

South Korea's Democratization Movement of the 1970s and 80s and Communicative Interaction in Transnational Ecumenical Networks

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Introduction

Since the early 2000s, there has been increasing attention on the role of transnational solidarity regarding the South Korean democratization movement of the 1970s and 1980s. South Korea's National Institute of Korean History, the Kim Dae-jung Presidential Library and Museum, and the Korea Democracy Foundation have been collecting overseas documents and materials related to the democratization movement.¹ In addition, the latter two institutions have collected oral histories of Korean compatriots and foreign activists who formed solidarity networks to support the democratization movement. Based on these materials, some researchers have published academic papers on overseas solidarity activities in the United States, Japan, and Germany. These papers mainly focused on the activities of overseas Koreans, analyzing how Korean compatriots

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1 The National Institute of Korean History published *Han'gukminjuhwaundong charyomongnokchip* (The Collection of Documents on Korean Democratization Movement) 2005.

formed solidarity with the Korean democratization movement while struggling with their identity and facing ethnic discrimination in those countries.² Although a few articles referred to the advocacy activities of foreign citizens or international support for the Korean democratization movement,³ there have not been sufficient efforts to systematically examine the process of cooperation among differently situated actors beyond national borders.

This article attempts to analyze the evolution of transnational solidarity among Korean and foreign activists in support of the Korean democratization and human rights movement of the 1970s and 80s. According to representative activists leading the movement, international ecumenical⁴ church networks, including the World Council of Churches (WCC), supported struggling Korean churches and Christian activists.⁵ Under the forced silence imposed by the military regime in the 1970s and 80s,

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- 2 Hyun-ock Cho, "HaeoeüHan'gukminjuhwaundong: pon'gukkwaiisangokwan'g yemitchöngch'esöngch'akki" (Movement for Democratization of Koreans abroad: their relationship with Korea and the finding of their identity), *Kyöngjewa sahoe* (Economy and Society) 66 (2005): 72-94. Giun Cho, "ZainichiChösenjin to 1970 nendai no Kankokuminshuka undö" (*Zainichi* and Korean democracy movement in the 1970s), *Gengo chiiki bunka kenkyu* (Language, Area and Cultural Studies) 12 (2006): 197-217. Heung Soo Kim, "Han'gukminjuhwakidokchatongjihoeü kyölsöngkwahwaldong" (A study of Activities of International Christian Network for Democracy in Korea), *Han'gukkidokkyowayöksa* (Christianity of Korea and the History) 27, no. 9 (2007): 199-224.
 - 3 Misook Lee, "Kankokuminshukaundöniokeruchikajöhö no hasshin" (Dissemination of Underground Information in the Democratization Movement of South Korea), *Kontakuto Zön* (Contact Zone) 5 (2012): 145-172. Cho, "ZainichiChösenjin to 1970 nendai no Kankokuminshuka undö" (*Zainichi* and Korean democracy movement in the 1970s).
 - 4 The world ecumenical movement is intent on integrating churches beyond Catholics and Protestants, emphasizing social engagement.
 - 5 Myöng Kwan Chi, "Tokubetsuintabyü: kokusaikyödö purojekutoshite no Kankokukara no tsüshin" (Letters from South Korea as joint international project: special interview with Chi Myöng Kwan), *Sekai* (September 2003): 49-67. Myöng

overseas Korean Christians and principled foreign Christians who had close networks with them shared information on the Korean political situation and brought out the voices of family members of prisoners of conscience to the world to appeal for solidarity. Thus, this article focuses on the formation and activities of transnational information exchange networks around the ecumenical churches in the 1970s and 80s. By investigating the dynamics of these networks, this article aims to illuminate the reflexivity of ‘communicative interaction’ among differently situated actors, examining how the process of listening and responding to the voices of struggling others leads to self-reflection on the role of one’s own society in the others’ suffering.

Communicative interaction in transnational networks

Constructivist scholars⁶ in international relations (IR) and social movement scholars have focused on transnational networks formed by International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs), NGOs, and individual activists since the 1990s. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, IR scholars, argued that “when channels between the state and its domestic actors are blocked, domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search

Kwan Chi, *Kyōkaisen o koeru tabi* (Travel crossing the border) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005). Hyung Gyu Park, *Na’i midūmūn kil wie itta* (My faith is on the street) (Paju: Changbi, 2010). Joo Hwa Kang, *Park Sang Jung kwa ecumenical undong* (Park Sang Jung and Ecumenical Movement) (Seoul: Samin, 2010). Jae Shik Oh, *Naegekkotūrotagaonūnhyōnjang* (Places appearing like flowers for me) (Seoul: TaehanKidokkyosōhoe, 2012).

6 While traditional perspectives of international relations and international politics interpret the activities of nation states based on military power in security issues and the national interests in market issues, constructivists focus on how normative and principled ideas affect the activities of nation states. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, ed., *The globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2008).

out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside.”⁷ Keck and Sikkink called the networks Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs), and explained the mechanism as a boomerang pattern. TANs inspired interdisciplinary research on human rights movements in the countries of the third wave of democratization,⁸ environmental movements, and the movements of indigenous people.⁹

However, it has been pointed out that much research on transnational networks has focused on the activities of donor institutions (INGOs), is United States-centric, and takes a top-down approach. Clifford Bob criticized such studies for suggesting “transnational networks form when intrepid activists in rich countries reach into the developing world to succor helpless “victims.”¹⁰ In other words, he problematized the dominant perspective that actors in more developed countries or donor institutions “help” or “teach” actors in struggling countries or societies. This one-way direction of the “helping” approach cannot fully examine the dynamics of transnational networks. Keck and Sikkink argued that TANs have a ‘communicative structure’ and that the core activity of TANs is infor-

7 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 12.

