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## Reflections on the Korean Democracy

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Dear Professor Shin Kee Wook, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am greatly honoured to speak before the APARC of Stanford University. I deeply appreciate Dr. Shin for inviting me to this highly renowned institution as a visiting scholar. I thank you all the staff and faculty members for giving me the opportunity to settle down well.

Today I would like to speak about the development of democracy in Korea, especially after the inauguration of President Moon Jae In. My view will focus on the orientation of the Constitutional revision in consideration of the democratic development of Korean politics.

Incidentally, I had originally planned to talk about the security issues surrounding the Korea crisis caused by the nuclear and missile provocation of North Korea. But the APARC told me that this topic was discussed often, and had been dealt with several times in the Center recently. They suggested I should rather talk about domestic politics, with my personal experience as a democratic activist and a politician. So I am going to talk about domestic politics of Korea today. President Trump visited Korea recently and still is in Asia. We may discuss the security issue later on during Q&A.

Today, last year was in the heart of the candle light demonstrations which led to the overthrow of the Park Keun Hye government. The candle light demonstration started on 29 October last year and the impeachment was passed in the National Assembly on 9 December, ruled by the Constitutional Court on 10 March this year. President Moon was elected on 9 May this year as a result of the candle light revolution.

The meaning of the candle light revolution was very significant in Korean democracy. Korea has continuously developed democracy by the people's movement. Korean people stubbornly resisted against Japanese colonialism, and eventually emancipated from the Japanese rule in 1945. Korean people resolutely opposed to Syngman Rhee's dictatorship, and overthrew the government through the April 19 Student Revolution in 1960. Although the Student Revolution was

rolled over by the May 16 Military Coup led by Park Chung Hee in 1961, President Park Chung Hee was continuously challenged by the democratisation movement throughout his term of office. He was killed by his key subordinate in 1979 amid the Busan-Masan Uprising. President Chun Du Hwan came to power after the May 18 Democratic Movement in Kwangju in 1980, but yielded his regime to the democratic government after June Revolution in 1987. The year 1987 is remembered as a historic event of the accomplishment of democracy through the people's movement. Worldly and domestically Korea has been considered to have accomplished both industrialisation and democratisation as an exemplary case.

However, Korea has yet to go further to democracy. The legacy of the authoritarian rule has long lasted in Korean politics. Korea in fact has been run by the emperor-like President even after the 1987 democratisation. Park Keun Hye might be a typical case of the legacy.

Last year's candle-light movement was a civil revolution. It was a massive, peaceful movement which changed the government. But, for the more, it was oriented to change the society from the bottom.

The Moon Jae In government thus came into power. The utmost target of the Moon government was the eradication of the deep-rooted corruption and irregularities. The Moon government has firmly carried out progressive reform. President Moon's policy is oriented to raise the economic and social standard of the low-income people. The major policy objectives are the change of irregular worker status to regular and permanent jobs, minimum wage increase, and the reduction of the working hours, among others.

Moreover, President Moon has shown openness and popular oriented performance. He opened the road in front of the Blue House to the public, makes coffee for himself among his aids and takes selfies with people on the street. He has recorded and maintained 70~80% popular support since his inauguration. The Moon government has generally shown a successful performance so far.

Having shown the general success of the governing performance, however, President Moon faces difficulties in many fields. The personnel affairs in the government is one. The most serious case was the National Assembly's rejection of the nomination of the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court. It was one of many scandals of personnel matters. There have been seven cases of the stepdown of the Minister nominees, including the Education Minister and the Labour Minister, in the course of the hearings of the National Assembly. Both of them were key members of the Moon's camp. Some ministers were appointed by the President despite of the failure in adopting the report of the parliamentary hearings. The Foreign Minister, Defense Minister and Head of the Fair Trade Commission were among the cases. The Minister of Medium and Venture Industries is not appointed yet, and the Moon government has not finished finalizing its cabinet members six months after the inauguration.

This was caused by the five personnel principles presented by President Moon during the campaign. These were : Military service, Illegal real estate investment, Tax evasion, False address registration, and plagiarism of thesis. These principles were not observed properly.

