



CHAPTER FOUR

THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH UNDER THE RULE OF JAPANESE IMPERIALISM

This chapter describes the Puritanical aspects of the Korean Presbyterian Church under the rule of Japanese imperialism (1910-1945). This period was recognized nationwide as a time of ecclesiastical apostasy by yielding to the policy of Shinto Shrine worship. It was also a time of persecution of the Puritanical faith, with a small numbers of Christian leaders, including laymen, keeping their faith and forming a sharp contrast. There were some important events in conjunction with the Korean Presbyterian Church like March First Movement,⁸⁷ Shinto Shrine worship and the rise of liberal theology. This study will especially consider how the Presbyterian Church maintained its faith and responded to affairs both local and abroad.

4.1. The General Delineation of the Korean Society and Church under Japanese Imperialism (1910-1945)

Since 1910, when Korea was forcefully annexed by Japan, the Japanese military government tried to destroy the Koreans completely. Firstly, Chosun Chongdokbu (the Government-General of Chosun) established the united system, which had united the police and the military policy, under the pretext of maintenance of public peace in Korea. The main activities of the institute were to stop freedom of expression, to forbid the selling of books that could inspire patriotism, including Korean history and geography, and to suppress a national movement for independence. In 1915, the institute published *Chosunbandosa* (The history of Chosun Peninsula), which was written in the colonial view of history. Chosun Chongdokbu allowed the Koreans to

⁸⁷ The March First movement was the event in which the Koreans rose against Japanese rule for national independence on 1st March, 1919. Japanese imperialism established Shinto shrines, Japan's indigenous religion in all parts of the Korean country. They made the Koreans worship Japanese religion compulsorily as a part of policy to unite Japanese and Korean. It was designed so that Japan could make Korea regard her territorial ambition of a Chinese invasion as positive (Kim 1997:263).



only learn Japanese as a means of communication and minimized the education of technology (Lee 1978:147-152).

During Terauchi's period,⁸⁸ he situated twenty thousand military police and spies to maintain control throughout the country. They searched houses at any time and arrested Koreans. Individual freedom and the rights of people were violated and mass media was thoroughly censored. Japan adopted a policy to demolish Korean history and culture and despise the Koreans. In addition, they conspired to "Japanize" the Koreans under the name of "Naesunilche" (the unification of Japan and Korea). The first step of their policy was to reduce schooling hours of Korean history and the Korean language in the schools and eventually ban it. All Koreans were forced to worship at the Shinto Shrines. At the close of the 1930s, they forced the Koreans to change their names into the Japanese style of naming. Furthermore, they encouraged divorces between the Koreans and started registered prostitution, even in small villages, in order to degenerate the Koreans (McKenzie 1920:183,186,199 in Kim 1992:159). Chongdokbu composed a land-surveying law in 1912, which forced landowners to register their lands. Most Korean landowners hesitated to go along with the law. As a result, they lost their lands and could not help but immigrate to China.

Chongdokbu regarded the Korean church as a source of a national movement for independence and despised it in the beginning. It meant that the Korean Church, which had experienced great revivals, had to experience hardships for its faith under Japanese imperialism. It was closely observed by the Japanese police. According to Brown (1912:8-9), a secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission,

For more than two years, reports have reached us from various parts of the country of growing suspicion and harshness by Japanese local gendarmes toward the helpless Korean Christians... Pastors were required to report the names of converts at police headquarters. A gendarme entered a

⁸⁸ Terauchi was the first governor-general of Chosun Chongdokbu. He was the one who played an important role in sealing the Korea-Japan Annexation on 22nd August, 1910 and promulgated it on 29th August, 1910.



private house, drew his sword threateningly and asked why the owner joined “the Jesus Christ” the night before... In one country church, a Japanese official walked into the pulpit during a Sunday service and denounced Christianity to the congregation.

As the Japanese police had suspected, many leaders of national independence came to visit the church and explored ways to introduce a national independence and mass education campaign. For instance, Shinminhoi (New People Society), which was organized by An Chang-Ho (1878-1938) and Jeon Duk-gi (1875-1914), who were central figures in 1907, consisted of Christians. The organization established a porcelain company with journalists, servicemen and businessmen and founded schools for a mass education drive. Shinminhoi also participated in publishing and prepared for armed activities. As descendants of Shinminhoi, Daesung School and Osan School in Pyongyang were established to resist the Japanese movement; other such establishments include Sungsil School in Pyongyang and Shinsung School in Sunchun. Churches in the areas of Pyongyang, Jungju and Sunchen were strongholds of the national movement (Kim 1997:198-199). Haese Gyowjuk Chonghoi (West coastal education Association), which was organized in Hwanghae province in 1908, also had the purpose and consisted of Christians under the flag of “One Township One Association.” Activities of these organizations were thought to be dangerous by a Japanese.

In 1911, Chongdokbu fabricated the so-called “One Hundred and Five People Incident” to oppress the Korean church and to eliminate its patriots. In addition, the 1919 persecution against the March First Independence Movement and Shinto Shrine worship were representative cases of the persecution suffered under Japanese imperialism. As Son (1974:152) pointed out that,

The persecutions of 1911 and 1919 were aimed against Christian Nationalists while the entire Shinto Shrine campaign was a universal religious persecution.

Therefore, in order to understand the atrocity by Japanese rule against the Korean Church, one needs to mention briefly “the One hundred and Five People Incident.” The

incident also worked as a motive for the national independent movement, “the First March Movement,” against Japanese imperialism.

4.1.1. One Hundred and Five People Incident

In order to eliminate Christian organizations, including Shinminhoi and other foreign missionaries that strongly supported Christian organizations, Chosun Chongdokbu fabricated the case of “One hundred and Five People Incident” in the following way:

At Syen Chun [Senchun], the conspirators proceeded on the 28th (Dec. 1910) to the station again and arranged themselves on the platform with the Japanese and Koreans who came there to welcome the Governor General. The train arrived about noon, and every one of the would be assassins watched intently for the opportunity, having ready his revolver or short sword under his long cloak. The Governor General descended from the train and saluting the welcomers passed within three or four steps of the conspirators. Owing, however, to the strict vigilance of the police officers and others, they could not accomplish their nefarious object (Brown 1912:5).

Due to the incident, there were extensive arrests all over the country from 1 January 1911. As a result, five hundred church leaders, including six pastors, fifty elders and eighty deacons, were arrested (Kim 1971:105). Their offenses that they were accused of were plotting against the governor-general’s life and being involved in its execution. Several missionaries were also reprimanded for their cooperation in the incident. Representatively, G. S. McCune, a headmaster of Senchun School, was suspected of giving arms to the plotters, which was considered a crime (McKenzie 1920:222 in Kim 1992:161). According to the prisoners’ confession, several American missionaries advised the Koreans to be brave and to kill the Governor-General without hesitation (Clark 1961:160).⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Missionaries’ names involved the case were as follows: As members of the M. E. C., Bishop Harris, Dr. Noble, Mr. Becker and Mr. Morris and, as Presbyterians, Underwood, Moffett, Wells, Swallen, Blair, Bernheisel, Baird, Holdcroft, Lee, McCune, Roberts, Sharrocks. Ross, Lampe, Whittemore (Song



However, these stories were fabricated by the Japanese military police. In addition, P. L. Gillet, a general director of Y. M. C. A., was banned from the country by the Japanese military police because he could reveal the fabrications against and the oppression of the church by Japanese imperialism to foreign countries (Sejong 1979:69).

A public trial was held on 28 June 1912 with three judges presiding in Seoul. The judges did not allow witnesses to be called and the only evidence presented was the fabricated confessions secured by the military police. The Japanese intention for continuing with the case was to, whether it was true or misunderstood, check activities of the church (Clark 1928:163). It was an open secret among missionaries who stayed in Korea.

Subsequently, one hundred and five among those who were convicted of a crime in the first trial, appealed to a higher court and were found innocent and acquitted. Six “Masterminds” were sentenced to five years’ servitude. When they were released from prison and arrived at Pyungyang Station in February 1915, nine thousand citizens enthusiastically welcomed the heroes who served their term of imprisonment for the nation and for the Christian faith (Lee 1978:152).⁹⁰

In conclusion, the Incident led to two results. One was, as Moffett (*the fiftieth celebration of the Korean mission of the P. C. U. S. A.* 1934:46) mentioned, that:

This persecution also made the Gospel more widely known and more favorably thought of by the Korean people; it strengthened the faith of pastors and elders and brought about an even greater friendship and sympathy between missionaries and the leaders of the church.