8 Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). According to Huntington, the Third wave of democratization began in 1974 (Portugal) and indicated the successive democratic transitions in Latin America and Asian countries (Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan) in the 1970s and 1980s.

9 Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights – International Norms and Domestic Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Susan Burgerman, *Moral Victories: How activists provoke multinational action* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2001) Sanjeev Khagram, *Dams and development: transnational struggles for water and power* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004). Hans Peter Schmitz, *Transnational Mobilization and Domestic Regime Change: Africa in Comparative Perspective* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

10 Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5.

mation exchange.¹¹ Thus, in order to understand the dynamics of transnational networks, communicative aspects, that is, the ‘communicative interactions’ among participants in the networks, need to be examined.

The definition of ‘communicative interaction’ can be traced to the concept and theory of Habermas’s communicative action. While teleological action (with strategic action as its subset) means the egocentric calculations of utility for simply achieving one’s personal goal, communicative action means “cooperative processes of interpretation” that promote common understanding through the participation of concerned people in political and public discourse.¹² In this regard, communicative action is the key normative element of the public sphere, which is the indispensable political space for democracy. Communicative action itself implies a type of “interaction.” The process of interpreting information and constructing common understanding needs interaction among actors such as “asking/calling” and “answering/responding.”

This interactive discursive aspect of communicative action is essential to understand the development of transnational solidarity among differently situated actors beyond borders. By focusing on the ‘communicative interaction’ among actors, transnational networks can be understood in more diversified ways, rather than simply as mechanisms for linear one-way “helping” or “teaching.” Through communicative interaction, the political space where transnational activists form networks is opened for reflection on the role one’s own society plays in creating and maintaining the current suffering of the others. This reflection instigates efforts to rectify the unjust relationships which are structured by the colonial past and ongoing inequalities of political and economic power. Efforts of rectification – such as changing governmental policies and societal attitudes – lead to the transformation of one’s own society. Thus, forming transnational solidarity with others can work reflexively, from solidarity with others

11 Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 3.

12 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action I* (translated by Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 101.

toward a process of self-transformation.

This paper, at first, explores the formation of international networks among Korean Christians and identifies the Christian groups in the United States and Japan that formed transnational information exchange networks with them. Then, the formation and activities of the Japanese and American groups will be examined, especially from the perspective of communicative interaction with Korean Christian networks. This examination is based on analyses of primary documents and interviews with key participants. At last, this paper argues that transnational networks can work in reflexive ways by listening and responding to the voices of the struggling and redefining the relationship between “us” and “them.”

Transnational information exchange networks around ecumenical churches

The military regime, which seized power in South Korea in 1961 with a coup, repressed human rights, controlling the political and social space, including the flow of information and the media. Critiques of the regime were considered subversive acts that benefited North Korea and the communist bloc, and violence against critics, including torture and kidnapping, was carried out by the military regime. When the *Yushin* Constitution¹³ went into effect in 1972, it systematically established a permanent presidency, thus blocking the domestic channel for any political opposition. Responding to this blockage, Korean democratic activists

13 President Park Chung Hee consolidated and systematized his power for a permanent presidency through the implementation of the *Yushin* Constitution. According to this document, the president is elected by a body established as the National Conference for Unification, which is directly under the president, Park Chung Hee. The president is elected for a six-year period, and no limitation is imposed on the number of times he can be re-elected. See Adrian Dewind and John Woodhouse, *Persecution of Defense Lawyers in South Korea: Report of a mission to South Korea in May 1979* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1979).

sought out overseas allies, including overseas Korean dissidents and principled foreign activists, in order to obtain and broaden international support for democratic reform. The priority for them was to carry the voices of Koreans struggling for human rights and democracy to the international arena.

Transnational information exchange networks among Korean Christians

When it came to forming transnational networks, churches had strong resources with their pre-existing international networks and symbolic image for human rights. In addition, their anti-communism stance made it difficult for the South Korean military regime to accuse them of being a tool of North Korea. Within this context, democratic Korean Christians started to form transnational information exchange networks to address the human rights situation and support the democratization movement in South Korea.

The Documentation Center for Action Group in Asia (DAGA) played an important role in these networks. Oh Jae Shik, a Korean staying in Tokyo as the secretary of the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) at the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), proposed this documentation center to the World Council of Churches (WCC), and it was established with financial support from WCC in 1973. Speaking about the establishment of DAGA, Oh explained that he realized the importance of the “internationalization of information.”

In 1972, martial law was proclaimed in South Korea and the Philippines and most Asian countries were becoming increasingly militarized. When I was in New Zealand, I heard that martial law had been declared in the Philippines. I flew there directly, but by the time I arrived my friends were already imprisoned or had fled. In South Korea, the political and social tensions were also greatly increasing. When people went in or out of the country, they had to go through a body check at Kimpo airport. Facing these situations, rather, because of

these situations, the need to let the world know what was happening grew out naturally.¹⁴

As Oh emphasized, the need for “internationalization of the voices of the struggling” naturally grew out of the increasing repression. The main activities of DAGA, therefore, consisted of documenting and translating information collected in South Korea and then disseminating it to world churches and Amnesty International. DAGA also conducted research on labor, human rights, and democratization movements in Asia. Kim Yong-Bok worked as a main staff at DAGA, and later Pharis Harvey (an American Methodist missionary) and Kurata Masahiko (a former staff of Amnesty International Japan) joined.

