


“The Root’s of Korea’s Volunteer Service Spirit”

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● Professor, The Academy of Korean Studies
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●  Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations

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PREFACE



Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations was organized to propagate efficient volunteer service activities throughout Korea. Starting out with some thirty-six organizations, the now 8,000,000 members of the current sixty member organizations, unite their strength, aligned side-by-side in organizations, and spread the volunteer service spirit to citizens throughout the entire country, while maintaining the individual idealistic characteristics of each organization. Furthermore, those 8 million volunteers are working to develop strategies for volunteer service that can contribute to the development of local communities throughout the nation. Their objective is to systematically further increase volunteer service movements.

With 1995 as the starting point, volunteer service activities in Korean society began to become more active, but those volunteer service activities generally exhibited a tendency to stress activities having an outward appearance without a spiritual basis. Nevertheless, the history of volunteer service in Korea

can be discovered through this collection of documents that are the results of the lives of the forefathers of modern Korea that stem from the eternal traditions found in the Hyangto, Durae, and Hyangyak, etc., of ancient times.

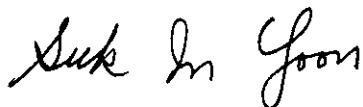
Specialists presentations are based on papers from a seminar titled “Finding the Roots of Korea’s Volunteer Service Spirit” that **Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations** convened in 1997. The research addressed the consistent, systematic and organizational forms found within the traditional culture of Korea throughout its long history of volunteer service. A translation project was set up aiming to introduce these traditions, the spirit and the forms of activities of Korea’s volunteer service to the entire world.

The year 2001 has been proclaimed by the United Nations to be International Year of Volunteers, and various events are being held to commemorate it in each country throughout the world.

In relation to that, a collection of documents under the title, "Finding the Roots of Korea's Volunteer Service Spirit" was published in the Korean language in 1997. The results of the **Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations** efforts are herein translated, published and distributed in commemoration of 2001 being the International Year of Volunteers.

The publication of this collection of documents demonstrates the pride of Korea's volunteers, and provides the opportunity to make the volunteer service of Korea known throughout the world.

January 2001

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Suk In Gwon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'G'.

Secretary General

Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations

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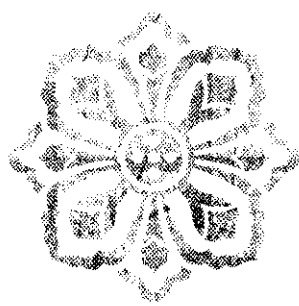
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I. Introduction



I. Introduction

Many problems have recently spread through Korean society: the deterioration of humanity, human alienation, serious economic crises, political confusion, degradation of sexual morality, destruction of the family unit, loss and pollution of the natural environment, and an enormous increase in accidents caused by lack of a sense of safety. Owing to these problems, the overall value of the human being as a member of the communal society is being neglected while there is even disdain for human life. As a result, Korea's communal society has been gradually deteriorating. Looking back at the past, Korea's humane traditional culture has already begun to be cut off, and good morals and manners and, until recently, even what has been considered to be "normal culture" have been pushed aside by the enormous increase of materialism and radical egoism, especially since Korea passed through complicated phases of

rapid industrialization and urbanization in the 1960s. Today, lack of order, norms, and common values that comprise the anomalous situation of Korean society prevail.

As a society develops and becomes increasingly complex, its laws, norms, and ethics, also become more diversified and complicated as well. Many problems that have accompanied social development have come into being in various fields. To resolve them, a new culture involving a volunteer work ethic and volunteer work movements based on a new system and humanity are needed.

Now especially, help from others is urgently required for people who have encountered unexpected accidents in the course of industrialization, or suffer from deep alienation and mental illness resulting from family disintegration. Solving these common human problems cannot be delayed, and as such the United Nations established a few days each year to both serve as warnings and help in overcoming these problems in the dimension of world humanity. These days are World Family Day, World Environment Day, and World Volunteer Service Day. This means that volunteer work is required worldwide as well as in one's own country. The meaning of volunteerism, beginning with the spontaneous helping of neighbors, has developed into the spirit of participating in non-compensated activities to prevent, control, and improve various social problems of the individual, group, and local society. Furthermore,

volunteer work has been further fostered through systemized organizations that work to enhance the well being of a given society.

The urgent need for volunteer activities has risen recently. Nevertheless, the fact that the central or local government's major concern and frequent involvement in volunteer service are not suited to an essential volunteer spirit makes it necessary to examine the overall culture of volunteer work. Today, it is said that the criteria for judging a developed country lies in the culture and system of volunteer service. In the United States, England, and Japan volunteer work has become routine. From this viewpoint, there is a pressing need to improve the sense of citizenship and civil culture of Korea in order to fix the volunteer service system.

II. Ideas and Traditions of Korea's Volunteer Service Spirit



II. Ideas and Traditions of Korea's Volunteer Service Spirit

A. Ideological Foundation

Volunteer activities began with the spontaneous helping of neighbors in need from the beginning of mankind existence on earth. The word 'volunteer' stems from the Latin word *voluntas*, which means spontaneous activity occurring not out of a sense of duty. It was during World War I that the word 'volunteer' began to be identified with the term 'enlisted man,' the one who volunteered for military service. The term gradually was applied to those working voluntarily in the field of social work. The modern meaning of volunteer activities lies in transcending benefaction and sentimentalism in coping with the problems of modern society and in free will based on the communal society

acting to overcome inhumane pressures.

The basis of volunteer service stems from human respect that does not neglect personal will nor disdain human behavior, and from this, we can have a sense of responsibility and togetherness in improving society. This spirit of volunteer work has long been rooted in Korea's traditional culture and society. The *ture* that started in ancient times involved people harmoniously working together in agrarian activities and naturally led to providing mutual aid, and the *p'umashi*, the exchange of labor, can be understood as being an early form of volunteer work for mutual benefit. The beginning of volunteer service in Korea goes back to the *hongik* ideal, the founding spirit of the country during the Tan'gun Chosôn period.

It was proven during the Koryô dynasty that the Tan'gun myth was not a forgery, and instead coincided with an archeologically verifiable social stage. Tan'gun is the historical record of the growth experience of the Korean people. It is natural, therefore, that when the spiritual origin of Koreans is illuminated from the viewpoints of traditional culture, religion, and ethics, it is in the Tan'gun period that the inquiry begins. The ideological characteristic of the Tan'gun spirit is *hongik in'gan*, and it is shown clearly in the idea of *cheseihwa* (promotion of social welfare). The idea of *hongik in'gan* is the standard for education in modern Korea as well as democratic welfare. *Hongik in'gan* is a concept of broadly being beneficial

for humanity, the archetype of Korean thought. Additionally, *cheseihwa*, the major principle that the concept of rule based on Heaven's will is based, is to regulate the world as suggested in the idea of *hongik in'gan*. The *hongik in'gan* ideal can be said to be the ultimate mutual love among humans and the basis of volunteer service. In relation to these meanings, also included in the *hongik in'gan* spirit are the values that all societies should develop to bring about a welfare state.

The origin of the term *hongik in'gan* is recorded in the *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), related to Hwanin, the heavenly ruler of ancient times. Hwanung, Hwanin's son, desired to rule the human world, and the father believed that the world could be benevolent. Accordingly, he gave his son three heavenly regalia and sent him to earth to rule humanity. When the meaning of *hongik in'gan* is examined from the aspect of a volunteer service spirit, the following points can be found.

