

The ‘Trust-building Process’ Strategy for the Creative Restoration of the ‘Korean-Ecosystem’

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Challenges Facing the Park Geun-hye Administration’s North Korea policy

The Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations’ moderate North Korea policy and the Lee Myung-bak administration’s hard line policy, both aimed to induce positive changes to the North Korean regime. During the same period, North Korea has consistently carried out armed provocations, from the naval battles at Yeonpyeong to the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, and on numerous occasions, launched long-range missiles and conducted nuclear tests. North Korea’s attitude indicates that neither a moderate nor a hard line policy was successful in reaching a satisfactory outcome. North Korea’s armed protests, which coincided with the launch of the Park Geun-hye administration, have created a negative environment that makes it unfavorable to implement the ‘Trust-building Process’ on the Korean Peninsula.

Given that North Korea has not renounced its efforts to develop nuclear weapons, resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis is the most urgent task facing the Park Geun-hye administration. It appears that mutual cooperation between the South Korea and the United States on issues regarding North Korea’s nuclear problem is stronger than ever. The problem is that while South Korea’s ultimate goal is the dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear weapons since it is directly affected by the nuclear threat, the U.S. can opt for either the dismantlement or non-proliferation of North Korea’s nuclear weapons. If the U.S. sets its

policy direction toward non-proliferation, then the South Korean government may end up facing a dilemma, in which it may become completely dependent on the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Another problem is that the U.S, China, and other states involved may have strategic objectives toward the Korean Peninsula which may be different from those of South Korea's. In the case of South Korea, unification is the most important national agenda regardless of the administration's inclinations. However, for the U.S. and China, maintaining the status quo on the Korean Peninsula may be an appealing policy alternative if their national interests do not align. There are expectations for the Park Geun-hye administration to show political creativity in the face of a complex North Korea policy environment.

A Paradigm Shift in North Korea Policy: Implementing the Concept of the 'Korean-Ecosystem'

In confronting the North Korean nuclear problem, show of force, and many other political challenges, a profound change in the perception of North Korea policy is needed, in order to display the type of political creativity that transcends both moderate and hard line policies. In this regard, South Korea could consider adopting the concept of an 'ecosystem' in order to bring a paradigm shift in North Korea policy.¹⁾ The concept of an ecosystem refers to a complex system combining biological and inorganic environmental factors. A normally functioning ecosystem refers to the state in which organisms and the environment coexist harmoniously in a sustainable manner. A nationality-ecosystem maintains a national/ethnic community sharing a single 'living space', which shares the same history and culture, and also maintains a state of harmony with various environmental factors. A normally functioning nationality-ecosystem can be defined as the state in which political, economic, and other social components of society operate deliberately for a purpose through such organic relationships. If a nationality-ecosystem is disrupted due to external factors such as division, then the organic relationships in the respective components also become disrupted, causing it to malfunction.

The concept of the 'Korean-Ecosystem' integrates the concept of a divided system and the problem of unification, with the concept of the ecosystem. It emphasizes the importance of an ecological linkage of the Korean nationality, which has been severed due to pending issues in inter-Korean relations. In addition, many problems in the North and South Korean societies arise from the rupture in the Korean-Ecosystem, and much attention needs to be given to ultimately resolve these social problems through creative restoration. The most significant point in introducing the concept of a Korean-Ecosystem is that it will transfer the political aim and target of South Korea's North Korea policy beyond the regime toward to linking the severed North-South ecosystem, and forming a conducive environment to this end. It also emphasizes the importance of policies regarding North Korean citizens.

1) Lim Gang-taeg, Cho Han-bum, et al., "Ways to Promote Cultural, Environmental, Business Amalgamation in Inter-Korean Cooperation based on a Creative Economy," *Creative Economy New Ideas New Market* (Seoul: National Council for Economic, Humanities, and Social Science, 2013), pp. 613-640.

The Korean Peninsula is divided and thus, cannot be considered a normally functioning nationality-ecosystem. The geographic division of the Peninsula has turned South Korea into an artificial island, causing much geopolitical and geoeconomic harm. Displaced people originally from the North, separated families, and North Korean refugees are direct victims of the emotional aspect of the division, and the history and culture of a homogenous living space that has persisted 5000 years now exist in a mutually disparate state. The threat of a nuclear war and the presence of 2 million soldiers on the Peninsula are also outcomes of the divided nationality-ecosystem. North Korea's regime crisis represents an extreme problem for the divided nationality-ecosystem. Victims of starvation, assumed to range from thousands to millions, chronic food deprivation, the worsening of the human rights situation, and other problems constitute an overall crisis in the human security of North Koreans; all of which are the direct outcomes of the divided nationality-ecosystem.