The trouble, however, was not in the principles themselves. The ruling party did not have the majority in the National Assembly. The Moon government stressed the Hyupchi (협치), or Collaboration, from the beginning of their rule. But they interpreted this 'collaboration' simply into the 'support' from the opposition. The ruling party should have shared the power with other parties in the National Assembly so that they could form the majority. They did not share any power with the opposition but only asked for the support. This does not work in politics.

The problem of the Moon Jae In government lies basically in the lack of understanding of parliamentary democracy. They took power through civil revolution, and they think that the power of people has absolute superiority in the political decision making. They ignored the power of the opposition especially because the major opposition, the Free Korea Party, was regarded as the peripheral power of Park Keun Hye. They might have considered the KukminuiDang was a semi-subordinate to the ruling Democrats since its political base was in the Honam area.

President Moon started his reformative rule with the administrative order (업무지시) at the beginning. On his first day of the office, the President ordered the formation of the 'Job Creation Committee' in which the President himself became the chairman. On the third day he visited Incheon International Airport where he promised the change of temporary non-regular workers' status to permanent workers within the year. He made such promises of reform as the increase of the government officials and the abolition of the nuclear power generation during his visits to the relative places. The government, through the Minimum Wage Commission, made 16.4% increase of the minimum wage of workers this year.

All these policies were received with wide enthusiasm among the public, especially workers and low-income people. This is what the progressive regime was supposed to do in terms of the execution of the policy promise. The maintenance of high rate public support in the opinion poll justifies Moon's performance.

Nevertheless, the economic performance does not seem good enough to meet the high rate of public support. Although the economic growth rate reaches 3%, unemployment rate went up to the highest, especially the youth unemployment. The suspension of the construction of the nuclear power plant Shingori 5 and 6 was cancelled and resumed by the decision of the Deliberation Committee. The minimum wage increase and the reduction of the working hours have faced a fierce criticism by the industries and opposition parties.

However, President Moon did not make any consultation with the opposition parties. They even said once that the parliamentary hearings for the ministerial appointment was simply a matter of reference. They are still accustomed to the traditional conception that the President has the only, highest and absolute value.

This stance, however, did not reflect the recently developed Korean politics, that is, the small-ruling and large-opposition parties. It also neglects the reality of the multi-party system of the Korean politics. In this system, the government and the ruling party has to share power with oppositions to receive their supports. This practice should be realised by the change of the political system. This is what I mean by the coalition government system. That is why Korean politics requires Constitutional revision.

All the Presidential candidates promised the amendment of the Constitution during the campaign. It was especially so since the Presidential election took place as a result of the candle light revolution. The revolution is meant to be accompanied by the change of the system, i.e. the Constitutional amendment.

The April 19 Revolution was accompanied by the Constitutional reform that introduced the parliamentary cabinet system. The civil revolution in 1987 led to the Constitutional amendment that admitted the five year single term of President, elected by the popular vote. The candle light civil revolution shouted 'Is this a Country?' which indicated the change of the basic power structure.

As a matter of fact, I myself came back to politics after two years of retirement, to uphold a cause of the establishment of the Seventh Republic. The rationale of the Seventh Republic was in the formation of a German style cabinet administration system in order to abolish the emperor-oriented Presidential system. I came to Seoul on 20 October last year, but the tablet PC of the Park Keun Hye - Choi Sun Shil gate (scandal) was exposed on the 24 October. My political ambition had thus perished.

The Constitutional amendment for the Seventh Republic is necessary for the political stability in the multi-party parliament and, minority-ruling and majority-opposition (여소야대) party structure in the National Assembly.

President Moon promised the Constitutional amendment twice, once at the Constitutional Day and another at the Budget Speech in the National Assembly. Both speeches, however, did not mention the change of the power structure. He stipulated the fundamental rights of the people and the enhancement of the status of local government. His speech on the Constitutional amendment was meant to maintain the present Presidential system.