Another was that this case proved an incentive for the nationwide independence movement. The Koreans let loose their indignation against Japanese imperialism

1928:68,18). Cf. Paik (1929:400).

⁹⁰ For the detailed records of accomplices, cruel tortures and trials at those times, see Lee (1978:147-152) and Kim (1992:161-162).



through the March First Independence Movement in 1919.

4.2. The March First Movement and the Korean Church

Since 1910 when Korea was invaded by Japan, while Japanese imperialism disbanded the Korean military and infringed on its police authority and jurisdiction, the Korean church became more and more organized and grew up to become the national body, spreading all over the country. Although the March First Movement was the national movement, which united various religious bodies like Chondogyo⁹¹, Christianity and Buddhism in the fight against Japanese imperialism, the Movement was widely dispersed by the church all over the country (Sejong 1979:71). We will consider the relation of the independent Movement and the Korean Presbyterian Church.

4.2.1. Motives of the March First Movement

In 1905, the Eulsa Treaty was implemented; this was a time in which Japanese imperialism deprived Korea of its policing power and jurisdiction, after which they annexed Korea in 1910. After that, harsh Japanese controls over all kinds of Korean life led to frustrations of all the people. Their dissatisfaction was expressed through the Movement on a national scale.

Concurrently, one of the most important causes that led to the Movement was the principle of self-determination proclaimed by President W. Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference on 8 January 1918. Among the Fourteen Points were the conditions for settlement of the War. W. Wilson emphasized that all nations had the right to decide for

⁹¹ It was founded by Choi Zae-u in 1860. He developed a syncretistic religion taking advantage of the fundamental elements from various religions like Confucianism, Taoism and Roman Catholicism. From Confucianism, he took the concept of five relations (father-son, king-subject, husband-wife, elder-younger and friend-friend); from Buddhism, the concept of heart cleansing ; from Taoism, the concept of body cleansing from natural and moral filth; from Roman Catholicism, the concept of organizational and ritualistic elements. Therefore, he insisted that the main doctrine of Chondogyo was that heaven and human beings are one.



themselves and freedom was supposed to be given to even small countries. He also insisted on putting an end to the invasion of small countries by stronger ones.

Compared to the Korean at home, the effect of self-determination stirred up many overseas patriots for independence of Korea. For instance, in January 1919 the Koreans in Sanghai, China, organized Shinhan Cheonggyendan (the reconstruction association of new Korean youth) and sent Kim Gyu-Sik to the Peace Conference to communicate the Korean's desire for independence (Kim 1992:168-169). Furthermore, five thousand Koreans in Hawaii organized the Korean National Association and promoted various national movements in its auspices. Some members of the Association tried to see President Wilson and to attend the Peace Conference to present Korea's situation. Even though these actions did not bring instant responses, the Korean situation was reported by the press and spread by rumors. Other overseas patriots in China, Japan and Korea eventually called for independence (Song 1976:77-78).

Another important cause of the Movement was a rumor relating to the sudden death of King Gojong on 21 January 1919. The rumor was that the Japanese killed King Gojong. The Government-general announced that the cause of the king's death was cerebral anemia. However, the Koreans did not believe the announcement and anti-Japanese sentiments rose even higher. Together with sorrow of national ruin, the news made the Koreans express their regret, which was beyond measure. Beyond these direct causes, atrocious policies of the Government-general concerning Korea were fundamental causes.

4.2.2. Progress of the March First Movement

One month before the March First Movement broke out, two hundred students declared the independence of Korea at Y. M. C. A. in Tokyo on February 8, 1919. They demonstrated through the streets, and even in front of police stations, for independence. Consequentially, while many students were arrested and imprisoned by Japanese police, the news motivated many national patriots at home to strike for independence (Chun 1946: 97-99). The movement in Tokyo served as a stimulus and decisive motive for the



domestic independent movement.

In the meantime, the domestic movement for independence was in progress with two flows. One flow was progressed within Chondogyo with Son Byong-Hi, the supreme leader of Chondogyo, as the central figure. The other was within Christianity with Park Hi-Do, a manager of Y. M. C. A., and Kim Won-Byek, a student of Yeonhi College, as central figures. These two flows were united by the persuasion of Lee Sung-Hun and developed further onto a national scale (Sejong 1979:72-73). Hyon (1946:26-29) described it in the following way;

Christians in Seoul and other provinces keenly felt the necessity of an independence movement, and they were holding frequent meetings in secret. They were in a state of excitement about the affair. In Seoul, Rev. Ham Tae Yong, Mr. Lee Gap-Song, and others met to discuss the movement. This is the reason why the Christian leaders immediately agreed to the proposal of Chondogyo when the proposal was suggested through Lee Sung Hun.

At last, on 1 March 1919 at two in the afternoon, national leaders, consisting of thirty-three people, came together at Taeha Restaurant in Seoul as planned. They read the Declaration of Independence⁹² and gave three cheers for independence in the presence of Government-general officials invited intentionally. They were immediately placed under arrest. At the same time students and the crowd gathered at Pagoda Park and equally recited the Declaration and cried “Daehan Doklip Manse” (Hurrah for the Korean Independence) and poured out into the streets. Several thousand copies of the Declaration were distributed by the students to the crowd in the streets. The Movement of independence was not only confined in Seoul. It spread on a national scale within a few days and even to Manchuria.⁹³

⁹² The drafts of the Declaration of Independence was made by Choi Nam-Son, a historian. See appendix. 4. for full text.

⁹³ The following day of the Independence Movement, (2 March 1919) was the eve of the state funeral of King Gojong and Sunday of Christians. Therefore, on the second day, demonstrations partially continued only in some places. The day of state funeral, 3rd March 1919, had no demonstration in Seoul.



However, the demonstration was, to its surprise, characterized by a non-violent and orderly movement. Barstow and Greenbie (1919:925 in Song 1976:94) recorded the character of the movement,

There were no attacks on Japanese property or persons – simply a cessation of labor, and a gathering of the people for orderly demonstration under the catchword “manse.” The Koreans, en masse, did not even try to retaliate when the Japanese attacked them. They used neither clubs nor weapons of any sort. Any it was against people like these – against this pathetic dignity and high-mindedness in revolt, that the Japanese retaliated with atrocities that rival those of Belgium and Armenia.

4.2.3. The Result of the March First Movement

The non-violent demonstration, which extended over two months all over the country, produced tremendous misery to Korea because Chosun Government-General consistently retaliated with inhumane measures like terrorism and atrocities. After the Movement, Chosun Government-General falsely reported and eliminated the victims of the Movement from March to April of 1919.⁹⁴ However, even though it is impossible to calculate the exact number of victims, a witness testified that at least forty thousand people were arrested and approximately six thousand people were killed (Martin 1919:11 in Min 1993:342).

The damage to Korean Church by the Government-General was announced the following May 1919;

There were seventeen razed chapels and twenty-four were partially destroyed. Except for these, the number of damaged chapels was forty-one and the damage to church property was worth thirty thousand dollars. The damage to Osan Middle School worth five thousand dollars. Compared to

⁹⁴ According to the report of Chosun Government-General, the numbers of death were one civilian and five hundred and fifty three demonstrationists. The number of deaths and injuries in total was two thousand one hundred and ninety five. For detail, see Min (1993:342).



in total, one thousand five hundred and fifty six imprisoned people who were Confucians, Cheondogyo-believers and Buddhists, the number of Christians in jail until 30th of June 1919, was two thousand one hundred and ninety. In addition, the number of ministers was one hundred and fifty one. (Sejong 1979:73).