The fact that South Korea, the 10th most powerful economy in the world, is confronted with outdated ideological confrontation and social conflicts, is also not irrelevant to the severed Korean-Ecosystem. The process of South Korea's compressed growth, which occurred in the divided system, required selectivity and concentration, while demands for equal distribution and democracy were overshadowed for a long period of time, due to the state's drive for growth. Confrontation between the North and South shaped an environment which led the citizens to accept monolithic values over pluralism, and was a major factor in aggravating societal tension. The confrontation between the progressives and conservatives, among different classes, generations, and regions are all related to the severed state of the Korean-Ecosystem. The divided Korean-Ecosystem is an important cause of the 'trust-crisis' that the South Korean society faces today, while the confrontation between the conservatives and reformist, as well as South-South conflicts all exemplify this point.

A Creative Restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem through the 'Guiding Type of Unification'²⁾

If the concept of the Korean-Ecosystem is applied, policies on North Korea and unification would carry the objective of restoring the divided ecosystem. Restoring the Korean-Ecosystem does not simply refer to returning to a pre-division state. For almost seventy years, the two Koreas have taken different modernization paths, and have cultivated separate ideologies and values and thus, an attempt to return to the pre-divided state can possibly create new and various problems. Unlike the past, profound global changes have taken place, and South Korea has grown into a global economic powerhouse. It has also immersed itself in the trend of globalization to the extent that it can no longer emphasize the purity of its homogenous nature, while multiculturalism is spreading fast in Korean society. In this regard, restoring the Korean-Ecosystem should be carried out in a forward-looking and innovative way. This process includes not only resolving the division and the Cold War culture in the two Korea's societies, but also establishing a political, economic, social system that can guide the Peninsula into the

2) Kim Kyu-ryoon, Cho Han-bum, et al., *Path and Tasks Ahead for the Guiding Type of Unification*, (Seoul: KINU, 2012).

twenty-first century.

The ‘guiding type of unification,’ a new means of implementing the restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem, need to be closely examined. This ‘guiding type’ does not refer to an ideal prototype, but refers to a complex concept that includes the idea of a developmental, forward-looking model. Given that North Korea, having lost its ability to sustain itself and thus lacks the capacity and will to lead the restoration, the role of South Korea to play the leading role is important. However, numerous problems which have been overlooked by South Korea’s successful development, have presented limitations for South Korea in taking the next step toward the model. South Korea also needs to embrace a process that is accompanied by positive changes, and the viewpoint and form of the creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem must be forward-looking.

Process of the Creative Restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem and the ‘Trust-building Process’

The creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem consists of a period of division, and a period of becoming a normal state after going through a restoration process; or in other words, a period of establishing its status as a world leading state. During the key process of restoration, policies regarding domestic, inter-Korean relations and international relations must be carried out efficiently. The concept of the Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula, which is being applied to the inter-Korean relations, must also be closely examined, as it will be expanded onto the domestic and international realms.

<Flow chart showing the creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem>

Period of division	Guiding type of unification	Restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political, economic, social, emotional disruption - High cost structure of division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Korea’s nuclear threat and military confrontation • North Korea’s regime crisis • Lack of trust in South Korean society 	<p style="text-align: center;"><Domestic></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the ‘trust-society’ and ‘domestic trust-society process’ <p style="text-align: center;"><Inter-Korean relations></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Form an ethnic community based on the ‘Trust-building Process’ on the Korean Peninsula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Korea Project • Green Détente • Creative Inter-Korean cooperation model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link various fields between the North and South <p style="text-align: center;">< International relations></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Form peaceful cooperation in Northeast Asia and strengthen unification diplomacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolve costs of division and yield benefits of unification - Integrate systems and state normalization - Complete open nationalism - Establish its status as a world leading state

〈Domestic steps: establishing a ‘trust society’ and a ‘domestic trust-building process³⁾〉

Currently, the South Korean society is faced with various social conflicts, and the civil society and systemic instruments are limited in their ability to resolve these problems. The South Korean society’s compressed growth process has given birth to various problems, as well as a lack of social trust. The lack of trust between the ruling and opposition parties, conservatives and progressives, corporations and laborers, and among different classes, regions and generations has been the major factor which led to the South Korean society’s high-cost structure. The fair society agenda that was brought up by the Lee Myung-bak administration demonstrates an effort to resolve such similar problems.