First, the root of the volunteer spirit in *hongik in'gan* is found in charity and pure human love. *Hongik in'gan* is God's love for humankind, which is the father and son's will transmitted from mind to mind to allow the human world the possibility of benevolence. It does not provide benevolence for any ulterior intent or purpose and is compelled to spread benevolence among others from a religious aspect. Thus, the humanity that springs forth from the pure human mind of the *hongik in'gan* spirit transcends practical interest.

Second, the idea of *hongik in'gan* not only means making the individual a member of the whole entity that has the potential for benevolence, but includes other states and nations, ultimately leading to a “live and let live” situation.

Third, the virtue of regarding others as being better than me exists in the spirit of *hongik in'gan*. To make others broadly capable of benevolence one has to endure inconvenience and pain, allowing others to avoid such inconvenience and pain. In general, the main cause of morally deviated action stems from falling into a state of egocentrism and not escaping from one's practical interests. On the contrary, the communal ethic of *hongik in'gan* transcends irrational actuality, and regards making others potentially benevolent as the main theme. Because of that, ethics such as individualism and selfishness are not permitted. The criteria of ethics lie not in the self but in others, and value judgements involving what is good or evil may be defined according to the degree others are aided.

Fourth, the spirit of *hongik in'gan* prefers that peace and liberty be pursued by humankind. These, of course, arise from mutual love. To enjoy them, one must treat the peace and liberty of others as being valuable. When we desire our peace and liberty earnestly, the peace and liberty of others cannot be overridden. All people were born with the same destiny based on their same origin. Therefore, humans should not be discriminated against based on social status. It is very inhumane

to encroach upon the blessed liberty or peace of others while relying on some transient power or authority.

As has been seen, the foundation of the spirit of volunteer service in Korea stems from the *hongik in'gan* ideal, the founding spirit of the country. In it, the religious, cultural and national spirit that relates to Korea's volunteer work and the ethical values illuminating it are included.

B. Historical Tradition

1. The Voluntary Will to Save the Nation of Shilla: *Hwarangdo*

Hwarangdo (the way of the *hwarang*), the beginning of voluntarism, was comprised of aristocratic youths during the Shilla Kingdom. Young volunteers cultivated their bodies and minds in mountains and rivers, realizing the great causes of loyalty and patriotism. Initially, they gathered voluntarily to cultivate themselves, enjoy songs and select a leader from among themselves, roaming about the splendid mountains and rivers. These volunteers were held up as outstanding persons of the country: prominent ministers, patriots, generals and soldiers emerged from among them. They became the basis for the unification of the Three Kingdoms by Shilla, and their spirit extended through the Choson dynasty (1392-1910), comprising a part of Korea's spiritual history.

2. Volunteer Work of Farmers and Slaves under Mongol Domination

The Mongols invaded the Koryô dynasty (918-1392) eight times. When the government's army was unable to confront the enemy, farmers, slaves and monks voluntarily rose up to repel the invaders from all fronts, providing stimulus to the spirit of resistance. They also desperately protected cultural assets from being sacked and burned by the enemy. This spirit of volunteerism was able to help save the country from this crisis for a period of some forty years. Obscure farmers, slaves, and monks did not wait to be summoned by the government, but rather voluntarily came forth to save the country.

3. Two Invasions and the Volunteer Righteous Army

The Japanese Invasion of the late sixteenth century and Manchu Invasion of the early seventeenth century were unprecedented national crises for Chosôn that paralyzed the country. With lives lost, land devastated, and cultural assets sacked, the government's army and foreign rescue forces failed to repel the invading forces. Confucian scholars immersed in their studies and monks alienated in mountains came forward voluntarily to rescue the country and the nation by way of raising a righteous army. Over sixty volunteer leaders, including Kwak Chaeu, Cho Hôn, Ko Kyôngmyông, and Chong Munbu, battled the enemy and helped restore the country. Kings Sônjo

and Kwanghae-gun highly applauded their volunteer spirit, saying: “Without their voluntary participation, how could we be safe and recover our territory?”

4. The Voluntary Participation of the Righteous Army in Late Imperial Korea

The volunteer righteous army in the late Chosôn period, heir to the spirit of the previous righteous armies, demonstrated perseverance and bravery through voluntary participation. Over 300 volunteer army leaders, including Ch’oe Ikhyôn, Min Chongshik, Yu Insôk, and Hô Wim, were not militiamen taking orders from someone against their will. As Pak Unshik described in his book, “They were patriots with the obvious will to save the country, not ones merely taking orders.” After the assassination of Queen Myôngsông, the struggle against Japan by the volunteer righteous army over a period of about twenty years made it possible for Korea to eventually regain its plundered country. Japanese imperial authorities also pointed out their struggle, “Without the voluntary army, we could have occupied Chosôn more easily and quickly.” Over 55,000 independence fighters at home and abroad were the incarnation of the spirit of the volunteer righteous army that brought about national salvation.

5. Volunteer Work in the Provisional Government

The provisional government (1919-45) of the Republic of Korea was sustained for twenty-seven years, led by more than forty men that included Yi Tongnyông, Kim Ku, and Syngman Rhee among others. They adopted a political form based upon the separation of the three branches of government wherein lies the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea. They gathered voluntarily in Shanghai China and brought together orthodox nationalistic and democratic people to run the government. As the result, patriots with a thoroughgoing sense of volunteerism were brought together to play a central role in the independence movement.

C. Ethno-spiritual Aspects

The purpose of volunteer service lies in helping people who are in need both materially and spiritually to help them live better by their own means. The volunteer spirit, from which they receive the will to live and discover meaning in their lives, may be said to have, in this sense, important meaning.

There is, then, a little difference between the result of material aid and that of spiritual aid. All are able to receive spiritual aid from a sage regardless of time and space, although material aid does have temporal and spatial limits. Even if one

is rich, wealth cannot be boundless and its unlimited distribution is not possible either. Ultimately, the positive meaning of volunteerism can be found in helping people in all kinds of difficulty to recover the will to live.

Next, I will address the foundations for this spirit of volunteer work and how it is expressed in Korea's national spirit. The national spirit revealed below helps to examine and make a correct prescription based on the current capitalist circumstances, in which attachment of self-interest and lack of concern with spiritual stability bring about conflict and opposition.

According to records in the aforementioned *Samguk yusa*, Hwanung informed a bear how to transform into a human, as the bear truly desired to become human. In this story, both a bear and tiger appealed to Hwanung to become humans. He instructs them that they are to live together in a cave and pray fervently. Moreover, they were to only eat mugwort and garlic and not come out of the cave for a period of one hundred days. Unlike the tiger, the bear followed Hwanung's directions and was transformed into a woman. After becoming a woman, she entreated him for a partner to have a baby. Hwanung, being a spirit, then transformed into a man and married her. The fruit of this union was Tan'gun. From this narrative, we can find some significant meaning regarding the national spirit.

One is that the bear was transformed not into a man but into a woman. This can be understood as reflecting a notion or

custom for the preference of woman over men in those times. When the idea of the founding of the country was elucidated, the transformation of the bear into a woman was necessary as it conformed to the social atmosphere. This assumption, however, does not allow any significant meaning to be found in the idea of founding the country. To explicate this assumption persuasively, we need to focus on female attributes, which contribute to a further explication of the concept of *hongik in'gan*.

Female attributes lie in a meekness that entails mild and soft feelings that result in a sense of stability. As the mother, the woman is benevolent to her children. Benevolence is another expression of female meekness in motherhood. This female meekness coincides with the meekness of the Tongi people.(Eastern Barbarians-an appellation given to the peoples living in the areas around and including the Korean peninsula in ancient Chinese histories) This was an estimation made by other people-not the Tongi people of who the Korean people were.