The statistics was also fairly distorted in comparison with the report of the General Assembly of Presbyterianism held in October 1919:

There were one thousand eight hundred and four arrested Presbyterians, one hundred and thirty four arrested pastors and elders, two hundred and two imprisoned church leaders and forty-one were killed. The number of people in jail to the period of General Assembly was one thousand six hundred and forty two. The number of deaths by flogging was six. Twelve chapels were destroyed and only in Hamkyung Synod, twenty-six people were murdered. Owing to the church leaders being confined, Presbyterian at the October session of General Assembly made decisions to discontinue the lectures of the Seminary and entrusted the official seats of General Assembly to foreign missionaries (Sejong 179:73-74).⁹⁵

However, the Japanese brutalities were continuing even more severely at the borders of the country than the inside. Most of it was centering on Manchuria. *Dokrip Paper* (Independent news) recorded the massacre of the Koreans by Japanese army during twenty seven days (9th October to 5th November) and in Gando on 8 December 1920 (Min 1993:347);

At every corner, Japan soldiers slaughtered innocent people and raped women. Houses, stacked grains, chapels and schools were razed to the ground. The statistics of the massacres in Sebukgando (The North-West Gan Island) was three thousand four hundred and sixty nine killed people,

⁹⁵ When the eighth session of the General Assembly was held in Pyungyang in October 1919, Chairman Kim Sen-du, former chairman Yang Geon-Baek, former secretary Ham Tae-Yeong and Revivalist Gil Sun-Ju were in jail (*Chosun Yesugyo Jangrohoi Sagi* (Ha) (The History of Chosun Christianity–Second Vol.) 1965:24 in Kim 1992:173).



one hundred and seventy ones were arrested, seventy one raped, three thousand two hundred and nine common destroyed, thirty six schools destroyed, fourteen chapels razed and the damage to fifty four thousand and forty five (unrecognizable unit) rice [rice bags] destroyed.

As seen above, most of the retaliations by the Japanese imperialism against the Movement was inflicted on the Korean church and society. Even though the March First Movement did not bring the independence to Korea, its results were very influential in the Korean society. It will be summarized as the following three things (Lee 1978:157-158).

Firstly, a provisional government was established in Sanghai. Subsequently, it was the organization which continuously promoted the independent movements against Japanese imperialism and the participation in the Second World War. It played a decisive role in liberation of Korea in 1945. Secondly, with the Movement as its starting point, Japanese imperialism began to govern Korea from the bayonet of the cultural policy after the Movement. For instance, Saitto took office as new Governor-General instead of Hasegawa. He acknowledged freedom of speech, assembly and religion to some extent. Thirdly, the community spirit of Korea was expressed in concrete action, such as problem conquering barriers like antagonistic relationship between denominations or religions. In addition, Korean Christians promoted their faith through hardships. The relationship between Christians and non-Christians became harmonious (Kim 1997:211).

4.2.4. The Standpoints of Religious Circles

Chosun Government-General regarded the Korean Church as the hidden power that led to the outset of the Movement. This regard could be proven by the oppression given to the Korean Church as enumerated above. However, unlike the last mentioned facts, there were different points of view between foreign missionaries and Korean Christians concerning the Korean political situation.



4.2.4.1. Missionaries' Standpoint

Foreign missionaries, who had stayed in Korea since 1910, when Japan annexed Korea, were met with difficulties concerning their views on the Korean political situation. They stood at the crossroads of the Korean political situation. This is because they still needed to have the confidence of the Koreans and, at the same time, avoid vexing the Japanese, in order to continue their missionary work

When A. J. Brown, a general secretary of the Board of Foreign Mission, visited Korea in 1909, he held a meeting in Pyongyang to determine the Koreans' attitude toward the Japanese government. He explored the following four attitudes at the meeting. Firstly, anti-Japanese attitude – this was the common attitude among the Koreans. Secondly, apathy attitude – this would be an unsatisfied attitude of both parties. Thirdly, pro-Japanese attitude – this meant they were supporters of colonialism. Fourthly, loyal recognition-attitude – this meant to keep a neutral policy. They followed the fourth one by unanimous consent and persuaded the Koreans to follow it as well (Kim 1992:162).

The missionaries did however not actually remain indifferent or neutral in attitude. Because of the cruel retaliation of Japanese government, the missionaries reported the whole affair of the Movement to their homeland. Missionaries were the very people who made the Movement and the Japanese response known to the international society. F. W. Scofield collected the materials at the massacre incident of Jeamri Church⁹⁶ and sent it to his homeland (Lee 1978:157). Missionaries in Japan also made a strong protest to the Japanese government to treat the Koreans properly (*The Korean Situation* s.a.:2 in Kim 1992:176).

Many missionaries cooperated with the Movement at an individual level. A. L. Becker, a medical professor of Yeonhi College, advised Park Hi-Do that the Declaration of

⁹⁶ On 15th April, 1919, two p.m., when the demonstration for independence reached the last moment, Arida, a Japanese lieutenant, called Christians to the Jeamri Chapel near Suwon. The Japanese Army took aim at Christians and set fire to them and the chapel. Approximately thirty believers were burnt to death in the fire and the chapel was burnt to ashes (Park 1946:112).



Independence was better read outside the country than inside. E. W. Mowry, a professor of Sungsil University, protected the students in his own house who prepared the Declaration and the Tekukgi (the national flag), also translating it, and sent it to the headquarters of the homeland. Because of his activities, he was sentenced to a six-month imprisonment in Pyongyang. G. S. McCune, principal of Shinsung Middle School in Senchun, was expelled on suspicion of planning the Movement with church leaders. S. A. Moffett, principal of Sungsil University, was arrested for addressing Korean independence at the world mission conference. To add to the previously mentioned people, there was also Rev. Thomas, W. A. Noble and P. L. Gillett who participated in the Movement and also in the hardships with the Koreans. In those times, when Chosun Government-General implored the missionaries to discourage the demonstration of the Korean society, they turned down Japanese's proposal flatly and preserved their standpoint in the following way:

We will not take part in politics that are incapable with the quelling political and social inconveniences spread through all the country. We will do nothing but evangelize and save spirits and only give mental comfort to those in need ... (The 30th of April 1919 Record of Eastern Affairs Committee of the American Christianity Association in Kim 1997:210-211).

4.2.4.2. The Standpoint of Korean Church

Korean Christians eagerly participated in the Movement with the Koreans, protesting the Japanese rule and restraint. Among those who signed the Declaration of Independence were sixteen Christians, fourteen Cheondogyo-believers and two Buddhists.⁹⁷ Church leaders intended to join the Movement, not from a complete church dimension but from the private stance of every Christian. This was caused by the

⁹⁷ A detailed list of them is as follows: Gil Sun-Ju, Lee Phil-Ju, Lee Byung-Jo, Kim Chang-Jun, Yang Jeon-Baek, Yoo Ye-Dae, Lee Gap-Sung, Lee Myung-Ryong, Lee Seung-Hun, Park Hi-Do, Park Dong-Woan, Sin Heung-Sik, Sin Sek-Gu, Oh Hwoa-Young, Jung Chun-Su, Choi Sung- Mo (Walton 1990:122). Among them, there were nine pastors, three elders and four jeondosas (probationers) (Moon 1975:18).



following two reasons. Firstly, they worried that missionaries and the church would meet misfortune and be suspected of the participants in the Movement. Secondly, they were trying to uphold the principle that the church remained neutral in political issues as missionaries had taught the Koreans (Kim 1992:173).

However, the private participation of Christians in the Movement did not receive a lukewarm attitude. Exodus was the text of the Bible patronized by church preachers at the worship after the March First Movement (Kim 1960:26). Whenever believers assembled, they prayed for national liberation from Japan, basing themselves on the simple faith of believing the Bible literally, thus Korean Christians regarded the history of the Old Testament as their own history. The Israelites request and prayers for salvation from Egypt, which appeared in Psalms and Prophecies, became the very prayers used by the Korean Christian (Park 1970:190,191).

4.3. Shintoism and the Korean Church

Since the March First Movement broke out in 1919, Japanese imperialism changed its policy from military force to cultural measures. However, there was only in the change of name; there was no essential difference. As Min (1993:478) pointed out, ‘the history of the Korean Church, which had been under persecution of Japan, reached its most difficult times because of the compulsory policy of Shrine worship.’

Meanwhile, Japan invaded Manchuria and established a puppet Manchurian regime on September 1931. Japan conspired to conquer China again, and thus Japan used the Korea as a supply base for the war against China and also attempted to Japanize Korea. To create an obscurantist policy for the Koreans, Japanese imperialism took advantage of Confucianism to exalt toadyism, which was subordination the Japanese ethos. Japan also forced Korean Christians to practise Shintoism in order to discourage the church, which was the last stronghold of the national movement for independence (Lee 1978:193).