The problem, however, is the fundamentally unstable political reality stemming from the prospective small-ruling and bigger-opposition parties under the present

Constitution. The multi-party reality is not only seen in the 2016 general elections. President Rho Mu Hyun was elected on the basis of the coalition with Chung Mong Jun, although it was eventually collapsed. President Kim Young Sam was elected amidst the three party competition with Kim Dae Jung and Chung Ju Young. The Most dramatic case was the election of President Kim Dae Jung in 1997. Kim Dae Jung made a coalition with Kim Jong Pil, who was the second power under President Park Chung Hee. President Kim was never able to appoint the Prime Minister by his own will throughout his term of office. When President Park Keun Hye was elected, Ahn Chul Soo was a third candidate who quit just before the enrollment of the candidacy. The multi party system has thus been the reality of Korean politics.

There has always been a merger or coalition activities during the Presidential or parliamentary elections. Now it is high time to systemize the temporary coalition or merger into a permanent system of coalition, through the Constitutional reform.

I was originally against the cabinet government. Not to mention the political instability of the Chang Myun's cabinet government which was toppled down by the military coup, I had opposed to the cabinet system in view of the political instability of the Japanese politics. Japanese politics never contributed to the economy and national security due to the factional dispute of the cabinet political system.

However, as democracy has developed in Korea after the democratisation in 1987, the conflict between the President and the parliament has become more obvious. The power of the President in the 1987 Constitution was the same as in the previous Constitution. The only change was the way the President was elected and the term of office. The President controlled the parliament through his status as the head of the ruling party. When I ran for the by-election of the National Assembly in 1993, I received the party nomination certificate at the Blue House, not at the party office or the National Assembly, from the then President Kim Young Sam. President Kim was at the same time the Head of the ruling Free Democratic Party.

My position changed when I witnessed the German political system. Germany showed the highest rate of economic growth with the highest economic competitiveness among the industrial countries. The country has achieved the highest level of welfare state. More over it accomplished the unification through the Ostpolitik, which was shared by the SPD, CDU, and FDP. The united Germany initiated the European Union, and maintained the strongest power leading Europe.

I discovered that these achievements were made out of political stability and national unity, which in turn were made by the political system of parliamentary democracy. This stability and unity was made possible by the coalition government throughout the German political history since 1949. Social market economy was proclaimed by Chancellor Erhart during Adenauer administration and, succeeded and developed by Brandt of SPD. Brandt's Ostpolitik was succeeded by Kohl of CDU in the process of unification in 1990. This was possible by the coalition with FDP of

both CDU and SPD, respectively. The coalition government made the centrist-integrative policies between antagonistic parties.

This politics of centrist-integration is required in Korean politics where the politics is still conceived as division and conflict. The recent turmoil of the BareunJeongdang and the KukminuiDang made concerns over the question of factionalism, regionalism and conflict-oriented Korean politics. The two political parties were thought to have considered a merger to make a third centrist-integrative political party. But recently nine members of the National Assembly defected the BareunJongdang, and internal conflict has become serious in the KukminuiDang. The merger seem to have gone away for some time being. Nevertheless, the emergence and existence of the third party will never disappear in Korean politics. It will come more clear when the elections, whether it be the Local Election or National Assembly Election or Presidential Election. We will have to be prepared to accommodate this constant multi-party situation. Again, this actually means the change of the system, which is the amendment of the Constitution.

The Seventh Republic may not be a pure cabinet system of government. The parliament has lost the credibility among the people. The election of the President by popular vote has long been regarded as a basic right of the people. The combination of German and Austrian model of power structure may be considered in this situation. The government is to be led by the Chancellor, who is elected by the parliament. The President elected by the popular vote represents the country and has the power of supreme commander of the armed forces. But in reality the President yields his/her power to the chancellor during the peaceful era as in Austria.

This will result in the consent democracy in the era of multi party politics. This is the best way to end the ideological and regional conflict which Korea suffers. This will bring about the unity among people which will enable the prosperity and the unification of the country in the future. This is the way Korea is to develop its democracy.

Epilogue:

The scenario of Constitutional amendment and the Seventh Republic will not be easily realised. It may be an illusion. The reason is simple. That is, the authoritarian power of the Korean President. As long as the President does not have a real sense of democracy, the division of power cannot be accomplished. Sharing power with the opposition is the essence of democracy in the future Korea.

Thank you.