In many cases, the underlying issue in South Korea’s social conflicts is the structural problem regarding the division and disruption in the Korean-Ecosystem. Ideological confrontations throughout the society and confrontations between the conservatives and progressives symbolically represent these conflicts. Amid the tensions in the divided system, social conflicts have not been resolved through dialogue and negotiation. Rather, given that the means of resolution have been dichotomized into exclusion and coercion, it can be concluded that South Korean social conflicts display a systemic nature. Distrust and exclusivity between the conservative and progressive blocs have formed the basis of the South Korean society’s ‘trust-crisis.’

The Park Geun-hye administration’s foremost agenda to build a ‘trust society’ must be evaluated in depth. The discourse on a trust society is an overarching discussion regarding the direction and the ruling philosophy of the Park Geun-hye government, and can act as the central factor for various subordinate policies. The formation of a trust society means establishing a basic trust arrangement among various agents in South Korean society, as well as securing fair competition. Only when distrust between the two camps, conservatives and progressives, is resolved and a trust arrangement is formed between the ruling and opposition parties’ policies, can South Korea expect to dismantle its structural conflicts. When efforts for a trust society bear fruit, the politicization of the social conflicts in South Korea, and the structure for the reoccurrence of such problems will be resolved, and it will become possible to manage conflicts in a low cost and highly efficient manner.

The formation of a trust relationship also has important implications for South Korea’s North Korea policy. The fact that it took a long time to battle out the facts regarding the sinking of the naval vessel *Cheonan*, despite the apparent causal relationship, is symbolic evidence of the lack of trust when it comes to the field of North Korea policy. The politicization and the South-South conflict regarding North Korea policy have acted as structural factors that weaken the momentum of Seoul’s North Korea policy, regardless of the incumbent administration. North Korea policy’s high cost structure is derived mostly from domestic political conflict regarding the North Korea issue, and less from actual differences in the direction of the North Korea policy.

3) Cho Han-bum, “Ways to Promote Domestic Trust Process for Citizen’s Consent on North Korea Policy,” (discussion paper presented on the 30th National Unification Advisory Council Youth Commission, April 30, 2013).

In the case that domestic trust is not formed within the South Korean society regarding the North Korea and unification policies, the process of building trust in inter-Korean relations will also be difficult. The implementation of a ‘domestic trust-building process,’ which includes relationship of trust between the ruling and opposition parties regarding South Korea’s North Korea policy, as well as the resolution of South-South conflicts, needs to be examined in close detail. If a relationship of trust in policy is established and South-South conflicts are resolved through the domestic trust-building process, then it will become possible to promote policies on North Korea and unification for the restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem. In order to promote the domestic trust-building process, the government and the leadership of the ruling party, as well as the cooperative stance from the opposing party are important. In addition, it is necessary to promote dialogue and negotiation within the civil society, as well as introspective pan-societal efforts to spread a culture of tolerance.

〈Inter-Korean relations: Forming an ethnic community based on the ‘Trust-building Process’ on the Korean Peninsula〉

If the aim of North Korea policy is shifted to the creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem, the target can include the North Korean authorities and citizens, and can also be expanded to the various fields of the divided Korean-Ecosystem. Unless the North Korean government displays a genuine will to negotiate, it must be regarded not as a negotiating partner, but an agent that needs to be ‘managed.’ The South Korean government has a responsibility to pay close attention to supporting and relieving the human security crisis of the North Korean citizens, who are also citizens of South Korea by law. Strong measures need to be taken with regard to North Korea’s human rights problems, and securing the trust of North Korean citizens should also be an objective of South Korea’s North Korea policy. It must not be forgotten that the biggest impetus for the unification between East and West Germany was the level of trust in West Germany’s system among the East Germans, and the fact that this trust resulted in West Germany’s long-term policies for the East German citizens. This is the reason why ‘customized policies for North Korean citizens’ must be consistently promoted.