The Korean Church actually showed the Puritanical aspects through the vigorous strife



against Shintoism better than during the March First Movement. During the time of the latter, the Korean Church was pointed out to have participated in the Movement passively, even though it is an enormous organization. For instance, there were no traces of Christianity in the Declaration of Independence even though Christian leaders were sixteen among thirty-three people forming the nucleus (Min 1972:263-264). However, the Korean Church showed splendid Puritanical faith well as a counter action against Shintoism. Before considering the counter-movement of the Korean Church against Shintoism, we need to deal with the notion of Shintoism, because of different views between conservative and liberal. Such views would decide the course of action.

4.3.1. Various Evaluations of Shintoism

Attitudes toward Shintoism were greatly different within and without Christianity. Some summarized that Shintoism was a religion or, others summarized it as a national ritual. While Presbyterians regarded it as a religion, Roman Catholics, Methodists and liberalists regarded it as a natural ritual. The respective attitudes led to a course of action: either obedience or resistance.

In 1822, Japan declared Shinto to be not “a religion” but “a ritual of the state” and to be separated from other religions (Kim sa: 195-196 in Yang 1997:124). Such a view was continuously maintained until 1920’s. The Methodist Church in Korea just followed literal explanation, thus most of them worshipped Japanese Shrines. As a result, schools in the Methodist line were maintained without much conflict until the Liberation from Japan Imperialism. Overall, Methodist Churches easily endured the oppression by Japan (Sejong 1979:101).

After some argument on the subject, the Roman Catholics were decided on the same line as the Methodist Church. The Vatican issued “the duties of Catholics towards their country” to the fathers in Japan, Korea and Manchuria concerning Shrine in 1936 in the following way:

The Apostolic Delegate to Japan from Rome advised the superiors of the



various religious institutes and congregations to allow the faithful to take part in such civic rites. ... (Oak 2004:482).

In addition, the Seventh Day Adventist Church also approved of it in December 1935 and the Holiness Church, who had continuously rejected Shrine worship, finally accepted it as a national ritual in 1943 (*The History of Presbyterian Church in Korea* 1988:156).

Meanwhile, the Presbyterian Church had two contrasting opinions; while liberal parties regarded Shrine worship as a kind of national ritual, conservative parties regarded it as idolatry. However, the Presbyterian Church did not overcome Japanese oppression and could not help but approve Shrine worship at the thirty-seventh General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on 9 September 1943.

Originally, Shintoism is the religion native to Japan, which was translated as “kami nomichi” or “the way of the kami” or “the way of gods” in Japanese. Its characteristics were pantheism and nature worship. The numbers of Kami is countless and is normally estimated at eight million (Lee 1966:2-9). The religion mainly regarded gods and the power of nature as sacred things. The sun goddess Amaterasu-Omikami was considered as the master of gods, and storms, rain, sea, rivers, water, land and its fruits, mountain, tree, fire were all as gods (Moore s a: 93-114 in Kim 1997:261).

In November 1936, the National Christian Council in Japan was troubled by the problem and approved of it as a national ritual along with the other policies of the Japanese government. Meanwhile, Shrine worship caused various responses from foreign missionaries. While the Canadian Mission easily approved it as a national ritual, the Northern Presbyterian Mission rejected it in spite of the abolition of the Christian schools that they ran. The Southern Presbyterian Mission and the Victorian Presbyterian Mission rejected it even more. Darby Fulton, a director of Southern Presbyterian Mission, played a decisive role in rejecting Shrine worship. He pointed out that Shrine worship was not a trifling matter but a fundamental matter of Christian faith, namely that it was a matter of deciding between monotheism and polytheism (Brown 1962:153 in Kim 1992:209).



In conclusion, Shintoism rose to the surface of debate of those times in the process of confrontation with Christianity. As Brown (1919:337) mentioned in his report of mission,

The other great national faith of Japan is Shintoism. Is it a religion? No one ever thought of arguing that it is not until the Christians in Japan objected to the observances of Shinto rites on the ground that they are incompatible with Christianity...

In addition, the identity of Shinto Worship was the dilemma in the circle of the Korean Christian.

The Shrine question in Japan and Japanese-controlled areas is a perplexing one. Can Christians justify compliance with the Japanese demand that they bow at the national shrines? The problem had become acute in Korea in recent years and [the] sentiment is divided. The debate here fairly represents both sides. Which is right? The authors are both prominent missionaries in Korea (*The Presbyterian Tribune* 1938.Jan.20).

It was surely not easy to decide whether or not Shintoism was a religion. In terms of the Japanese government, whether Shrine worship was a national ritual or idolatry, Japanese imperialism used shrine worship as the tool to accomplish its desires. The above point made the conservative Korean Christians take up an unyielding stance. In the long run, the Korean Church underwent all sorts of hardships owing to Japanese enforcement of Shrine worship from the mid of 1930's to 1945, the year of Liberation from Japan.

4.3.2. Shrine Worship as a Tool of Japanese Imperialism

It was only in 1918 that Japanese imperialism took shrine worship to Korea. However, the construction costs of shrines were included in the budgets of the Government-General since 1912. In 1925, a shrine called Chosun Singung was first established at Namsan in Seoul. After that, shrines were gradually established all over the country



(Lee 1978:199). However, it was not until the late 1930's that Japanese imperialism enforced Shrine worship more strictly. The Manchurian invasion was used by Japan, to include the Koreans in order to exalt and share the thoughts of invading China. McCune, President of the Union Christian College of Pyongyang during that period, (Oak 2004:483) recorded the real purpose of Shinto Shrine worship as follows:

Since the reconstruction of Japan took place, the military party had dreamed and planned for the expansion of the Japanese Empire so that it should completely control all eastern Asia, dominate the whole of the Orient and spread even further. In order to unite the Empire into an individual unit for the carrying on of the great struggle necessary for the fulfillment of the dream, the old Shinto cult was once more reinstated as the national religion proclaiming the divine person of the Emperor and his direct descent from Amaterasu-omikami, the Sun Goddess... The military leaders are determined to carry through their program even though it means the destruction of the many educational institutions built up in Korea by Foreign Mission Boards.

Whether shrine worship was simply a national ceremony or not, the necessary procedures which were enforced on Koreans, took on the character of religion.⁹⁸ In rejecting Shrine worship owing to Christian faith, the Koreans could not help but bear the brunt of oppression. In 1932, the Chosun Government-General forced Christian schools in Pyongyang to participate in a ceremony, which worshipped a Japanese emperor and military men that died in the Manchurian War. Furthermore, they informed all the schools that the teachers and the students had to worship at the Japanese shrine regularly. In November 1935, Yasdakke, a Japanese governor of Pyungan Namdo (one

⁹⁸ Shrine worship, even though stressing that everyday life was the service for gods, generally consisted of four factors in the Shrine temple. First, Harai (Purification) meant that worshippers and priests rinsed out their mouths with clean water and poured water on the tip of hands in order to remove uncleanness, unrighteousness and vice. Second, Shinsen (Offering) was the factor that was believed to be the curse to descendants if it was done slighted. Third, Norito (Prayer) was processed that priests put unique accent and rhythm and read a pray written in traditional Japanese. Four, Naorai (Symbolic feast) meant the progress to drink the wine made of cereals which the priest or a female shaman gave. For the details, see Lee (1978:196-197).



of eight provinces), ordered all principals within the Province to worship a Shrine before the united conference. Since then, Shrine worship became a serious problem to Korean Christians (Kim 1971:177-179).

4.3.3. The Resistance of the Korean Church

Since 1937, before the resistance of the Korean Church against Japanese Shrine worship, Governor-General forced the Koreans to pray for the victory of war, which was the time when the war of China-Japan broke out. Many schools, which were against it, were closed down.⁹⁹

With violent force, the Government-General made the church a victim by forcing the church to worship at the Japanese shrine. When Pyungbuk Synod, which was one of the biggest synods in numbers, was held on 19 February 1938, the Sunchun police station hatched a plan. It made Kim Il-Sun, chairman of the Synod, work as a secret agent for Japan, and made him introduce a resolution in favour of Shrine worship. Even though only two or three members came to vote under surveillance of police officers in civilian clothes, the resolution was passed without difficulty. Japanese imperialists used coercive measures like this, forcing seventeen out of twenty-three synods over the country to submit to Shrine worship. At last, the Government-General made a resolution in favour of shrine worship to be passed at the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of Presbyterian Church. When the meeting was over, twenty-three Chongdaes (representatives of General Assembly) including vice-chairman, Rev. Kim Gil-Chang, directly went and worshipped at the shrine in Pyungyang (Kim 1997:269, 271).¹⁰⁰ Rev. Hong Taeck-Gi, chairperson of General Assembly, read a resolution of the General Assembly for Shrine worship as follows:

⁹⁹ Gwangju Sungil boys middle school, Supia girls middle-school, Mokpo Youngheung boys school, Jeongmyung girls middle-school and Gunsan Youngmyung school were abolished and Sunchun Maesan middle-school, Jeonju Shinheung middle-school and Gijeon girls middle-school closed voluntarily. More than ten schools were abolished in terms of the resistance to Shrine worship (Kim 1997:265-267).