Meekness is having mild and soft feelings, and can be manifested only when there is energetic, patient endurance beforehand. On other side of the coin, both meekness and humility can be seen as weaknesses, lacking in external adaptability; however, energetic, patient endurance is innate to both of them. Probably because of this, it is recorded in the

Hou Hanshu (History of the Latter Han Dynasty) that “The Tongi people can never be annihilated.” Then, how do these details help to expand on the hongik in’gan concept?

Hongik in’gan means making a human world of the broadest possible benefit. Making the world benevolent may have the sense of giving men both spiritual stability and material allowance. Both spiritual stability and material allowance can be realized through the practice and the attitude of making others comfortable. Making others comfortable begins from the state of mind that prohibits putting others at a disadvantage. Its greatest effect comes from the active practice of having meekness before them.

The practice of meekness in human relations provokes others to seek spiritual stability and the will to live, which can lead to economic stability in their own lives. Eventually, the practice of meekness is the ability to make others stable on the basis of one’s own stability. Even if it does not reveal itself clearly, it is certainly a great potential ability. This conforms to the fact that *kyôm*, one of the trigrams in the *Zhuyi* (Book of Changes), has meekness and humility as essential qualities, and because of that, it is considered to be the most important of the sixty-four trigrams. The practice of meekness and humility can be viewed as a valuable factor through tolerance in human relations to bring about solidarity and harmony.

It is necessary to explain further the basis for the practice of

meekness toward others. This has something in common with explaining Hwanung's case. In other words, when Hwanung descended to the human world, he was accompanied by some officials to take charge of many kinds of work for men. Why was this so?

The basis for the practice of meekness and humility might be found in recognizing heartily that all humans have equal dignity. In fact, the recognition that all humans have equal dignity starts from a sincere realization of one's own dignity. The mind and practice of making much of oneself can be a starting point for opening up towards others.

The spirit that was emphasized in ancient Korean society is the expression of meekness and humility in the form of making much of and loving others on the basis of making much of and loving oneself. It was expressed without any arbitrary effort. This is clearly shown in the case of Sun, the ancient king of the Tongi people. According to Mencius, Sun's benevolent and righteous actions did not come from any sense of means to achieve some purpose, but rather from a natural inner benevolence and righteousness, and such action of itself was an objective.

The national spirit of Koreans is revealed in the form of meekness and humility. Meekness and humility are practiced based on the dignity of all men, including oneself. Therefore, meekness and humility were actual aspects of living naturally, as expressed in the sense of the dignity of man in human relations.

It resulted in mutual advantages for men who were aiding and being aided. The will and its practice to offer spiritual stability and material benefit made it possible to bring about mutual advantage.

As I have discussed, strong will and its continuous practice are the basis for bringing about benefits such as volunteer service. As such, the source of volunteer spirit can be found in the national spirit. Then, the national spirit, being the spirit of volunteerism, carries the innate meaning of displaying the leader's qualities in various fields. Cultivating the national spirit and practicing it in human relations means displaying leadership to its fullest. Actually, those who help others to seek spiritual stability and material benefit can be called leaders. The national spirit as the spirit of volunteerism has features of subjectivity leading to a harmony of diversities. To discuss the means of expressing this subjectivity, we should inquire into the meaning of the Five Secular Injunctions of the *hwarang*.

The Five Secular Injunctions involved loyalty, filial piety, fidelity, bravery, and sanctity of life. Among them, loyalty, filial piety and fidelity are closely related to Confucianism while the sanctity of life is based on Buddhist doctrines. During the Shilla Kingdom, Confucianism and Buddhism were the main currents of thought in both intellectual and religious spheres. The Five Secular Injunctions included both of these belief systems at the same time, thus demonstrating that the *hwarang*

had the tolerant will to discard prejudice or bias and to accept the true meaning of various ideas objectively, without prejudice for a specific trend. Besides Confucianism and Buddhism, the *hwarang* also had a deep interest in Taoism.

That the *hwarang* practiced morality and fidelity, enjoyed song and dance, and visited places of scenic beauty to cultivate themselves reveals a close bond with Taoist naturalism. We can see that the Five Secular Injunctions and *hwarangdo* contained various belief systems, including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and the *hwarang* practiced elements of all three without any bias toward a particular ideology. From the *hwarang* came able leaders and brave soldiers who played major roles in making Shilla a stable society, eventually preparing the groundwork for the ensuing unification of the Three Kingdoms and more.

Here, I would like to emphasize some essential points. First, that these able men and brave soldiers accepted a variety of ideologies and beliefs. Second, that the *hwarang* supposed that other men also were open-like them-to various ideas, or had the potential to accept a variety of ideas even though not open-minded. Without this awareness, the solidarity for unification among the *hwarang* and the people could not have been achieved. It was the tolerance for diversity among the *hwarang* and people that the capacity for unification was based. What then was the essential factor for such tolerance coming

into being?

This can be explained through the meaning of the birth of Tan'gun. The birth of Tan'gun came about as the result of the harmony of the forces of heaven and earth in which the dignified meaning of his birth is found. When this meaning is applied to all men, the dignity of man is secured, and the social realization of *hongik in'gan* can be justified and universalized. The tolerance of the *hwarang* came from the practice of the Five Secular Injunctions and this was disseminated to the Shilla people. This verifies that the meaning of the social realization of *hongik in'gan* based on the dignity of mankind in ancient Chosôn was transmitted to Shilla.

Much emphasis should be placed on mutual respect and its continual practice in human relations. This conforms to the fact that human nature should be sought from the aspect of the dignity of man. The ancestors of today's Koreans ceaselessly pursued human relations based on the dignity of man and had a firm hold on the national spirit. People need to understand this and try to follow suit.

In many cases, however, to stress a specific item in particular reveals paradoxically the lack of the very same thing. The background of accentuating the importance of volunteer work admits to the dark side of society that urgently needs aid. This dark side comes from mutual negligence in human relations, which has its roots in the careless treatment of the dignity of

man. Therefore, a deep awareness of the dignity of man and the will to aid those in need have important meaning for enhancing spiritual stability and arousing the will to live by participating in volunteer activities in taking care of them. The human relations aspect of the model volunteer service found in the national spirit should be considered as a valuable asset in the sense of sustaining the practice of traditional values connected with the meaningful spirit of volunteer work in our society.

The capability to practice the national spirit as the source of the spirit of volunteerism is deeply related to leadership. Leaders can be defined as being those who offer the helpless both spiritual stability and material resources. As we perceive that problems in industrial society mainly arise from selfish desires to maximize personal gain, we try to achieve social stability and development by respecting and aiding one another on the basis of the national spirit as the spirit of volunteerism.

D. Religious Factors

Religion came into being because of the problems of mankind. In other words, mankind has always required religion when experiencing difficulties. Therefore, service and sacrifice compose the primary aspects of religion. Service and sacrifice are never negative activities subordinated to other activities, but

are positive having essential meaning of themselves.

Let us examine the concept of the Bodhisattva as being the ideal in Mahayana Buddhism. The Bodhisattva put off nirvana to save all creatures in spite of already having attained enlightenment. The Bodhisattva pursues mercy as well as enlightenment. It is very meaningful that mercy is presented as the first way of the six paramitas to attain Bodhisattva. Even if meditating and practicing the precepts are important, having mercy on others, above all, is securing the quality of a bodhisattva. In this connection, service itself is the primary goal, not a secondary means for Buddhists.

It is the same for Christians. Jesus gave the highest priority to love over belief or desire. This is embodied especially in the precept "Love your neighbor." Well then, who are one's neighbors? Surely, this does not refer merely to people living close by. A neighbor is anyone, whoever is in need. Therefore, love, the ultimate virtue in Christianity, means unconditional aid for people in trouble. The story of the Good Samaritan, who unconditionally administered care to the stranger in need, is one example showing the practice of Christian love. This love can never be practiced under coercion. It consists of voluntary and unpaid activities given to others. Moreover, it is an ultimate goal of itself, not a means.