In order for the creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem to take place, a linear process that connects each divided field within the ecosystem is needed. This can be conceptualized as the formation of an ethnic community through the process of the guided type of unification. Given that the restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem requires a process of forming a political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental community, this is in line with the plan for a common ethnic unification. The Korean-Ecosystem stems from various political complexities and constraining factors. This is preceded by the formation of an economic, socio-cultural, environmental community, and the results should be linked to the completion of a political community. The important point is that the formative process of an ethnic community should be done in a forward-looking manner via an exemplary agent; this ultimately points to the guiding type of unification.

The process of forming an ethnic community refers to an organic and virtuous cycle, which realizes unification through creative inter-Korean cooperation, from the perspective of the two Korean society’s

functional changes, and mid-to-long term aspects. In the process of linking the divided Korean-Ecosystem, new engines for growth and job creation will be created within South Korean society, and as North Korea's marketization and democratization is expedited, a foundation for peaceful unification will be arranged. The key to creative inter-Korean cooperation lies in convergence, and that the process of restoring the Korean-Ecosystem is linked to industries is significant. A creative inter-Korean cooperative model through the convergence of the fields of environment, culture and the arts, history, peace with industry, should be actively assessed.⁴⁾ As the world's only divided state, South Korea has a just cause in leading the industry of peace and culture, while the DMZ, which has gained the interest of the international community, has potential for peaceful ecological development. From this perspective, a reinterpretation, as well as a process of developmental expansion, is needed for projects such as the Green Détente,⁵⁾ and the Vision Korea Project.⁶⁾

Efforts to link these projects to the Korean-Ecosystem must be sustainable and carried out in a protective manner. Given that efforts to link each field of the ecosystem itself has important meaning for the formation of a trust-structure, various efforts must be made regardless of the attitudes of North Korean authorities. While stabilizing tensions on the Peninsula, attempts to change the North Korean government and society must also be pursued. In addition, detailed measures to cope with the possibility of uncertainties in North Korea, derived from the vulnerability of the Kim Jong-un regime -often overshadowed by its show of force- must be provided.

〈International relations: formulating peaceful cooperation in Northeast Asia〉

When considering the importance of a divided system within the context of international politics, inducing the cooperation of neighboring states is a key task for the restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem. Given that a fundamental resolution of North Korea's nuclear issue is a precondition for the restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem, a measure that avoids such problem cannot be an option for negotiation. South Korea's North Korea policy is a sub-concept of its unification policy, and it can be said that the ultimate political goal is the creative restoration of the Korean-Ecosystem. Thus, diplomatic efforts must be consistently made to transcend the international community's inertia in preferring the maintenance of division, and this must be a task that goes beyond the inclination of an administration.

It will be difficult to smoothly carry out the complex process of restoring the Korean-Ecosystem, unless a cooperative relationship with China is formed on the basis of the U.S-ROK alliance. This is the reason

4) Lim Gang-taeg, Cho Han-bum, et al., "Ways to Promote Cultural, Environmental, Business Amalgamation in Inter-Korean Cooperation based on a Creative Economy," pp. 613-640.

5) The Green Détente seeks ways of economic cooperation to form an Inter-Korean Environmental community, conduct a joint study on various aspects of the border regions, DMZ, Baek-du Mt. volcano, and create a new energy complex inside the Kaesong Industrial Complex. "The 18th Presidential Transitional Team," *Government Tasks for the Park Geun-hye Administration*, February, 2013, p.192.

6) The Vision Korea Project is a means to form an Inter-Korean economic community. In the mid-to-long term period, it includes means to gradually connect business infrastructure for railways, roads, electricity, and commerce. *Ibid.*,p.192.

why the Park Geun-hye administration must seek developmental means to formulate peaceful cooperation in Northeast Asia. Given that energy cooperation and industries linking the railway between North Korea, South Korea, and Russia have captured the interest of North Korea, this may provide the impetus that is needed to give shape to form peaceful cooperation in Northeast Asia. In addition, now is the time to harness innovation in inducing non-political cooperation in Northeast Asia, and strengthening the unification diplomacy, in order to creatively restore the Korean-Ecosystem. © KINU 2013

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