¹⁰⁰ See Kim (1997:269-272) and Min (1993:484-485) for the detailed process of the resolution for Shrine worship of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of Presbyterian Church.



I understand that the Japanese Shrine is neither a religion, nor against Christian doctrines, and that Shrine worship is just a patriotic national ceremony. Therefore, I declare to make every effort as a citizen of the Japanese emperor, under the current state of emergency, by being the first to do Shrine worship and participating in orders of the mobilization of the entire army (The Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh General Assembly of Chosun Yesugyo Presbyterian Church 1938:9 in Min 1993:485).

While Korean Churches succumbed to Japanese authority by worshipping at the shrine during the Japanese oppression, a resistance the movement, which was organized regionally, also started spreading nationwide. In September 1931, Kyungnam Synod passed a resolution against Shrine worship. The Korean Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of mission in 1934; she regarded that year as the Jubilee and held a festival and colorful events commemoration the year in Pyongyang. A commemorative ceremony was held in the playground of Sungsil School along with a demonstration.

After the humiliating approval of shrine worship, anti-movements were continuously progressed all over the country with some reverends as leaders: Rev. Lee Gi-Sun and Eld. Park Gwan-Jun in Pyungbuk Province, Rev. Han Sang-Dong, Rev. Ju Nam-Sun and Choi Duk-Gi, probationer, in Kyungnam Province, Rev. Lee Won-Young in Kyungbuk, Rev. Son Yang-Won in Cheonnam Province and Bruce F. Hunt in Manchuria (Lee 1978:242-243). Furthermore, all students and professors of Pyongyang Theological Seminary, which was regarded as the centre place of Korean Christianity, set out on an anti-movement of Shrine worship leading to police detectives resided at the school and kept watch over them. In the end, Pyongyang Theological Seminary was adjourned for an indefinite period on September 20, 1935, and then abolished in 1938. Two hundred churches were also abolished, two thousand church members were consigned to prison and about fifty Christian leaders wore the crown of martyrdom (Moffett 1962:75).¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, foreign missionaries also stubbornly opposed to the resolution of General

¹⁰¹ Also, see Clark (1971:230).



Assembly. On 28 September 1938, P. C. U. S. passed a resolution to secede from Chosun Yesugyo Presbyterian, which yielded under pressure of Japanese imperialism. P. C. U. S. A. also did so in May 1938. Furthermore, P. C. U. S. and P. C. U. S. A., including the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (P. C. V.), supported pastors who were expelled from the different synod owing to the objection against Shrine worship (Kim 1971:191). On the one hand, it was the Sanjeonhyun Church in Pyongyang, which systematically objected to Shrine worship in North Korea. On the other hand, there were Rev. Han Sang-Dong, who was Rev. Ju Gi-Chul's successor of Munchang Church in Mansan, Rev. Ju Nam-Sun, Rev. Hwang Chul-Do and Rev. Lee In-Jae who took lead in the counter-movement in South Korea. The former was represented as Rev. Ju Gi-Chul and the latter as Rev. Han Sang-Dong (Kim 1992:214-215).

We need to consider and revise the activities of the two reverends because we can feel Puritan faith and piety in their lives like the Puritans who tried to keep pure and obey God's Word from the corrupted religious circles of the Anglican Church in England and America.

4.3.3.1. Rev. Ju Gi-Chul's Resistant Activities

Rev. Ju Gi-Chul (1897-1944) was regarded as the 'Glory of Korean Church (Lee 1978:210)' in the history of Christianity because he objected to Shrine worship and sacrificed himself for the cause.

On November 25 1897, he was the fourth child of seven brothers and sisters by elder Ju Hyun-Sung in Woongchun in Kyungnam Province. He received great grace in the revival meeting led by Rev. Kim Ik-Doo. This was while he was teaching at Kyonam School, but immediately transferred into Pyongyang Theological Seminary and became the thirtieth graduate from it. After that, in 1936, he was invited as the chief minister by Sanjeonhyun Church, where Elder Cho Man-Sik had been working, via Choryang Church in Pusan and Munchang Church in Mansan. Sohn referred to the ministry of Rev. Ju as follows:



He was sent to Korea by God. He was a man of God and righteous before God. I am thankful that I am one of those who were directly influenced by his faith. In earlier days, I was a student in his class at Kyungnam Bible Institute. His class was like a revival meeting full of God's grace. Moreover, his zeal for the Lord and his ardent passion were his typical characteristics (Kim 1958:6).

He took the lead in the anti-movement of Shrine worship during his ministering against it. Before that, Rev. Ju surprised the religious circles by submitting a resolution against Shrine worship to Kyungnam Synod in 1931 (Kim 1970:136). He was arrested by the police three times from 1938.¹⁰² Pyongyang Synod, which he belonged to, approved of Shrine worship and removed him from office on December 19, 1939. When the police arrested him for the fourth time, they abolished Sanjeonhyun Church in May 1940 and he was severely punished on the rack in Pyongyang and martyred on May 21, 1944 (Kim 1971:195).

The sermons of Rev. Ju reflected his theological thoughts as well as the philosophy of his ministry. As Kwon (Kim 1958:11)¹⁰³ mentioned, "His sermons were his confessions, his life, and his spirit sealed by his blood".

One of the most remarkable ideas shown in his sermons was the 'Coram Deo' spirit (before the presence of God). On September 1, 1936, he preached on the subject of "Ilsagako" (the mind not to be scared of even death) at the Pyongyang Theological Seminary. He emphasized three points. Firstly, be ready to die for following Jesus. Secondly, be ready to die for leading other souls to Jesus. Thirdly, be ready to die for witnessing the truth of the resurrection.

Shall we live after denying Jesus? Alternatively, shall we die to follow Jesus? It is a real death to deny the true Jesus, while to die for Jesus means

¹⁰² Rev. Ju Gi-Chul's were arrested three times: January 1938, September 1938 and August 1939 (An 1956:41).

¹⁰³ Kim In-Sye, a ardent follower of Rev. Ju Gi-Chul, shorthanded his sermons and published them. Rev. Ju himself never wrote any article or book.



to live in the real sense of the Word. The time when Jesus was welcomed has past; now it is the time of persecution and suffering; let anyone who does not want to follow Jesus, go! But all those who are willing to follow Jesus are required to deny themselves.... Why are we Christians hesitating to abandon our lives for the Lord...? Why should we remain firm to the end in obedience to God's commandments, confronting the idolatry of the Shinto Shrine at the cost of our lives? Without question, it is because of the idea of God-centeredness (Kim 1958:14-15).

Park (1980:s.a. in Chung 1996:107)¹⁰⁴ commented on Rev. Ju's theological thoughts in the same line of Calvinism as follows:

Rev. Choo's [Ju] theology of "Il-sa-ka-go" (being ready to die) was based upon the idea that we Christians should be ready to die to keep the first commandment.... To put it another way, would be "the idea of God's honor" because the reason we keep the first commandment is to glorify the Creator God.... much same as the idea of "Soli Deo Gloria" which Calvinism has developed from the ideas of Calvin, Augustine, and Paul.

As mentioned above, his thoughts on Coram Deo were incompatible with Japanese Shrine worship. The last sermon was "My Five Petitions" based on Mat. 5:18 and Rom. 8:18 and 31-39. This showed his feelings against Shrine worship.

1. May I overcome the power of death, which I am nearly facing at my death. I cannot help praying, "Please allow me to overcome the power of death." All things living lament tremble and grieve before death. Are there so many people who were afraid of death and gave up faith to escape it... Oh! Lord, please do not take trouble with taking care of me. Make me keep the Lord's commandment although my body comes to break into flour..." My beloved Christians, those who belong to Christ must behave like Christians whether by life or by death... Don't be grieved even though I die. Rev. Ju cannot kneel to the other gods except God (Lee

¹⁰⁴ There is no page referred from previous quotation.