As has been shown, religious activities are closely related to volunteerism. The relationship between religion and volunteer

service appears in various forms in Korea's history, and reaches back to the ideal of *hongik in'gan*. One concrete historical record clearly exhibits this service during the era of the Shilla queen Sôndôk (r. 632-647), when men and women voluntarily worked in receipt of absolutely no material recompense, carrying clay to make a Buddhist statue in the course of building Yongmyo Temple.

Additionally, orphans and the elderly, who had no protectors, have been sheltered and taken care of in Buddhist temples since long ago. Later, during the construction of Namhan-san Fortress or the defense barrier on Kanghwa Island, the roles of volunteers are well known. Especially, it is common knowledge that in transferring the capital from Kaegyông to Hanyang, enormous human resources were rallied to build the fortress in Hanyang. Records tell of people worn out with cold, sickness, and hunger being helped by the monks of Chaeun-jong, a Buddhist sect. These documents contain examples similar to the volunteerism of modern times. Then too, there are the volunteer armies that included the monk soldiers who fought in aforementioned Japanese and Manchu invasions, which are other examples of actual volunteer service on a large scale and a vital part of Korea's history. These serve as religious examples to the world in relation to volunteer work showing continued activities to support society in time of disaster without expectation of reward.

The entry of Christianity to Korea during the late Choson period brought new concepts of public welfare service related to education and health care that took on some new features of volunteer service. Relief for the poor provided by Christian churches after the Korean War is also included in the framework of volunteer work in a broad sense. Christian service relied on voluntary devotion based on the spirit of love as part of missionary work.

Indeed, what are the real aspects of religious volunteerism in Korean society these days? After the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the relationship between volunteer work and religious organizations is not great according to various statistics. It is relatively well known that religious organizations abroad have played positive roles regarding volunteer service. In Korea, however, in contrast to the rapid extension of the discussion of volunteerism carried out in schools, enterprises, and government, active participation is not very visible in the case of religious organizations. Some point out that religious organizations are not exerting any effort in volunteer service. This point cannot completely be denied, but in my opinion, many religious organizations formerly considered volunteer work to be something natural and long practiced, but now do not think it necessary to participate in the discussion nor to connect with other organizations involved in volunteer work.

Religious organizations working to achieve the principle

objectives of volunteer service can be easily found solving problems concerning the home, youth, infants, elderly, disabled, poor, consumers, health and medical treatment, crime, environmental pollution, and community development. Numerous religious organizations, in fact, are taking the initiative in promoting volunteer work throughout Korean society. These days especially, the concept of volunteerism focuses not on providing aid or charity from the philanthropic aspect, but arranging opportunity for self-development through the social experience. Moreover, as the result of active invitation, the participation of specialists is gradually increasing. Therefore, systematic programs centered on volunteer organizations are required instead of diverse, individual volunteer service. In other words, this means that a regular supply of human resources in addition to facilities, funding, and professional personnel for education are necessary to bring about successful volunteer work. In the light of these points, religious organizations are already endowed with the proper conditions for volunteer service, including an organizational body centered on the support of a large number of devotees.

The interrelationship between religious bodies and volunteer work can be deeply understood as based on the theory of social construction. Modern society is often described as pluralist. The development of a division of labor since the onslaught of modernity accelerated specialization within society, which

enabled each part of society to have appropriate meaning. Unlike in past times when food, clothing and shelter were achieved by farming and individual pursuits to sustain life, modern people are engaged in only one business, while benefiting from the efforts of others engaged in other businesses. Thus, each part of society has become significant in its own way and this has resulted in rapid growth. Then, the plurality of modern society does not signify simple fragmentation. Rather, it means the polarization of individual life. Namely, individuals experience mega-structures outside of their dwellings and are attached to individualism at home.

This means hospitals, schools, and firms are so massive that solitary individuals can no longer be treated as individuals. One is just referred to as an anonymous number, and neatly falls into categories in which another can replace him or her. The individual is alienated completely in social life. On the other hand, it may be natural that the individual who is alienated outside pursues a more personal life at home to compensate for the external alienation. If all humans only look after their personal interests, social norms cannot but be thrown into disorder. Finally, social anomie results. In other words, polarization of social construction brings about alienation and anomie. The appearance of various morbid phenomena calling for volunteer service may be the result of this polarization.

In this context, emphasis on the functions of family,

neighbors, religion, and volunteer groups as mediating structures between the individual and mega-structures to combat the danger of polarization are meaningful. In particular, in societies recently experiencing serious polarization as the result of rapid industrialization, like in Korea, it is increasingly necessary to stress the functions of mediating structures. For example, in the case of the Samping Department Store accident when the building collapsed, the role of the macro-government revealed its limits in many aspects. Furthermore, to assume the individual attitude of an onlooker, regarding such disaster as being irrelevant to me, is disappointing. On the other hand, the action of volunteer groups, including religious organizations, was rapid and devoted. Enormous funds are directed to social welfare, though the bureaucratic structure can easily duplicate it. In contrast to this, providing services through mediating structures can be systematic and relatively efficient.

In this regard, it is necessary to focus on attaining mutual companionship between religious and volunteer service groups as mediating structures. Today, they are largely relied upon as alternative resources for overcoming all sorts of morbid social phenomena stemming from alienation and anomie. In addition, they, as similar social capital, are ultimately required to engage in a close cooperative relationship.

E. The Ethical Considerations

Citizen participation in a democratic society appears in various forms. First, there is participation (i.e., elections and petitions) through institutional means. In addition, there is also political participation through spontaneous, non-institutional citizen movements. The more mature a democratic society, the more active the political participation involving citizens in the collective. Not all of the problems occurring within a society are resolved through political authority alone, nor only through institutional processes. To the contrary, we find situations in advanced democratic societies where social problems are solved by the spontaneous participation of citizens. This phenomenon appears in the societies where the principle of democracy by the people for the people is most naturally evident. Naturally, spontaneous citizen movements have political meaning. Thus, volunteer service is distinguished from the former activities in the point that it stems from ethical roots. So, what is the ethical basis for having a spirit of volunteerism?

Society is a common body originally formed by humans full of self-interest out of the instinct of self-preservation. There are desires that make it impossible to control the egoism that the human is born with; though this is restrained forcibly, it is not the solution. Nevertheless, if it is impossible to overcome the evils that self-interest generates in society, human society will

collapse in defeat and end on the battlefield of the survival of the fittest. The statements by Thomas Hobbes that “All people struggle against all people” and “Man is a wolf to men” (*homo homini lupus*) are based on all people having an instinctive behavior for self-preservation. Hobbes wrote of the human confrontation with the natural condition: “...The most serious thing is the fear of death as the result of continued terror and violence, and human life that is isolated, destitute, abhorrent, beastly and short.” How human beings can coexist and the question of building a reciprocally beneficial relationship through social planning is difficult to realize by using institutional apparatuses alone. Here, the self-restraint, self-sacrifice and altruistic behavior of the mature human must be preserved. It was within this meaning that the philosopher Aristotle said that the harmonization of politics and morality becomes the inevitable objective of the common society.

Volunteer activities are a citizen movement based on altruistic behavior carried out in a society in which selfishness is widespread. Although this sort of benevolent behavior has a basis in Korea’s traditional principle of interdependence, there are also grounds for adequately explaining it based on Western moral philosophy.