In addition, Korean Christians in Japan, including Oh Jae Shik, Chi Myōng Kwan, and Kim Yong-Bok, cooperated to prepare the draft of the “Korean Christian Manifesto,” an appeal to world churches and citizens for solidarity. This document was secretly carried to Kim Kwan Suhk, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), and was published on May 20, 1973. This underground declaration was reported by *Christianity and Crisis* (Figure 1) and received broad attention among liberal Christians of various nationalities.¹⁵ In South Korea, NCCCK conducted a series of meetings to organize a human rights committee in 1973, and in response to the arrest of a number of Christians at the National Federation of Democratic Youth and Students (*Minch'ōnghanngnyōn*) incident in April 1974, NCCCK formally established its “Human Rights Committee.” The activities of the Human Rights Committee consisted of human rights education and advocacy, the establishment of a coalition with domestic and international human rights or-

14 Interview with Oh Jae Sik, Tokyo, Japan (February 18, 2010).

15 The Institute of the History of Christianity of Korea, “1973-nyōn Han'gukkūri sūdojasōnōnchaksōng kyōngwi chwadamhoe (Round-table Talk on the process of making Korean Christian Manifesto).” *Han'gukkidokkyowayōksa* (Christianity of Korea and the History) 9 (1998): 331-357.

ganizations, and research on human rights violations. The Human Rights Committee had close relationships with the *Galilaya Church*,¹⁶ the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice,¹⁷ and a foreign missionary group called the Monday Night Meeting.¹⁸

In 1975, Korean Christians who were working in the WCC, the CCA,

and the National Council of Churches (NCC) officially organized an international group called the International Christian Network for Democracy in Korea.¹⁹ The group was led by Kim Chai Choon, a Korean living in Toronto, Canada, and it published a bulletin called *Minjutongji*. This group aimed to collect, interpret, and share information, and also to coordinate strategies among movements in different countries.²⁰



<Fig. 1> “Korean Christian Manifesto” *Christianity and Crisis* (July 9, 1973)

The “Letters from South

16 The Galilaya Church consisted of leading Korean Christian professors who had been fired by the military regime because of their social engagement.

17 Ch’ŏnjugyochōngŭkuhyōnchōn’guksajedan (천주교정의구현전국사제단) was established in 1974, right after Bishop Chi Hak-soon was arrested for publishing his “declaration of conscience.”

18 The group of foreign missionaries in South Korea met every Monday evening to support the democratization movement. See, Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006).

19 *Han’gukminjuhwakidokchatongjihoe* (한국민주화기독교자동지회).

20 Kim, “Han’gukminjuhwakidokchatongjihoe,” 208.

Korea” a serial published in the leading Japanese monthly magazine *Sekai* from 1973-1988, also played an important role in the transnational networks. Chi Myōng Kwan, under the pseudonym T.K Sei, wrote the serial with the cooperation of church networks. Chi said that “there were numerous Japanese, American, German and Canadian friends who were dispatched to South Korea and carried out information [for the *Letters*].”²¹

One of those information messengers was Pharis Harvey. Harvey had worked as the secretary of the Christian student movement at the General Board of Global Ministries, the global mission agency of the United Methodist Church. He came to Japan in 1975 when Oh Jae Shik invited him to work in DAGA. Aside from his formal work in DAGA, Harvey was also a secret information messenger.

We had kind of a regular group. Professor Chi (Myōng Kwan) and Oh Jae Shik would identify particular persons they wanted us to meet. We met political prisoners' family members, leaders of Christian groups, and also leaders of various activists groups. All of us would spend a week just meeting with people, gathering information and documents, and getting stories helpful to Chi (Myōng Kwan). Then we took it back ... None of us went too often because we didn't want to establish a pattern that they (the Korean government) might recognize. So it was always somebody different.²²

The “Letters from South Korea” were read not only by Korean residents in Japan and Japanese, but also by Koreans in North America and Europe. Some Korean students and activists were also able to access smuggled copies of the Letters in South Korea.²³ As one of students who had read the

21 Myōng Kwan Chi, *Kyōkaisen o Koeru Tabi* (Travel crossing the border) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 137.

22 Interview with Pharis Harvey, Santa Cruz, California, United States (February 13, 2013).

23 Sung Suh, *Gokuchū19 nen: KankokuSeijihan no Tatakai* (19 years in prison: strug-

smuggled copies, Kang Myung-koo recollected, reading the letters (from South Korea) was itself a protest action.

I read the letters through my friends who had participated in the student movement. Letters from South Korea reported on incidents which had not been reported (by mass media). ... I was very surprised to know that there was such a courageous person who criticized the government outspokenly. ... There were Japanese copies and translated Korean copies. Because I didn't know Japanese, I mainly read the Korean copies. The action of reading the letters itself had the meaning of protest.²⁴

By sharing information on the courageous voices and actions, which was first delivered outside and then smuggled back into Korea, Korean students and activists gained a sense of solidarity with the protests and started to realize their own intrinsic power.