1978:213).¹⁰⁵ 4. Let me live in righteousness and die in righteousness...
Alas! The name of Jesus my Lord is falling to the ground Oh! Pyongyang
Oh! Pyongyang My Jerusalem of the land of propriety of the East! Oh!
Taedong River. Cry with me for a thousand years. I will offer to my Lord
my life, however humble it might be (Kim 1976:161).

According to *Kidok Shinbo* (Christian Messengers press) (May 13 1936),

From 1938 to 1945, about 2000 Christians were arrested for their refusal to
practise Shrine worship, and about 50 persons died in prison for their faith.
Rev. Ju (1897-1944) of Pyongyang was one of the 50 martyrs.

The Korean government regarded Rev. Ju as one of the deceased patriots and laid his
remains in the Armed Cemetery at Dongjak-Dong in Seoul (Lee 1978:217).

4.3.3.2. Rev. Han Sang-Dong's Resistant Activities

Whereas Rev. Ju was one of the main leaders of North Korea against Japanese Shrine
worship, Rev. Han Sang-Dong (1901-1976), who succeeded to Rev. Ju's post at
Moonchang Church in Masan, played a leading role in a counter movement with Ju
Nam-Sun, Hwang Chul-Do and Lee In-Jae in the southern parts of Korea (Kim
1992:215).

Rev. Han was to resign from his post at the synod because of pressure from the police.
He separated himself from the synod for Shrine worship and organized a new synod in
cooperation with missionaries, who resided in Busan, Masan, Jinju and Gechang (Kim
1997:278). On November 29 1939, they formulated the following principles to
inaugurate the opposition movement (Kim 1971:196).

1. The dissolution movement of the present Synods

¹⁰⁵ The remained were as follows: 2. May I endure long-term hardships. 3. May God look after old
mother, wife and children. 4. May I live and die along with righteousness. 5. May God receive my spirit
(Lee 1978:213-214).



2. To refuse the baptism of pastors who are in favor of Shrine worship
3. To organize the new synod consisting of only believers who are against Shrine worship
4. To seek mutual assistance between anti-Shrine worshippers
5. To travel and worship in groups and to concentrate our efforts to kinder spirits.

On March 28 1940, when Rev. Ju was released from prison, Rev. Han met with him and other supporters in Pyongyang, in the northern part of Korea. They planned to hold a national campaign against Shrine worship. As for important figures, there were Han Sang-Dong in Busan, Lee Chan-Su in Masan, Hwang Chul-Do in Jinju, Ju Nam-Sun in Gechang and the northern leaders of Korea: Lee Ju-Won, Lee Hyun-Sok and Son Myung-Bok. Rev. Han was arrested in Busan on July 3, 1940 and was transferred to Pyongyang in 1941, where he had to go through all kinds of hardships. Many foreign missionaries also cooperated with the campaign. Representatively, F. E. Hamilton and D. L. Malsbary donated funds to the campaign. B. F. Hunt printed papers for causes against Shrine worship and distributed it over Manchuria (Kim 1997:278).

Park Yun-Sun, who had been one of the leading figures since the establishment of Koryo Theological Seminary with Han Sang-Dong, said this of Rev. Han,

The history of the Korean Church was glorified by late Rev. Sang Dong Hahn, who took the initiative in campaigning against worship at Shintoist shrines during the later period of Japanese imperialism. He lived only for the glory of God and endured suffering in prison for six years [1940-1945] (Shim 1977:3).

4.3.4. Puritanism as the Foundation of Resistance

Park (1960:1) referred to foundation of faith of anti-Shrine worshippers,

Most of them were Presbyterians who possessed conservative and Reformed faith. They believed that Bible was the Word of God and the absolute standard of faith and life.



This correctly corresponded to the first chapter of the Westminster Confession, which English and American Puritans used as an instrument of church reformation against the lukewarm measure of the Anglican Church. Lee (:183-194 in Kim 1992:219) commented their faith in the following four ways: Firstly, obedience to God's command and love for the church. Secondly, the eschatological expectation and private confidence of the Lordship of Christ. Thirdly, the unyielding testimony of faith for God's Word. Fourthly, to evaluate martyrdom highly for God's glory. As a result, anti-Shrine worshippers endured all kinds of hardships with the expectation of the Second Advent of Christ and affection for God's Word.

These were the same factors that were already discovered in the Puritans. Kim (1992: 222) commented in the following way:

Anti-shrine worshippers, as conservative Christians of Korea, mostly believed in the millennium. They rejected the Shrine worship through the faith believing that the millennium defied the Shrine worship and got the power to endure sufferings.

They believed that the Second Advent of Christ was imminent, and that when Jesus Christ would come again, all the countries and authorities would kneel to Jesus, the Ruler, and when the millennium begins and Jesus establishes his own kingdom, all Christians would rule over the world with him (Lee 1968:173, 188 in Kim 1992: 222).

Martyrdom or sufferers expressed such attitudes as follow. In July 1941 when Rev. Ju and Rev. Han met each other by chance in Pyungyang Prison, Rev. Ju said him,

“Rev. Han, everything is through with me now. I won't be able to go on living.”... I am comforted with the thought of Jesus' receiving me to heaven upon my death.... (Shim 1984:133).

In addition, Rev. Han prayed during the cruel torture by the Japanese imperialists,

“Dear, Lord, please take my life! Each day is too heavy a burden for me



to bear. I am too weary. I am too tired...” ... “Thank you Lord for Your beautiful grace for a sinner like me that could also march in the glorious rank of martyrs...” (:147-148).

Although the church no longer endured a threat of Japanese arms, the Korean Church surrendered. Only Puritanical faith shines through anti-worshipping of shrines.

4.4. The Rise of Liberalism

During the period of oppression of Koreans by Japanese imperialism along with shrines worship, the Korean Presbyterian Church was faced with several after-effects. For example, the number of Christians was reduced during the period of Japanese imperialism. Patriots of the independent movement, who regarded church as a strong foothold, entered into the church, but were very disappointed at the fact that the church yielded under Japanese pressure. The focus of the Christian faith was also transferred from something realistic like history or culture to the afterlife. Christianity lost the opportunity to hold real power over Korean society. Among these after-effects, the rise of liberalism was one of the vital issues. This meant that Japanese Shrine worship became the starting point of two confrontational streams in the history of Presbyterianism in Korea. Liberalism in Korea was bred in the incubation of the Chosun Theological Seminary.

4.4.1. Chosun Theological Seminary

Due to oppression of the shrine worship, Pyongyang Theological Seminary was abolished in 1938. To make matters worse, missionaries were forced to leave the country, and the main stream of conservative theologians, like Park Hyung-Nong, sought refuge in Manchuria. Many celebrated pastors were also put in jail and martyred. These situations necessitated the establishment of new theological seminary. The movement was conspicuous to take lead in the academic circles of liberal theology. With Rev. Chae Phil-Geun, Rev. Kim Young-Ju, Rev. Cha Jae-Myung and Elder Kim Dae-Hyun as leaders, the Chosun Theological Seminary was established in Seoul on April 19 1940 (Min 1993:507). It served as the Mecca of liberal theology and was



renamed the Hankook (Korea) Theological Seminary.¹⁰⁶

Dr. Kim Chae-Choon, one of the most important people, who consolidated the foundation and the framework of the Seminary, mentioned the purpose of foundation, “Liberation from the control of western missionaries and conservative theology” (Kim 1992:227). He regarded all the past days of Church History in Korea as “Bu Jae” (absence). He promised to begin the new start of a discontinued Church History and looked upon himself as a leader (Kim 1957:5). He also referred to the following five ideas of what the theological education ought to keep (Yoo 1968:87-88).

1. Introduction of worldwide level of theological thought and evangelism
2. Autonomous Christian’s faith in terms of piety and study
3. Reconfirmation of Calvin Theology by freedom of a professor’s study and teaching without the theological limits.
4. Adoption of criticism on the hermeneutics of Bible.
5. Realization of the positive aspect of Korean theology and ecclesiastical authority in terms of virtue.