The first ethical principle of volunteer service is self-control and spontaneity. Volunteerism does not take place at the direction of another but stems from one’s desire and will. As

such, what occasion will result in volunteering and serving? Alternatively, when is it most likely that humans will act spontaneously? Human behavior exhibits no better time for spontaneity than the time when there is self-gain or in doing work that suits one's taste and disposition. In other words, it begins with individual ego (*egoismus*) and in one's heart (*Wohlgefallen*). Therefore, self-restraint and spontaneity do not begin with abstract virtues like the "love of humanity" or the "happiness and equality of mankind." Listening to the words of individuals who return the money they accumulated over a lifetime to society, they often recall the hardships they experienced over time and the most intimate problems they encountered. For example, because they were unable to attend a school, there are cases where they provide scholarships for education. Hence, the most spontaneous volunteerism and the most prolonged, sustained volunteer behavior generally hinges upon what one thinks is the most help required from one's own self-experience. Parents who lose a child in an accident devote their assets, time and effort to work directed towards the prevention of such an accident. This is precisely what the opportunity is-egoism appearing in a sublimated form.

The staying power for volunteer work weakens the further the volunteer is removed from the world of personal experience while the closer one is to a personal experience, more seriousness and passion surge forth. Therefore, spontaneity cannot occur in

an abstract volunteer group detached from the world of personal experience.

The second ethical principle of volunteerism is a charitable and sympathetic heart. A person sees that moral conduct springs from feelings. In human action that aims for an objective and has the strength to go forward continuously, there is only one kind of emotion that is important. That emotion entails evoking happiness for mankind and rage over the misfortune of others. Beyond this, nothing else is of consequence. If one is a responsible member of a community, whenever there is an impediment to the happiness that all should enjoy, the emotion of sharing together in that misfortune is indeed very genuine. Hume wrote that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature. It largely controls our judgement concerning beauty and gives us a feeling of moral approbation in many types of moral human endeavors. Sympathy is not charity that some party with a vested interest simply grants. It is something that rises from feelings of morality, lying dormant within a human being, and is the command of the conscience. Therefore, a society lacking sympathy not only frequently experiences cases in which unfortunate circumstances are simply lamented, but also experiences added misfortunes throughout the entire society that cannot be solved through institutional mechanisms alone. In this sense we can understand that rising from genuine moral feelings, a merciful and sympathetic heart

has to act on the principle of volunteer service.

The third ethical principle of volunteerism involves common good and utility. That predication manifests the sociological imagination that enables thinking about how this society will turn out if I merely stand by looking at the circumstances that require my help. This ability leads to thinking about the direction in which society will go forward. Ordinarily, utilitarianism is typified by the proposition of the most happiness for the most people. Although the principle of utilitarianism is also related to Epicureanism, England's utilitarianism differs from Epicureanism in that it sets individual pleasure as its objective, asserting the pleasure of the overall society. Jeremy Bentham, the originator of utilitarianism, stated that nature put mankind under the domination of the two sovereigns of pain and pleasure. That which determines what we will become entirely depends upon these two sovereigns, and of course designates what we must do too. He went on to say that the principle for approving or disapproving all behavior depends upon the question of whether or not that behavior is inclined toward furthering or reducing the happiness of the related parties.

Ultimately, Kant's discourse on ethics also indicates that when the standard criteria for individual behavior says "always act to achieve the standards of the law, which is at the same time universally justified," there has to be universality for the

benefit and happiness of all people. The public good is the core of ethics for both the happiness of the individual and common society as well. Hence, the core of the volunteer spirit is precisely in the common good.

The fourth ethical principle of volunteerism is a sense of unconditional obligation. It is a feeling of responsibility void of expecting any compensation. Volunteer work does not anticipate any sort of compensation before doing something. It is something that simply follows the command of one's conscience and morality. Kant wrote that if one's good deeds originate in one's simple temperament or character, that ultimately does not bring morality. If I am charitable to another and the helping deeds I render are because I incipiently like doing the good deeds, I am also capable of not doing good deeds when I dislike doing them.

Although one volunteers because one has the time, when that time is not there, the person who says they are unable to volunteer amounts to not accepting something that must be done out of a the sense of moral obligation. Conduct in this situation by no means can be said to be moral. Obligation is a command that does not control what is possible or not possible according to one's preferences, interests or situation. Therefore, Kant wrote that if some sort of condition is attached to moral behavior and acting morally, it is not moralistic. "When I want to receive praise from many people, I do good deeds." The

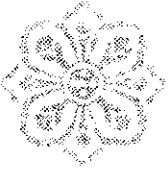
“want to” is the corresponding condition. This conditional performance of good deeds is what expects the compensation or reward that determines human behavior. Therefore, Kant stated that moral behavior “does not attach conditions,” that is, it is an unconditional order. He stated that man should unconditionally be honest and help others in need of help.

Here, what kind of person expects to receive compensation through volunteer service? Moral command is of itself something that is beautiful and moral command is carried out because it has value of itself. What is the income that is received through volunteer work? Although it is unconditional, the fact that something is gained cannot be denied. It is not material income but is spiritual income or worth. That is the recompense for which all who aspire to volunteer work expect.

The fifth ethical principle of volunteerism is the self-sacrifice of one’s soul and attainment of religious love. To be sure, it is evident that conduct involving the devotion of one’s time, materials, and physical effort to volunteer service is for neither simple fun nor passing the time. We can say that in all areas of Korean society, those who work hard for people experiencing hardship are able to volunteer without using their personal belongings. In the Bible too it says, “First sell off all of your possessions, give relief to the poor, and then follow me.” The deepest meaning of serving is like devoting one’s self to a kind of religious sacrifice. Therefore, while enduring all kinds of

adversity and hardship, people who excel in volunteer work are endowed with a disposition similar to that of religious martyrs. Every time we read or hear about the lifetime achievements of Mother TERESA, we question where her strength of service stemmed from. This informs us that there is something in the faithful heart that is even deeper than that which comes from the system of belief that binds together and supports humans. The commandment “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” becomes the volunteer’s ultimate commandment.

III. The Origin and Status of Korea's Volunteer Service Culture



III. The Origin and Status of Korea's Volunteer Service Culture

If we examine the cultural background of the countries where volunteer service originated, the following points summarize these cultures. First is love based on human history. Second is relief and charity work done in the Christian spirit. Third is the spirit to spontaneously support military service and nursing during wartime. Fourth is all of the social and neighborhood work campaigns that started organizations such as the Red Cross Society. Fifth is volunteer service in the social welfare dimension. Sixth is the launching of the volunteer Peace Corps for human peace. When looking at the cultural background and content in which Korea's volunteer service began, though different than Western countries, similarities can be found. Moreover, the Korean experience reveals points that are rather more outstanding than those of the West from the

historical perspective of philosophical and organizational activities. By reviewing various historical documents a brief examination will be made of the meaning and historical account of volunteerism and the *hyangdo*, *ture*, *kye*, and *hyangyak*, which show the historical flow.

A. *Hyangdo* (Religious Disciples Community)

Hyangdo was an organized body for developing various common objectives during the traditional era and after Buddhism incorporated this body it became widespread and active in the developmental processes of ancient society. Although its character was not constant in each period, it originally was designated as an association of the faithful organized for the purpose of Buddhist activities. It appears that rather than existing only for Buddhist activities, *hyangdo* was also responsible for functioning in times of good and bad fortune, congratulations and condolences, and providing relief during catastrophes involving its members. In addition, the members who made up the *hyangdo* were marked as making up the administration or being a part of the common production body since they comprised voluntary and spontaneous organizations. Still, the *hyangdo* was charged with the important mission of forming a cooperative system among the communities while

linking the internal structures of the villages with the outside.