Japanese Christian groups: transmitting information and raising awareness in Japan

Japanese Christians started to organize solidarity groups in response to incidents like the arrest of Park Hyung-kyu (a former graduate of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary) in June 1973, the kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung from Tokyo in August 1973, and the Seoul National University student rally on October 2 1973. The growing movement among Korean residents in Japan also stimulated Japanese Christians.

gle of Korean political prisoner) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994). Suh noted that Paek Hyōn'guk, the president of student council at Keimyung University, was imprisoned at the end of 1974 because he had possessed a banned book, *Letters from South Korea* (ibid., 117).

24 Interview with Kang Myung-koo, a professor at Seoul National University, through email (December 22, 2010).

The Emergency Christian Conference on Korean Problems (ECC) was established on January 15, 1974.²⁵ ECC members were mainly from the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), and thus the ECC office was set up in a room inside the NCCJ office. This spatial proximity enabled close communication among Korean Christians and concerned Japanese Christians.

The founding statement of the ECC shows that the formation of this group was stimulated by harsh critiques and appeals from Korean Christian activists.

In South Korea, students, intellectuals, and journalists have mobilized protests since last year against the Park government, the Japanese government, and Japanese corporations, calling for the democratization of South Korea and the establishment of human rights, and condemning the subordination of Korea to the Japanese economy. A number of Christian leaders and students have also participated in those activities and carried out their own activities.... Furthermore, Christian youth in the Korean Christian Church in Japan held a 10-day hunger strike and a rally against the Foreign Ministry in Sukiyabashi Park, demanding the cancelation of the Korea-Japan Ministerial Talks scheduled on December 26, in response to the Christians in their motherland. *We were shocked by their courageous faith-based campaign, which also urged critical self-scrutiny our part. For behind the political situation in Korea, for which they were now fighting and risking their lives, werethe Japanese colonial rule in the past and the economic invasion in the present.* We Japanese have to be responsible for these issues in front of God. With this realization, we gathered at the Emergency Conference.²⁶

25 *Kankokumondaikirisutoshakinkyūkaigi* (韓国問題キリスト者緊急会議).

26 ECC, *KankokuMinshukaTōsō Shiryōshū1973~1976* (Documentation of Korean Democratization Movement 1973~1976) (Tokyo: Shinkyō Syupansya, 1976), 76-77; *emphasis added*.

As the statement notes, there were “critiques” and “appeals” from Korean Christians, and the establishment of the ECC itself was one of the responses. Korean Christians criticized the Japanese government's support for the Korean military regime and accused Japan of benefiting from its neo-colonial relationship with South Korea. The statement of the Korean Student Christian Federation (KSCF) on July 30, 1971 pointed out that “all churches need to awaken the Christian conscience against Japan’s neocolonialism.”²⁷ Some pastors protested against Korea-Japan ministerial talks with an indefinite hunger strike starting on December 17, 1973, claiming that the talks aimed to subordinate Korea's economy to Japan’s. They also raised problems related to the importing of polluting industries from Japan and of suspected connections involving political funds between Japan and South Korea.²⁸ These critiques were delivered to Japanese Christians not only through personal contacts, but also through the first formal meeting of NCKK and NCCJ on July 2-5, 1973, which was held in Seoul.²⁹ The “answering” of Japanese Christians was responding to the Korean Christians’ critiques that Japan’s past colonization and current economic invasion attributed to the current Korean political situation.

Through the establishment of the ECC, the initially loose information exchange networks based on private contacts beyond borders became more sophisticated. Although some ECC members were sent to South Korea, most of the messengers between the two countries were Westerners because Japanese would still arouse the suspicion of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA). Yet the ECC played the important role of being the “formal recipient of collected information,” transmitting infor-

27 Human Rights Committee of NCKK, *1970-nyōndae minjuhwaundong: Kidokkyo-in'gwōnungongūlchungsimūro* (Democratization movement in the 1970s: focusing on Christians Human Rights movement), 1 (Seoul: NCKK, 1987), 95.

28 Ibid. 306.

29 The topics discussed there were 1) Japan’s economic neocolonial advance, 2) the legal status of Korean residents (*Zainichi*) in Japan, 3) the Koreans in Sakhalin, 4) immigration law in Japan, 5) the Korean victims of the atomic bombing, 6) the *Yasukuni* shrine, 7) sex tourism (called *Kiseng Kankoku*), and 8) history textbooks.

mation from South Korea to world.

Paul Schneiss, one of the main information messengers, came to Japan as a German missionary from EMS (Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland) in August 1975. He explained the process of delivering information between South Korea and Japan.

Just three days after my arrival in Japan, I was told to go to South Korea to carry underground reports and leaflets. Korean Christians were looking for a person who could quickly fly to South Korea, act naturally during the body check at Kimpo (airport), and who was tight-mouthed. A German was allowed to travel to South Korea without a visa, so I was chosen. ...The NCKK and the Human Rights Committee briefed me on the contents of the trials of some political prisoners in English and in Japanese and I would make notes and later write reports. I received underground documents, statements, and leaflets and delivered them to the ECC and Chi Myōng Kwan, the author of "Letters from South Korea." I also carried many things to South Korea such as documents from the North America Coalition on Human Rights in Korea, reports of hearings in the US parliament, and even the "Letters from South Korea."³⁰

Paul Schneiss explained that he basically delivered collected materials to the ECC and NCCJ, rather than directly to the Korean Christians in Japan, in order avoid attracting the attention of the KCIA, which was also active in Japan.