As for the faculty, Chae Phil-Geun, Kim Young-Ju and Ham Tae-Young were educated in Japan and were blamed by the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in the mid 1930s for having liberal theology or sympathizing with liberalists (Conn 1967:174 in Kim 1992:226).¹⁰⁷ As stated above, the issue of Shrine worship served as a momentum to accelerate bipolarization of theology: conservatism vs. liberalism. The two conflicting streams of theology remained the irrevocable characteristic in the history of

¹⁰⁶ At the end of Japanese imperialism over Korea, Chosun Theological Seminary had also undergone all sorts of hardships by Japanese policies of oppression like any other schools. The Seminary was too far with the conservative tradition of Pyongyang theological Seminary. After Liberation from Japan in 1945, When the Communists came to power on the North Korea, The Seminary was abolished. After that, Chosun Theological Seminary was reestablished in Seoul by Dr. Kim Chae-Choon (Kim 1992:226-227).

¹⁰⁷ Rev. Chae Phil-Geun became the focus of public censure because of translation of the Abingdon Commentary under the influence of liberalism in 1934. Kim Young-Ju openly denied Mosaic authorship of the Five Scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and became a target of attack from 1934 to 1935. Ham Tae-Young was under the same censorship due to his liberal theology (Hunt 1960:38 in Conn 1988:103).



the Korean Church.

4.4.2. Park, Hyung-Nong vs. Kim Chae-Choon

4.4.2.1. The Life and Thought of Park Hyung-Nong

Park, Hyung-Nong (1897-1979) was a representative figure that spoke for the conservative theology. In 1929, he took Th. B and Th. M degree from the Princeton Theological Seminary under the influence of J. Gresham Machen and C. W. Hodge. After that, he studied and got a Ph. D degree from Louisville Theological Seminary under the influence of A. T. Robertson in 1933. As his academic careers shows, Park learned the points, which decided the future of the Korean Church. In 1930, Park became a systematic professor of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary. He took an active part as a brilliant theologian and preacher there. One of his five collections of his sermons,¹⁰⁸ *Keep Faith in God* was published in 1941 during Japanese imperialism. The sermons reflected his theology well.

Christian missionary works have been very successful all over the world since Christianity was introduced. It is very praiseworthy. However, numerous different gospels have risen. Some people within churches struggle to compromise with those so-called scholarships; Christian psychology, Christian sociology, or Christian philosophy. In the twentieth century, churches went astray without even deciding which gospel to follow. Celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity in Korea, we have a lot to appreciate. How should we cope with many changed gospels, which are now preached by many lectures or writers? ... I want you to keep your conservative faith in God. Missionaries keep telling us that we should study the Bible for our churches to be successful, but before that I'd rather tell you that we should believe the Bible as the word of God... An agitation in your faith in God

¹⁰⁸ He published the five collections of sermons: *Keep Faith in God* in 1941, *Our refuge* in 1953, *The Remnant of God's People* in 1954, *God's Grace in Adversity* in 1955 and *Dr. Park's Collections of Sermons* in 1977.



can appear if you believe in a variety of heresies, religions, such as the religion of science, evolution, pantheism, and social religion. However, our Christianity may disappear from this world.... How should I easily give up such precious faith that those such as Luther, Calvin, Wycliffe, the Puritans, and other sincere Christians have passed down to me! I hope that the Korean churches will remain constant forever. I sincerely want you to be the faithful keeper of such true faith.

Liberalism, which began to spread into the church, was his target of attack. Park (1964:8-9) described the situation of those times as follows:

For the early fifty years of mission, the Korean Presbyterian Church succeeded in holding fast to orthodoxy theology. However, thereafter, it cannot keep away from the danger of liberalism any more, which has infiltrating into the church. In cooperation with the liberal movement, which was prevalent in public, dissenters hostile to Reformed faith stealthily appeared within circles of Presbyterian churches. I read several kinds of religious magazines and translations extensively and found in it to be various, freely published liberal concepts of theology. Higher criticism and fallacy of the Bible was emphasized and some sentences denying the Virgin Birth of Christ, Jesus' Deity, Redemption, Reincarnation, and Reward and Punishment of the afterlife, were found here and there (Park 1941:236-237).

He especially laid emphasis on the Inerrancy and Verbal Inspiration of the Bible in terms of the scientific and historical exactitude and the Bible being against liberalism (Park 1996:200). He referred to the object of his theology in *Kyoeui Theology Je 1 Guen Seron* (The First Book of an Introduction of Doctrine Theology) as follows:

The main purpose of the writer is to receive and transmit the Reformed Orthodox Theology of Calvinism as it was, not to write a creative work.... it is my desire to transmit to the new generation the very right theology which missionaries of this land transmitted eight years ago (Park 1983:16).



According to his statements, Park clarified his mission was to introduce Puritan and Reformed theology, which could be defined as follows:

The theology, which added the Puritan thoughts of Britain and the United States to the Calvinistic Reformism of Europe, was embodied into the Westminster Standards (Park 1976:11). The theology, which the Puritan missionaries of Britain and the United States received and introduced, was also regarded by the Westminster Standards as the standard of doctrines and the rules by which it must be conformed (:15).

Therefore, it was natural for him to be called “a Machen of Korea,” or “a Fighter for Conservative Theology” (Park 2004:193). Kim (2000:281) mentioned the achievement of Park Hyung-Nong in the following way:

He contributed much in forming a peak in terms of the history of Korean theology standing aloof from many denominations, as well as the formation of the conservative church and conservative theology of the lines in Korea.

4.4.2.2. The Life and Thoughts of Kim Chae-Choon

In the 1920's, when Japanese imperialism began to take root in Korea, many Korean theological students went to Japan for their studies. In the 1930's, when they came back from the Japanese universities under the influence of Liberalism, their influences climbed to its peak in Korea. Kim Chae-Choon also belonged to the category of these. He went to Japan as a twenty-five year old to study at the Chungsan Hakwon (Blue Mountain Institute), which was characterized by radical liberalism and looked like an agent of Union Theological Seminary (Kim 1956:189). K. Barth's theology dominated Japanese theology in the 1930's (Park 1991:152).

After that, he went over to America and studied at Princeton in 1931 and at the Western Theological Seminary, which was also exceptionally liberal. He struggled studying the liberal theology more indepth for a long time. After he came back to Korea, he taught



the Bible at Pyungyang Sungin School and worked as a member of the editorial staff of *Shinhak Jinam* (The Theological Review) in 1933- 1945 (Kim 1956:190). Kim (:190) commented the theological inclination of Rev. Kim Chae-Choon in the following way:

Even though Kim Chae-Choon was not a radical liberal theologians who dared to criticize the Bible destructively, he was certainly a liberal theologian who completely conflicted with conservative theologians who emphasized the verbal inspiration and the historical and scientific Inerrancy of the Bible. Kim Chae-Choon tried to confront and fight the conservatives as he had a disregard for them.

As mentioned-above, Kim tolerated both extremes of the two theologies freely on the basis of higher criticism and called himself “a liberal-conservative” (Kim 1973:33 in Yim 1995:47). Park Hyung-Nong stubbornly opposed the liberal activities of Kim Chae-Choon within *Shinhak Jinam* and it resulted in him being ousted from his post. It meant a skirmish of two parties: Conservatives vs. Liberals

4.4.2.3. The Conflicts between the Conservatives and the Liberals

The reasons of the spread of liberal theology mentioned in Korea Conn (1997:53-68) refers to three things.

Firstly, the beginning of liberal theology was from early foreign missionaries. Hunt, who came to Korea from P. C. U. S. A. in 1887, referred that there were at least one of the missionaries among them who did not believe in the Inerrancy of the Bible (Galbraith 1952:153 in Conn 1997:53). Compared to P. C. U. S. A., the Canadian Presbyterian Mission had a tendency to be liberal. After 1925, when the Mission completely passed into the hands of the liberals, many more missionaries that were liberalists worked in Korea. Representatively, there were William Scott as the chairperson of the Mission, Kim Kwan-Sik and Jo Hui-Yem, who finished their studies in America and who took part in the educational institute with liberal theology.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Before 1925, many conservative missionaries played an important role in Korea like Grierson,



Second, Comity Arrangements of 1893 played an important role in spreading liberalism within the Korean Presbyterian Church. The principles between the Methodist Mission and the Presbyterian Mission turned many Presbyterians into Methodists, who were under liberal theology at the beginning of the mission, because Presbyterians in the area controlled by the Methodist Mission had to go to the Methodist Church.