Looking at the social character of the *hyangdo*, Buddhism provided the principle for social management to overcome the tribal contract while ancient society developed, as can be observed in the *hwarangdo* being incorporated in the *hyangdo*. During this first period, there were difficulties in merging with the existing order and the inevitable unfolding of a structure in response to those difficulties. However, the rule of the Shilla aristocratic class weakened, and weaker groups in confrontation that were associated with the established order tried to secure a power base by actively using doctrines such as the Buddhist Pure Land teachings which were then diffusing to the lower social levels. Subsequently in the late Shilla period, *hyangdo* organizations in villages and other areas beyond the capital became largely composed of powerful people within the local regions, including local people. They also functioned as a realistic means for the local powers to strengthen the cooperative communal system relationship that was leading overall society. The organization and character of the early Koryo period inherited that of the latter Shilla. At the end of Shilla, Koryô continued the bureaucratic organization and the local powers that were leaders in the local communities came to be prominent throughout the common political system. *Hyangdo* definitely became restricted within these circumstances, while to the contrary, it was also reinforced.

By investigating the composition of the upper class, we see that there were *hyangdo* organizations formed for groups such as women and peasants that grew out of the *hyangdo* established by high-level officials at the center. These organizations apparently strengthened the functions of the cooperative system in the countryside while elements of Buddhism were no longer particularly prominent. Other activities, such as holding Buddhist masses, burning incense and offering flowers, Buddhist invocations, and mutual assistance activities, still maintained a heavy Buddhist influence. At that time, large-scale *hyangdo* organizations composed of hundreds or thousands of people were almost non-existent. According to records in *Yongjae ch'ongwha* (Assorted Writings of Yongjae) the *hyangdo* of the early Chosôn period were composed of from seven to nine people for the smallest groups and around 100 people for the largest organizations. Notable in this period is the transformation of the *hyangdo* to more of a cooperative system for rural areas than a group for Buddhist activities. This was a continuation of intensive agricultural developments during the late Koryô period. As agricultural class specialization occurred, many farmers were ruined. As such, there arose a need to restructure the cooperative communal system of the villages so that these individuals could secure their relative independence and guarantee their own well-being. As the character of this cooperative system for the villages became widespread, the

government in early Chosôn took control of it and made it a formal unit of government. The local cooperative system of the *hyangdo* survived in such activities as providing coffin-bearers and other functions for funeral services, while the farmers' cooperative was charged with the functions of a common labor organization. In other words, according to the locale, the character of the cooperative labor organization, known as the *hyangdo*, continued as if it had not changed at all. However, with the propagation of new rice cultivation methods, ordinary farmers began to have more economic leeway and free time. The *hyangdo* eventually came to typify the common systemic order of village society in latter Chosôn through forming farmers' cooperatives as the labor organization that markedly raised their autonomy and organizational effectiveness.

B. Ture (Farm Cooperative)

The ture was a cooperative agricultural labor organization staffed by villagers in the rice-farming belt. Men farmed, and women and children cooperated in activities such as weaving. The work of the men at times became customary when the power of large-scale labor had to be applied for short periods as with transplanting rice seedlings and weeding the fields. Because the formation and function of the farm cooperative

differed according to region it had various names, including appellations such as *nongsa* (農事), *nonggye* (農契), *nongch'ong* (農廳), *nong'ak* (農樂), *nonggi* (農旗), *mokch'ang* (牧廳), and *kyaksa* (醜社). Although a farm cooperative, it also played a major role in such communal recreational events as the tug-of-war and torch competitions.

The *ture* gradually transformed to individual communal systems, with diverse functions such as labor groups, military groups, morality groups, mutual aid groups, faith groups, competition groups, and others. As for land ownership, the land was part of the cooperative system of the rural area that involved common tilling and distribution. Therefore, there is the assertion that the common labor organization of all the residents came to be called the farm cooperative (*ture*). In the case of the ancient common farm system, a mutual relationship arrangement among the people, as well as the relationships among collectives and production methods too, resulted in a solid and cohesive organization.

The farm cooperative of the communal labor organization could only have had strong collective and coercive features in that it was an analogous system. There were many kinds of farm cooperatives. There were organizations for both men and women divided by gender, those based on age, and those founded on meritorious strengths and weaknesses among others. With regard to generation, not only were there *ture* for youth,

middle aged and the elderly, there were those with or without musical accompaniment. In the traditional cooperative labor organizations, there was the *p'umat*, or the exchange of services, an organization that differed from the *ture*. The exchange of service organization was a body for the exchange of labor on a small scale that was based on the intent of individuals. Here, to the contrary, adult males of the village were practically obligated to participate as members. Males who intended to join the *ture* showed their strength to the people of the village and had to gain their approval. This new style of participation, based on the local region, took on many diverse names. Here, we are also able to find remnants of the coming-of-age ceremonies that had been passed down from ancient society.

Cooperative labor based on the *ture* covered the entire farming process, including such activities as planting rice, irrigating fields, weeding, cutting stalks, and threshing. Without fail, the farm cooperative was mobilized, especially for the labor-intensive activities such as rice planting and weeding. Even in the mid 1970s a farm cooperative in Hoengsông County of Kangwôn Province was still active. The planting of rice here was about one week ahead of areas without *ture*, and the *ture* enabled this. Members decided among themselves when the best day for going out to do the transplanting and engaged in free discussions on rice seedling quality and other tasks.

The presence of farmer's music is a characteristic that can

distinguish one *ture* from another. Those with music call members to work with rousing music designed to encourage participation. There are many types of farmer's music designed to ease particular tasks by mimicking the farming processes, while other types of this music are used in rituals dedicated to local tutelary deities. Farmer's music also alleviates the hardship of labor, musters increased strength among the farmers, and brings about an invigorating cooperation.

C. *Kye* (Mutual Aid Association)

The mutual aid association (*kye*) is one of the cooperative groups that has long been present in Korea. This mutual aid association naturally came about based on the needs of the farmers. Being a support collective, it has been more common and more active than the *ture* association and the organizations for the exchange of service. As the origin of the *kye* is not clear, and it has a variety of forms and functions, it is difficult to define this concept in a few words. Although there are many theories, the *kye* involved an agreement for purposes such as mutual aid among members, friendship, unity, and common benefit, and it is generally operated based on those same points of agreement.

There are so many kinds of mutual aid associations that they

cannot be counted. According to a study done in 1938, there were 480 kinds based on different names alone. Categories of the associations were on the standard of such functions as organizational purpose of the body and external form, and there especially was a general inclination that followed function. However, to address the question of whether one association had various simultaneous functions is difficult because there are cases of associations having similar names while carrying out completely different functions. For example, though a *kye* may be said to be for recreation or friendship, economic issues are actually taken into consideration.

It is also difficult to address the period when the mutual aid association first appeared. There are a variety of assertions on the time period that the *kye* was established: some scholars cite a period before the Three Kingdoms Period, with others naming the Shilla, Koryô, or Chosôn periods. Making an accurate supposition, therefore, is difficult. In particular, theories on the origin of the *kye* are even more diverse since extant documents before the Chosôn period are rare.

The mutual aid associations of the Chosôn dynasty went through significant changes during the colonial period. When looking at the various changes cited in studies conducted in 1926 and 1938, we find first that the number of associations increased from twenty thousand to thirty thousand during this period. Looking at the total numbers for each kind of

association, the percentage of associations aimed at public works and associations with recreational objectives increased; while on the contrary, the percentage of others decreased. These trends are the same for the members of the associations as well. Approximately 60% of the associations had mutual assistance as their objective. About 50% of the people joining associations also had an objective aimed at mutual assistance as well. Therefore, we know that mutual assistance was the most important function of the *kye* during this period.