One of the ECC members who later became a general secretary of NCCJ, Shoji Tsutomu, also pointed out that the main role of the ECC was "formal recipient" of the collected information from South Korea.³¹ According to him, the ECC not only collected information but also raised awareness of

30 Interview with Paul Schneiss, Heidelberg, Germany (November 30 and December 1, 2009).

31 Interview with Shoji Tsutomu, Tokyo, Japan (February 17 and 18, 2010).

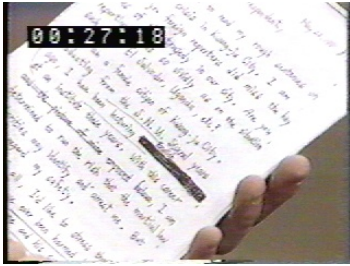
the Korean situation in Japan, where at the time most people didn't know about or have much interest in Korea. The ECC conducted press conferences based on underground information from South Korea, held prayer meetings, street demonstrations, and study meetings, hosted (international) conferences, sent post-cards, and collected support funds.

Another Christian group in Japan which closely networked with Korean Christians was the Council for Justice and Peace in Japan, established in 1974. Because some Korean and Japanese Catholics had spent years studying in Rome, and had become friends or at least acquaintances with each other, the arrests of Korean Christians related to the National Federation of Democratic Youth and Students (*Minch'ŏnghangnyŏn*) incident in 1974 was a critical factor in the establishment of the "Korea Committee" in the Council for Justice and Peace in Japan. Immediately after the Council's formation in June 1974, the Korea Committee was organized as the first committee of the Council (committees related to Japan's own domestic issues came later).³²

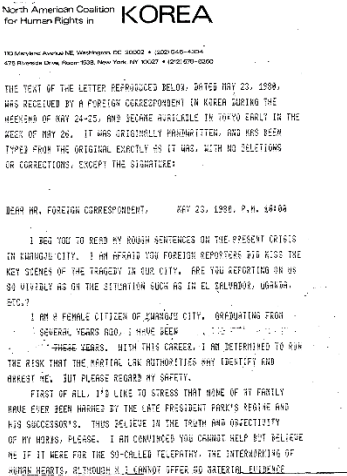
Although the information networks between Korean and Japanese Catholic churches were not as systematic as the Protestant church networks, the information networks of the Korean Catholic Churches also contributed to raising international awareness of the situation in South Korea. For example, in 1980, Korean priests secretly carried out documents and tape recording evidence of the Kwangju massacre to disseminate among Catholic networks. On July 12, 1980, the *Donga-Ilbo*, a daily newspaper in South Korea, reported that "Seven Catholic priests, including Oh Tae-soon of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice, were arrested because they allegedly distorted the Kwangju incident and disseminated false information" and "also because they defamed the nation by forming vicious international opinions by disseminating a tape recording called the 'Testimony of Witness in Kwangju' to Japan and

32 In chronological order, the Philippines Committee was established in 1976, the Domestic Issue Committee in 1977, and this domestic issue committee became the *Yasukuni Shrine Committee* in 1982.

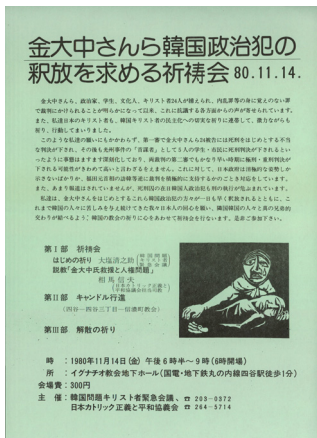
other foreign countries.” In Japan, NHK, the public broadcaster (Figure 2), and the magazine *Sekai* reported on the ‘Testimony.’ The recording was also sent to groups in the United States such as NACHR (Figure 3).



<Fig. 2> “South Korea under martial law” in a NHK special broadcast on May 26, 1980. The main anchor is reading a handwritten document of testimony from a citizen in Kwangju.



<Fig. 3> NACHR received the same handwritten document (receiving date is unclear).



<Fig. 4 (Left)> Leaflet announcing the United Prayer Meeting.

<Fig. 5 (Right)> Program of the Prayer Meeting.

Beginning in 1978, the Council for Justice and Peace in Japan and the ECC together organized an annual united prayer meeting to show solidarity with Korean Christians (Figure 4, 5). In addition, they also conducted the “Don’t Kill Kim Dae-jung” campaign in 1980 together with the Japan-Korea Solidarity Council,³³ a non-Christian citizen group.

North American Group: lobbying with accurate information

In 1975 several different groups in North America working on Korean issues met in a series of meetings and decided to organize a networking group in order to enhance communication and the effectiveness of activities. This network became the North America Coalition for Human Rights in Korea (NACHR). The key purposes of the NACHR were to exchange and distribute information and to coordinate actions. The important actors in the meetings were ecumenical Christians including Protestants and

33 *Nikkanrentairenrakukaigi* (日韓連帯連絡会議).

Catholics. Many representative members had personal experiences in South Korea. For example, Peggy Billings, who became the chairperson of NACHR, had served as a Methodist missionary in Pusan, South Korea from 1953 to 1963.