Thirdly, conservative Koreans and missionaries also contributed to the spread of liberal theology in Korea. This was because, although they are while privately conservative, they had tolerance of educational activity of liberalism in religious circles. For instance, Namgung Hyek, who became the first Korean professor at Pyungyang Theological Seminary in 1927, introduced Kim Chae-Choon to the Seminary.

Despite the signs outlined above, a full-scale collision between the two opposing parties was vividly expressed by Park Hyung-Nong and Kim Chae-Choon. As an active participant and regular writer of *Shinhak Jinam* from 1933 to 1935, Kim Chae-Choon wrote several articles in which much of liberalism was included.¹¹⁰ Kim Chae-Choon confessed after coming back to Korea;

I came back to Korea as thirty-two years old. I felt that the Church as well as the society were being attacked by an oppressive blockade and indigestion.... The feeling made me provide the wider spread of vision to the new generation, which made them grow up along with the global trends of theology. I would pursue this focus as the purpose of my works. I just felt the need to make a breathe hole in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, canned by orthodoxy... (Kim 1963:22-24).

McCrae, Foote, Young and Robb within the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. For the details, see Brown (1919:540), Jeon (1955:82) and Kim (:185-188).

¹¹⁰ For instance, ‘the Immortal View of the Soul shown by the Book of Job (*S. J.* 1933, 69, 31-36), The Inner Life of Jeremiah in terms of the biographical point of view (*S. J.* 1933, 71, 43-51), The Life of Amos and His Prophecy (*S. J.* 1933, 72, 43-47), The Study on “Immanuel” Prophecy of Isaiah (*S. J.* 1934, 73, 32-38), The Bookman Movement and its Critique (*S. J.* 1935, 79, 44-58), The Study on the Resurrection of Christ (*S. J.* 1935, 80, 44-58) and The Respectable End (*S. J.* 1935, 81, 49-53)’. The full references of the above articles are in the bibliography of the thesis.



Even though the early thoughts of Kin Chae-Choon were not as liberal as those of the western liberal theologians, his attitudes dealing with theology, and not the contents of his theology itself, were regarded as liberal in the conservative outlook of Korea. For instance, Kim Chae-Choon (The Study on “Immanuel” Prophecy of Isaiah. *S. J.* 1934:32-38) wrote the following concerning the Resurrection of Christ;

The Resurrected Body of Christ is the glorified, spiritualized, eternal body, which, at the same time, exactly corresponds with His spiritual life, as well as not losing even an attribution of a completely bodily being.

Even though he followed the conservative and traditional point of view like the above-mentioned shows, he treated it differently when writing. Kim Chae-Choon (1934, 16:32-38) commented on Isaiah 7:14 that the original intent of Isaiah was not to refer to Jesus Christ but to the “Ideal King” through this verse. A fellow writer of the New Testament had put it there. Also, the Hebrew “Alma”, which was translated into virgin, interpreted “a young woman”. Kim (1971:189) classified Kim Chae-choon’s theology as neo-orthodoxy rather than liberalism.

While the influence of liberalism was limited for only a few people at those times, several troubles between conservative and liberal parties began to spread all over the country. The General Assembly of 1934 dealt with the intense issues of women’s rights within the church and the authorship of Genesis. The former originated from the article of Rev. Kim Chun-Bae, which reported in a *Kidok Shinbo* (Christians Messengers Newspaper) in the name of “A Writing sent to General Assembly of Presbyterianism”. He interpreted that the meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34 (Women should remain silent in the churches, NIV) as only a lesson and custom of a church in the country two thousand years ago and not the eternal truth. The latter originated from Rev. Kim Young-Ju, who was under indictment because of contradiction of Moses’ authorship of Genesis. The General Assembly of 1934 chose an investigation committee in order to examine and report on these two cases. Park Hyung-Nong was the leader of the committee. In 1935, the report of the committee was passed by unanimous vote as follows. As for the pastor who contradicted Moses’ authorship of Genesis, ‘Owing to the pastor who violated the Creed of our church, the first Article, it is right to refuse him to be a religious worker of



our church' (Park 1964:10).¹¹¹ Also, on womens' participation in the church's affairs,

Despite the Bible not allowing the educational authority of women, to interpret the Bible freely in order to go with the current of the times, raising the women's rights movement, it means that the mentality of the movement is nothing else but a destructive critical attitude of the Bible... If anyone is found to do so, the Synod will deal with him in terms of Chapter 6 Article 43 of *Kwenging Jorye* (the book of disciplinary regulation) (Kim :179-185).

Besides these, the twenty-fourth General Assembly of 1935 disciplined a few Presbyterian pastors¹¹² who got involved in the translation of the *Abingdon Commentary*, which based on liberalism, was translated and published by the Methodist commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the mission. Park Hyung-Nong commented the Commentary in the following way;

The book translated the Bible in terms of the principle of higher criticism. The history of revelation was considered by a preconceived idea, called the evolutionary theory of religion. Therefore, it doubted or contradicted traditional writers and dates of each book of the Scriptures and pointed out revision of posterity at every turn. It emphasized that there were changes in the view of God in the Bible, and the revelation of the Bible was not from miracles but from human experience.... Furthermore, it contradicted the Virgin Birth of Christ and doubted the Deity of Christ. Jesus instructed wrongly on historical facts and authors of some books of the Old Testament because of a limited knowledge. His consciousness of the Messiah was formed at the very time of Peter's Confession of Belief in the

¹¹¹ Art. I. The Scripture of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, yet the only infallible rule of faith and duty. See appendix. 3.

¹¹² Representatively, Chae Phil-Geun and Song Chang-Geun were involved as translators of the Commentary. Afterward, Rev. Chae obeyed the admonition of General Assembly, but did not forsake liberal theology. Rev. Song resisted to the bitter end that, despite that the Commentary was not against the Christian doctrines, the General Assembly curbed freedom of theology (Conn 1997:82-83).



region of Caesarea Philippi.... The book contradicted the bodily Resurrection of Jesus and stressed that its concept was first from the revelation literature of the Jews. In addition, the book insisted that Heaven is not corporeal thing but only good life of privates and God's rule of society. Besides these, the liberal statements, which were opposed to the orthodox church, were found without limit (Park 1964:9).

Furthermore, the General Assembly concentrated on other efforts to halt the advance of the liberals, which played an active part in the writings of those times. When *Kidok Shinbo* (Christian Messengers Newspaper), which was published by the Christian Literature Society of Korea in Seoul, became hotbeds of liberal writings. Rev. Jeon Phil-Sun, a Presbyterian liberalist and publisher of the newspaper, was taken in sanction by the Assembly. Besides this, the Positive Faith Society, which was organized by Shin Heung-u in 1934, was active in the publishing of liberal writings. The Assembly strongly censured the organization, which tried to raise the funds from America to publish liberal books.

However, a series of measures like the above did not fill up the crack between the two parties. On the contrary, the gap between two different parties grew more and more with the process of time. As for actual application of theology like Japanese Shrine worship, the two parties went in opposite directions. After that, the two parties were the direct source of division of the church and polarization of theology in Korea (Kim 1992:201).

4.5. Conclusion

The course, which Korean society took under the Japanese rule from 1919 through to 1945, was full of trials and tribulations. The March First Movement was a national struggle for liberation against such a suppressed history. This took up a non-violent character from the beginning to the end. The Korean Church played an important role in the Movement from the outset. Church organizations, scattered on a national scale, served a infrastructure to the Movement. Judging from this, Christianity developed as a national religion.



In the meantime, the Korean Presbyterian Church, after it had experienced the great revivals early in the 1900s, encountered two big enemies internally and externally in this period. One was Japanese Shrine worship and another was the spread of liberalism. The approval of the General Assembly in 1938 on the issue of the former was the apostasy of Christianity. The different solid views between the conservative and the liberal on the issue of Shrine worship made way for a depolarization of theology. However, even in the heat of apostasy, a small number of Puritanical Christian leaders kept their faith while bearing hardship and martyrdom.

Their faith was greatly praised even within the public society as well as in religious circles after liberation from Japan. In addition, ex post facto measures of apostasy were one of the most sensitive issues in the new period. It came in sight with the spilt and conflict within religious circles. The Korean Church was confronted by such new times. The next chapter shall open insight into this.