sajon (Political dictionary) (Pyongyang: Sahoekwahak chulpansa, 1973). p. 156.

50) Byung-roh Kim, *Pukhan sahoeui chonggyosong: chuchesasangkwa kidokkyoui chonggyosong pigyo* (A Study on Religiosity of North Korea: Comparison between Juche ideology and Christianity) (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2000), pp. 93-104.

51) Yong-ho Choe, "Christian Background in the Early Life of Kim Il Sung," *Asian Survey* 26(10) October 1986.

52) Kim Il Sung, *Segiwa tobuoro* (Along with the Century) Book I, (Pyongyang: Choson nodongdang chulpansa, 1992). p. 104.

53) Regarding disaster and the millennium movement, refer to Michael, Barkun. *Disaster and the Millennium* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

54) Miishi Zenkichi, *Chunggukui chohnyonwangguk undong* (Chinese Millennium) (Seoul: Koryowon, 1993), pp. 41-43.

55) Unification Thought Institute, *New Essentials of Unification Thought* (Seoul: Unification Thought Institute, 2005), pp. 382-383.

## A Study on the Christian Characteristics of North Korean Juche Ideology

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Diverse forms of Marxism were developed since Marx. Marx-Leninist economic determinism, Western Marxism as a critique of ideology, Maoism, current Chinese socialism, and Juche Ideology. Juche Ideology of North Korea has peculiar characteristics, which we cannot find in any other forms of Marxism. Dr. Kim's paper explained why and how Juche Ideology is distinguished from other forms of Marxism. Dr. Kim rightly characterized the peculiar nature of Juche Ideology as the deification of Kim Il-sung. I will explain some points. Dr. Kim wrote in his essay but did not explain in his presentation.

The distinct characteristic of Juche ideology is its religious or pseudo-religious character, which is based upon the deification and mystification of the late Kim Il-sung. Without understanding the religious characteristics of this thought, one cannot understand why and how for three years after the death of Kim Il-sung, political rule was conducted based upon the instructions of the deceased leader without having an official election for a new leader, and diplomats were appointed and sent in the name of the deceased Kim Il-sung.

The deification of Kim Il-sung lies at the heart of Juche ideology, which results in practices characteristic of religion. His birthplace and sites where he conducted his activities are holy grounds that are destinations for North Koreans to make their pilgrimages. His portrait is hung on the wall of every household and people begin each day by reading his words. Reflection meetings are held on a regular basis, where people can repent their wrong doings and unfaithful thoughts and behaviors based upon Kim's words as the sacred text. Based upon the deification of Kim, North Korea is characterized as the chosen nation, and North Koreans are educated as chosen people