NACHR was officially established on November 19, 1975 at the Inter-church Center, New York with Peggy Billings as the chairperson and Kim Sang-ho as the executive director. According to the coalition's statement of intent, it was established "in the view of the continuing repression of human rights in Korea and the consequent need to increase the effectiveness of those supporting the rights of all Koreans."³⁴ In the United States, critical voices against the Vietnam War and the government's support of Latin American military regimes gained legitimacy among social activists in the 1960s and the 1970s.³⁵ Campaigns against torture in Brazil and later in Argentina and Chile occurred in 1970s and human rights advocacy groups had largely grown at the grassroots level with the activities of Amnesty International. Within this context, there was a pool of human rights activists in the United States and the NACHR was established from a strong awareness on human rights and democracy principles.

As a coordinating and networking group, NACHR's main services were documentation, research, and distribution of resources. In addition, presenting concerns on Korean issues in Washington and at the United Nations was an important activity of NACHR. Reflecting on their activities in 1978, the NACHR Executive Committee discussed the use and distribution of collected documents.

In conclusion it was suggested that the Coalition should clip and mail weekly to the US and Canadian members of the Coalition relevant and appropriate materials from the US press. The Coalition will

34 A STATEMENT OF INTENT, NORTH AMERICAN COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA, November 19, 1975.

35 James Green, *We cannot remain silent: opposition to the Brazilian military* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

supply these same materials to Dr. Myung Gul Son, who will arrange for their distribution, as appropriate, outside of the US and Canada. Requests for specific documents which are received from Korea and Japan will be filled as is possible by the Washington or New York office ... It was agreed that the Washington office would send individual copies of US government documentation (especially the Fraser and Jaworski Committee) to DAGA.³⁶

Because the United States was the country with the most influence over South Korea, it was important for NACHR to raise awareness about the human rights violations at Congressional hearings and in the American media. With exactly the same idea, the Korean government also tried to influence the United States Congress, which later resulted in the “Park Tongsun Scandal”³⁷ in 1976 and triggered an investigation of US and South Korea relations by the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the House Committee on International relations, led by Donald Fraser. Although NACHR was not directly involved in the investigation, NACHR supplied relevant information to the investigation and also sent the subcommittee’s information to South Korea.

In 1979, after Pharis Harvey became the executive director of NACHR, he moved the main office of NACHR from New York to Washington to focus on lobbying activities. These aimed to change United States foreign policy on South Korea, which had been dominated by security issues while ignoring human rights in order to keep good relations with the Korean government. Pharis Harvey said that NACHR took the position that

36 OFFICE FOR EAST ASIA THE PACIFIC Memorandum, April 24, 1978, Subject: North America Coalition for Human Rights in Korea, To: Sang Ho Kim, From: Edwin M. Luidens.

37 Against the backdrop of human rights violations and political repression in South Korea, the United States Congress started to question the continuation of aid and provision of troops to South Korea. In order to influence the Congress, Park Tongsun lobbied members of Congress, and in 1976, he was charged with using money from the South Korean government to bribe members of the US Congress.

the way to influence the politics in Washington was “to supply accurate information.”

The source of influence that we had was having accurate information. We focused all our efforts at communicating accurate information to the members of Congress and to the State Department and even for short time for a couple or three years I offered classes every three months to new Foreign Services personnel. I spoke about Korea, about the human rights situation, and the political dynamics in Korea. Those people were from the State Department, from the Defense Department, and from the CIA. I learned myself how they were thinking about Korea, such as their mindset, that is, ‘Who can we support and manipulate?’ or ‘Is he pro-America or not?’ So I tried to combat that kind of attitude because our whole approach as a movement was to say that we cannot have a good future in US - Korea relations if we are not supporting the Korean people’s aspirations. That was a kind of theme of everything that we did.³⁸

NACHR also carried out street demonstrations, although it was not able to form a mass movement. According to Pharis Harvey, because they thought it was almost impossible to raise the awareness of ordinary people on foreign issues that are not directly related to the United States, the coalition strategically focused on influencing Washington with accurate information. Based on this idea, NACHR gave lectures, testified at Congressional committees, and often sent letters to members of Congress, urging them to pressure the Korean government.

Communicative interaction among networks

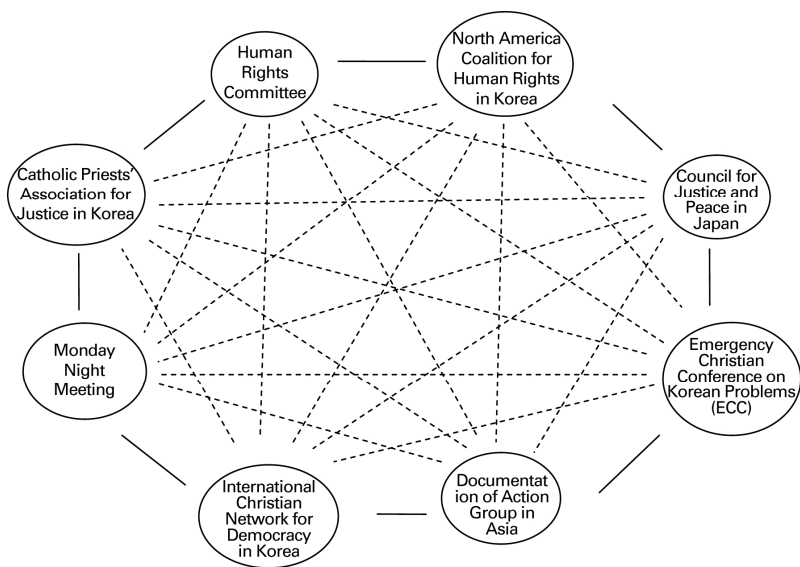
We have seen from the above information that transnational information

38 Interview with Pharis Harvey, Santa Cruz, California, United States (February 15, 2013).

exchange networks around ecumenical churches were working to support human rights and democratization in South Korea.