D. *Hyangyak* (Rural Community Agreement)

The rural community agreement, or *hyangyak*, contributed largely to diffusing and establishing virtuous customs of Confucianism. As a result of the efforts of Yi Hwang, Yi I and others who arranged the *hyangyak* of the Chosôn period by modifying it so that the influence of the four great principles of the Yossi *hyangyak* of China (mutual authority to do virtuous work [德業相勸], mutual standards for mistakes [過失相規], mutual discussions on customary practices [禮俗相交], and mutual relief for hardships [患難相恤]) would match the actual conditions of Chosôn, it became widespread throughout society. It was the self-governing compact of the rural areas and contributed to social stability by developing local autonomy. Yi

Hwang's *Yean hyangyak* (禮安鄉約) and Yi I's *Haeju hyangyak* (海州鄉約) were regulated agreements that differed from the original *hyangyak* in that they were not for educating the local communities. There was something called the internal *hyang* (*hyangan*) in every region, and only qualified people from among its membership could be appointed to *hyang* appointee positions, such as district magistrate, based on its rules. The organization of this internal *hyang*, as a gathering of regionally powerful people, entailed that the organization's members be registered. Only registered members were appointed as *hyang* appointees with specified independent government authority, and the organization operated autonomously below the prefecture level in the villages and counties.

The start of the *hyangyak* in Chosôn is usually considered to be when Kim An-kuk completed a translation of the *Yôssi hyangyak* while he was chief auditor for Kyongsang Province in 1517. The *Yôssi hyangyak* is mentioned in the *Chuja taejon* (Complete Works of Chuja) and had been passed down from the Koryô period along with the philosophy of Chuja (Chinese: Zhuzi). However, since it lacked explanation and the ordinary people had difficulties in understanding it, Kim An-kuk, who was deeply immersed in Neo-Confucianism ideals and a passionate educator, translated the *Yôssi hyangyak* from the original Chinese into Korean and published it.

Cho Kwang-cho of the Sarim political faction and others of

the mid-Chosôn period rapidly hastened the materialization of the Chuja Philosophy Idealist Society. The *hyangyak*, which regulated local customs, was regarded to be a good means and its enforcement throughout the entire country was stressed. Nevertheless, the vigor for implementing the *hyangyak* throughout the country rapidly waned and disappeared owing to the 1519 literati purge, which resulted in the Cho Kwang-cho School falling into ruin. The *hyangyak* at that time did not harmonize tradition and autonomy. The leadership of the *hyangyak* was guided by those in authority and “had become something urgent, unlike the original purpose of the *hyangyak*” by criticizing the flaws of Cho Kwang-cho’s implementation the *hyangyak*. This was said to be due to the head of the prefecture government being at the lead of the organization that enforced implementation. The *hyangyak* also had to acquire qualified people that suited its leader before it could administer its responsibilities, and the problem was that talented people could not be found in every village of a region. There is also a theory asserting that when carelessly delegating punitive authority to descendents of the nobility among the hyang and exacting high taxes, the *hyangyak* interfered with the provincial government. More than anything else, however, a realistic aspect of implementing the *hyangyak* was the tendency toward its personal dislike. There are even records of the negative effects of *hyangyak* such as retarding natural human compassion,

stifling justice, and constraining local customs.

The rural community agreement was first managed centered upon the *yuhyangso* (留鄉所), a local autonomous institution prominent in the late Koryo period. Those appointed to positions under the chief magistrate of the district were granted the rank of *shisa* in the bureaucracy even though they were commonly referred to as *p'unghôn* or *chipkang*. Although the teachings of the *hyangyak* were diverse, maintaining the separation of the upper and lower, old and young, and internal and external was the essence of what was propagated. Commoners avoiding their station in life, desiring an appointment outside of their station, or moving without giving notice are mentioned as being the most prohibited actions, and listing each division of work item by item that had to be maintained is also emphasized. Looking at the Muin Village *hyangyak* from the mid-seventeenth century, we can see it was based on the Yossi *hyangyak*, but there are also aspects that reveal attempts to reconcile with the changing times. When we examine the articles of this local village agreement, there are many rules that apply only to the upper classes (*yangban*). Some examples include punishments for those who indiscriminately punish those below them and for those who publicly complain about the actions of the magistrate.

Regulations for commoners included penalties for those who did not take care of their parents, who spoke vulgarly to their

mother-in-law, or who insulted a *yangban*. The government prosecuted severe violations. These regulations combined with compelling force, served to fix subordinated positions within society in many ways. Therefore, the practices of the ancestors of today's Koreans that came from the precepts of the *hyangyak* are what established the foundation for Korea's social lifestyle and moral outlook. The Japanese at the beginning of the twentieth century were astounded at observing that even the most ignorant Korean peasant farmer had correct manners and their traditional morals were ideal. These, from one perspective, were the remnants of the *hyangyak* that held beautiful customs and good practices as being paramount.

Looking at the cooperative system aspect within the local village agreement, when all of the members of a household were ill and unable to farm, fellow members of the *hyangyak* joined in to do the weeding and the head of the *hyangyak* came to care for the afflicted and isolated sick persons. Assistance was given in finding marriage partners for those who could not find a partner because they were over the normal age for marriage or poor, and orphans having no place to go or nobody to turn to were helped throughout early life, educated and taken care of until they reached maturity and were able to take care of themselves. Additionally, regarding law and order in rural life, for example, the person who stole water from another's ditch or encroached upon another's land were subject to severe

punishment. Other penalties are prescribed for allowing one's fields to go to ruin or not helping one's neighbors in times of need among many others.

IV. Current Status of Volunteer Services



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Korean volunteer activities in the modern sense began with the founding of various social groups, such as the Korean YMCA League (founded in 1903), the Korean YWCA Association (1922) and the Korean Red Cross Society (1905). Later, the Western District Settlement Office was established in Seoul to improve interdependence among neighbors and raise the levels of awareness among citizens. In 1941, there were some 250 district committee members who were active in volunteer work appointed to the government while four government settlement offices were set up. The 4-H Club was also inaugurated in this period, but ceased activities after a few years. After the Korean War, however, with the development of the cooperative agricultural movement and such, agricultural youth guidance work was reintroduced and spread throughout

the country. The movement to develop rural communities became very active, owing to combination of the volunteer leaders and efforts by the government to train leaders. Yet, this has diminished in recent years as many youths from rural areas have moved to urban areas and the work of the New Community Movement has taken over the tasks formerly managed by volunteer groups.

After liberation, volunteer movements became primarily the sphere of college students during their semester breaks. Their contributions extended to night school programs aimed at eradicating illiteracy, assisting with farm work, providing public health education and other activities. The Basic Labor Law was promulgated in 1953 and addressed volunteer activities for social welfare. In 1950, among the institutions under the banner of the United Nations, the UNICEF Korea Commission was created to ensure the well-being of children. This Commission has provided public information about the plight of children throughout the world, raised funds, established educational programs, organized and supported assistance clubs, and provided mother's milk and nursing services to needy infants. By the 1960s, the Red Cross Society movement, based on the spirit of humanitarianism, became active.