These information exchange networks might be interpreted as mechanisms for “one-way helping” from the developed world to the developing world. However, this perspective tends to ignore the communicative interaction among actors within the network, which includes reflexive learning from the struggle. This communicative interaction can lead to self-transformation through participating in the other’s struggling.

Through the transnational information exchange networks, Japanese and American Christians learned not only about the political and social situation of Korea, but also about the relationship of their own countries with Korea that structured that very situation. In response to “critiques” and “urgings” from South Koreans, Japanese Christians began to understand that the current struggles in South Korea were also rooted in the past col-



<Fig. 6> Transnational information exchange networks among Christians

onization of Korea by Japan. Yamaguchi Akiko, who was a member of ECC and a staff of NCCJ, pointed out that the solidarity movement allowed the consciousness of Japan's past invasions in Asia to arise in more outspoken and detailed way.

In the 1970s and the 80s, even in churches, there were still many people who said they had affluent lives and good memories in the colonies. Although there were some people who felt guilty and thought we needed to acknowledge the victimized Asian people, they couldn't publicly talk about that. So, those people committed to the solidarity movement as a proof of repentance. Thus, it was through the solidarity movement with the struggling Koreans that the reflection on the past history between Japan and Korea was able to arise.³⁹

In other words, Japanese Christians gained a more open public space for talking about the colonial past through the solidarity activities. Yamaguchi described the solidarity movement in the 1970s and 80s as the first generation of the "Korean wave," a time when Japanese people first started learning the Korean language and seeking out the opinions of Korean people. This learning enabled Japanese Christians to reflect on the relationship between Japan and Korea and to participate in conscientious activism to reconcile with Asia. For example, later, in 1996, Yamaguchi translated a book on Korean "comfort women" who were deployed to China by the Japanese army which was edited by "The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan," and she actively participated in the international women's movement for the "comfort women" issue in the 1990s and 2000s.

For Japanese Christians, the democratization movement in South Korea was an opportunity not only for reflecting on the past, but also for social engagement within Japanese society. Fukamizu Masakatsu, who was the general director of the Council for Justice and Peace in Japan from 1981 to

39 Interview with Yamaguchi Akiko, Tokyo, Japan (October 15, 2011).

1991, said that the Korean democratization movement gave a chance for Christians to gain agency and actively participate in the society.

As pointed out repeatedly by Bishop Soma Nobuo,⁴⁰ Japan had recovered its economy from special procurements for the Korean War, and our activities of the Council for Justice and Peace in Japan was activated through the enormous energy of the Korean Catholic bishops, students, and laborers who risked their lives to struggle.⁴¹

In other words, solidarity with the Korean democratization movement opened up Japanese Christians' social engagement in Japan where Christians had previously mainly focused on individual salvation.

In contrast to Japanese churches, the American churches had a longer history of social engagement. South Korea could be regarded as one case among other campaigns in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. However, although the structure looked like that of 'donor to receiver' (from North to South), people who engaged and cooperated with the struggling learned more about their relations with others, and could reflect their experiences back to their own society.

For example, Pharis Harvey, who was the executive director of NACHR, organized an International Labor Rights Forum in 1986. He said "it was my work related to Korea that led me to see the reason for repression was more economic than security."

In 1982, while I was still in NACHR, human rights advocacy in the US was becoming less effective. Human rights advocacy in the US used the withdrawal of foreign aid as the main instrument to pressure a

40 The first general director of Council for Justice and Peace in Japan.

41 Masakatsu Fukamizu, "Katsudō no Suishinryoku: Rekishi no Nagare o tōshite [Driving force of activities: through the flow of history]," *Seigi to Heiwa no 25 nen* [25 years of Justice and Peace] (Tokyo: Council for Justice and Peace in Japan, 1995), 69-70.

government on human rights. But fewer and fewer governments found US aid important. It wasn't effective to South Korea at all anymore. This is when we realized we needed some linkage between economic issues and human rights issues. When I was hospitalized for a while in 1982, I read all the laws related to foreign relations and thought we should condition our trade relations based on respect for worker's rights, particularly in the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which allowed a unilateral decision by the US to void tariffs for developing countries with some exceptions. I came out of the hospital and began to put together a coalition of NGOs and some congressional staff to develop a law that would establish the conditionality. The law passed in 1984⁴² and became effective in 1985 under the Reagan administration, which was not pro-labor. We also realized we needed to form an organization to ensure the enforcement of the law, and that was how the International Labor Rights Forum was born. The impetus for me in working on the inclusion of workers' rights in the GSP grew out of my work with human rights and labor movements in Korea.⁴³

In other words, through working with Korean Christians in DAGA and NACHR, and through working on the human rights and labor movements in Asia, Harvey and his fellows began to analyze the links between human rights, labor rights, and trade issues between the developing countries and developed countries. In Asia, developing countries tried to keep wages

42 The United States Congress added a requirement that GSP participation be conditional on taking steps to afford basic labor standards such as the right of association, and the right to organize and to bargain collectively. During the 1980s, Congress enacted several laws requiring respect for worker rights as a condition of access to the US market, but of all these laws, the GSP worker provisions provide the strongest remedy. Benjamin N. Davis, "The effects of worker rights protections in United States trade laws: A case study of El Salvador." *American University International Law Review* 10, no. 3 (1995): 1167-1214.

43 Interview with Pharis Harvey, Santa Cruz, California, United States (February 15, 2013).

low, repressing the workers' demands, to attract foreign capital investment. Multi-national corporations based in developed countries tried to obtain the most profitable place to invest. Thus, corporations and governments in developed countries, together with governments of developing countries, formed repressive regimes in developing countries. For Harvey and his colleagues, the GSP was a practical solution to address the violation of workers' rights; it was feasible to add workers' rights as condition to bilateral trade agreements in the law. The lobbying work of Harvey and his colleagues shows how the efforts of self-transformation can develop out of solidarity activities with struggling others. Through forming solidarity activities, including delivering and disseminating information on the political situation of South Korea, American Christians also learned and deepened their understanding of the structured relationship between Korea and the United States, and re-directed their activities to transform their own society as well its relationship with other countries.

Among actors in transnational networks, communicative interaction occurred directly (face to face communication) and indirectly (interpretation and translation), and it brought about reflexive reform in the relations between "us" and "them." Through the experiences of listening and responding to the voices of the struggling, that is, through communicative interaction, actors in transnational networks reflected on the structured relationship between the struggling and themselves, and contributed to the ongoing process of reforming their own societies.

Conclusion

This research investigated the dynamics of transnational networks, focusing on Christian information exchange networks around the Korean democratization movement in the 1970s and the 80s. It showed that there were conversations such as harsh problem posing, urging, and answering among actors beyond borders during the formation of transnational networks. In addition, by committing to information exchange with Korean

Christians, actors in Japan and the United States not only supported Korean Christians, but also learned about their own societies and reflected their experiences back to those societies. In Japan, for the first time after the war, Christians took a lead role in openly reflecting on Japan's history with Asia and engaging the society around issues of the imperial past. In the United States, Christian activists working on democracy and labor movements in developing countries, including South Korea, problematized the unjust global economic order.

Transnational networks cannot be simply understood as linear relations between “helpers” and “beneficiaries” or “donors” and “receivers.” Through communicative interaction among actors, which involves listening to the voices of others and problematizing the relation between “us” and “them,” transnational networks can work in reflexive ways. This self-reflection through transnational connections can contribute to the growth of democracy across the globe.

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<Abstract>

South Korea's Democratization Movement of the 1970s and 80s and Communicative Interaction in Transnational Ecumenical Networks

Misook Lee

Transnational network studies in international relations, sociology, and history have grown rapidly since the 1990s. Research often tends to take a top-down (North-South) approach in which developed countries or international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are assumed to “help” the developing ones. However, this one-way approach cannot fully explain the dynamics of transnational activist networks. The following paper aims to better understand the dynamics of transnational networks by focusing on the ‘communicative interaction’ among various groups supporting the democratization movement in South Korea. It specifically investigates the formation and activities of transnational information exchange networks in Japan and the United States that worked with Korean Christians. In addition, this research examines the meaning and political implications of forming transnational networks with struggling others; transnational networks can work reflexively by problematizing the structural relationships among differently situated actors.

Keywords: Transnational Advocacy Networks, Communicative Interaction, Democratization Movement, Reflexivity

〈국문초록〉

1970~1980년대 한국 민주화 운동과 트랜스내셔널 에큐메니컬 네트워크의 의사소통적 상호작용

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1990년대 이래 국제정치학, 사회학, 역사학 등 다양한 학문분과 내에서 트랜스내셔널 네트워크에 관한 연구가 급속히 발전해 왔다. 기존의 연구들은 선진국 혹은 국제적인 비정부기구들이 개발도상국을 “돕는다”고 가정하는 하향식 접근을 취해왔다. 그러나 이러한 일방향적인 접근만으로는 트랜스내셔널한 활동가들의 네트워크 역학을 온전히 설명해 낼 수 없다.

본 연구는 한국 민주화 운동을 지지하였던 다양한 집단들 간의 ‘상호작용’에 초점을 맞추으로써 트랜스내셔널 네트워크의 역학을

보다 심도 있게 이해하고자 한다. 특히 한국 기독교인들과 공조하였던 일본 및 미국의 트랜스내셔널한 정보교환 네트워크의 형성과 활동을 탐구한다. 또한, 본 연구는 투쟁하는 타자와의 트랜스내셔널 네트워크의 형성이 갖는 정치적 함의를 고찰하고자 한다.

본 연구를 통해, 트랜스내셔널 네트워크는 활동가들간의 의사소통적 상호작용을 통해, 활동가들의 서로 다른 위치를 규정하는 구조적 관계를 문제시하는 성찰적 작용이 가능하다는 것을 밝혔다.

주제어: 초국적 네트워크, 의사소통적 상호작용, 민주화 운동, 성찰