There have been numerous social welfare laws enacted in Korea. Some examples include the Civil Service Pension Law (1960), the Rehabilitation and Guidance Law (1960), Life

Protection Law (1962), Corrupt Behavior Prevention Law (1962), Child Welfare Law (1962), Disaster Relief Law (1962), Medical Insurance Law (1963), Industrial Disaster Compensation Insurance Law (1963), and the Regional Schools Support Association (1969). In the 1970s, the Korean Social Welfare Association inaugurated the Social Volunteer Guidance Council. The Council regulated, gathered, and educated volunteer service workers and this enabled increased utilization of volunteers. In the category of social welfare legislation, the Social Welfare Work Law (1970), the National Welfare Pension Law (1973), Special Law on Adoption (1976), and the Medical Protection Law (1977) were among the many laws enacted. Concern over volunteer activities grew with the coming of the 1980s, resulting in increased help given to others, advancing the overall welfare of society and the burgeoning of new organizations. The Volunteer Service Human Resource Bank of the Korea Women's Development Institute was established in 1984. The Volunteer Service Corps for the 1988 Olympic Organization Committee was organized in 1985, and the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics were turning points that proliferated and brought awareness of volunteer service throughout the nation. The International Hunger Organization was established in 1989, and began such activities as distributing food, medical assistance, and educational work based on concern for humanity and for neighbors of the global village dying of starvation. In the area

of social welfare legislation, laws were passed in areas such as caring for the mentally and physically handicapped, caring for the elderly in 1981, and for those contributing national meritorious service in 1984. There was also legislation passed related to such matters as mother and child welfare, the advancement of employment for the handicapped in 1989, and in 1992, a law on childcare.

In the 1990s many factors that were to influence volunteer activities occurred. One was the opening of democratic and social movements throughout the country. Another was the establishment of local government authority. In the Taegu area, the Volunteer Service Center attached to the Social Welfare Problems Research Institute that had been active since 1987 changed its name to the Chonsok Welfare Foundation Taegu Volunteer Center, and widened its scope of activities, working to propagate and supply volunteer service culture and engaging in the exchange of volunteer service groups both within and outside of Korea. In addition, the Pusan Korea Volunteer Service Association was established in 1993, Ulsan Volunteer Service Activity Center established in 1995, and the Pohang Volunteer Service center was established in 1996, spreading service activities tailored to meet the particular needs of the local regions. The Korea Neighborly Love Foundation, Inc., began its work in 1991, offering love and assistance to neighbors transcending race and religion throughout the global village. It

has offered relief and aid by such means as dispatching a medical service team to Rwanda based on the aim of establishing a society in which all can live together.

The Citizen Group Association was formed in January 1994 and the Korea Volunteer Service Group Association was formed in April of the same year. Both groups were designed to coordinate regional activities among various groups. These associations stimulate the spirit of volunteerism among citizens throughout the country and strengthen a variety of related activities. They were established for the purpose of contributing to regional communities, national development, and peace, and they spread the volunteer service spirit to all citizens by utilizing the ideologies and special characteristics of the member groups and strengthens their horizontal ties. The Korea Volunteer Service Group Association became a member of the International Association of Volunteers (IAVE) in November 1994 and convened the IAVE Asia Pacific Region Conference in Seoul, April 9-13, 1997. In addition, it initiated the Volunteer Service Campaign at the Chungang newspaper in July of that same year, annually commemorates December 5th as Volunteer Service Worker Day, established the weekly Volunteer Service Celebration, and presents awards to outstanding volunteer workers.

As the awareness for the need of volunteer activities broadened, the Ministry of Justice and Executive Administration

chose volunteer service as a required training program topic for their employees. Appointment of judges to the Supreme Court now reflects their volunteer achievements. Beginning with the first semester of 1995, ten universities throughout the country, including Hanyang and Taegu universities, began offering courses in volunteer service either as elective or requisite courses, and gave academic credit for volunteer work. Heavy industries also consider volunteerism in their training programs when hiring new employees and training human resources.

Since overall life assistance records were introduced to elementary, middle and high schools in 1996 based on the Volunteer Service Promotion Law proposal and the Education Improvement proposal placed before the National Assembly in May 1995, interest in the activities of student volunteers that are recorded therein has continued to rise. The importance placed on applying the record of their service activities as documentation of feelings when it comes to progressing to schools of higher grades further increases their hope for success.

V. Conclusion



V. Conclusion

Ordinarily, volunteerism begins in a spirit of respect for humanity without regard for the ideas or behavior of those in need while the nature of a cooperative social culture is rooted in a sense of solidarity with the desire to improve it. Although the need for volunteer work in Korean society is rapidly rising, the degree of participation is actually on the low side. Moreover, volunteer organizations are currently largely the result of government concern and support rather than being of a pure civil origin and tend to be situated in a way that differs from the essence of the volunteer service spirit.

The humanitarian ideal-the root of the volunteer service spirit-is inclined toward a spirit of love for humanity and the spirit of mercy in a religious sense. This humanitarian ideal entails love that is centered upon the human, and in social life as well there is the "others first, before me" ethic and the virtue in

thinking of another rather than oneself. The motivation for historical development creating even higher levels of philosophical thought and religious culture has not come about by excluding philosophy and religion from abroad, but rather from positively accepting them. This is clearly seen in the characteristics of Korea's traditional culture and can be said a distinguishing feature of Korea's cultural spirit. Granting the fact that the volunteer culture of modern Korea has not developed in various aspects, the problem is how to modernize and activate it because the root and cultural spirit of historical volunteer service is, after all is said, lagging behind.

In other words, an essential point is how to transplant in modern society the volunteer spirit of historical systems such as the *hyangdo*, *ture*, *kye* and *hyangyak*. These values need to be utilized to provide the impetus to: 1) establish social organizations of the faithful for righteous activities of faith; 2) provide relief for disasters based on a common cultural spirit; 3) volunteer for military service with a spirit of patriotism; 4) foster cooperative labor organizations and worker group spirit; 5) ensure mutual relief and giving congratulations and condolences in the spirit of cooperation; and 6) ensure charity and settlement work in the spirit of honorable customary practices, and develop a civic minded culture.

Through actual positive behavior, volunteer activities bring worth and happiness to the heart. Beyond these emotions

experienced by the individual alone, social welfare activity must be done so that all of Korean society can enjoy its value. In order for this to be realized, the humanitarian spirit, moral spirit, peace spirit, service spirit, cooperative system spirit, spirit of elegance, spirit of eternal life and immortality, and the creative spirit that characterize the Korean people have to be melded together in the volunteer spirit. Once this is accomplished, we can expect that a new social current will flow in the direction of building a volunteer service welfare society. In other words, when this new movement brings internal worth and happiness to all active volunteers, volunteer organizations will become energized with the civic volunteer spirit, and there will be increased hope for a better future.

Profile of Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations

Mission :

- To spread the spirit of voluntary services
- To develop the field of volunteer activities.
- To educate the leaders/directors concerning with volunteering

History :

The Volunteer Activation Workshop which was first held in October 30, 1992 with the attendance and cooperation from the social welfare professors, cooperation representative, and government personage had structured the foundation of what is now the KCVO's. It has finally initiated the 36 organizations in April 1, 1994 at the Korean Red Cross Assembly Hall.

The KCVO was first organized with the 36 organization, but in 2000 there were 60 organizations consisting of the almost 8 million volunteer members.

“새천년 새사회 새사람”

자원봉사의 힘으로



2001

International Year
of Volunteers

“Volunteers for a caring society”

2001 로고 설명

자원봉사 기구인 2001년 ‘세계자원봉사자의 해’를 상징하는 로고는 새천년
로 자원봉사활동의 가치와 있는 의미를 중점적으로 표현하는 2001년 로고의
중심 부분의 세 사람이 새천년 로고의 핵심인 2001년 로고의 핵심인 2001년
새천년봉사자의 해를 위한 자원봉사활동의 중요성을 상징적으로 표현하는
동시에 새천년 로고의 핵심인 2001년 로고의 핵심인 2001년 로고의 핵심인
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* 이 로고는 한국자원봉사단체연합회(한국자원봉사단체연합회)가 만들어 주신 것입니다.

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