

40th Peace Forum: seeking a North Korean human rights policy for a Heavenly Unified Korea

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The 40th Peace Forum on the Heavenly Unified Korea, hosted by the International Headquarters of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification and organized by the Think Tank 2022 Institute for Policy Studies



Um Yunhyeong, Director and moderator of the Heavenly Unified Korea Peace Forum, said in his opening remarks, "Human rights are universal rights or values recognized by all human beings. The two Chinese characters in the word "ingwon" or human rights, express that all people are guaranteed the chance for life and safety, to enjoy freedom, acknowledge each other's individuality and differences, and participate in society for a peaceful and happy life. Just as oxygen in the atmosphere, which is invisible to our eyes, enables us to live, human rights allow us to live a life that is worthy. For that reason, human rights should not be monopolized, undermined, or suppressed by anyone." Jin Seong-bae, chairman of the Hyojeong World Peace Foundation, said in the General Lecture on Heavenly Unified Korea, "Peaceful unification can be understood according to the essentialism of peace and of Godism."



Yoon Yeo-sang, director of the North Korean Human Rights Information Center, in the first special lecture, "Proposal of a North Korean Human Rights Policy to the Yoon Seok-yeol Government," proposed a paradigm shift on specific human rights policies in North Korea and ways to reorganize and normalize North Korea's human rights policies and institutions. Director Yoon said, "Above all, it is important to adhere to universality, consistency, and non-political human rights policies without regard to regime change. Regarding the actions of the North Korean authorities, it is necessary to maintain a principled attitude in solidarity with the international community regarding behaviors on the part of the North Korean authorities that go

against universal human rights values such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression." and went on to say, "Reorganization and normalization of North Korean human rights policies and institutions are urgently needed." In particular, in order to improve the effectiveness of human rights improvement in North Korea, he proposed specific policies such as A North Korean Residents Repatriation Review Committee A Repatriation Committee for Detained Nationals and A North Korean Human Rights Memorial Hall.



Han Bong-hee, director of the "Live to 100" Korean medicine clinic, who gave the second special lecture, studied oriental medicine while in the process of settling down in South Korea. His story can be found in a book about the process of his entire family's escape from North Korea, with the title "Journey to Freedom and Human Rights: My Family's Escape from North Korea." Through various activities, such as becoming an oriental medicine doctor and participating in international conferences on human rights and refugees in North Korea, he has spoken in detail about the reality of human rights in North Korea.

In particular, he shared the story of a North Korean who was imprisoned in a political prison camp for criticizing the agricultural policy of the North Korean authorities while working on a farm in Anbyun County, Gangwon-do in 1985, illustrating the reality of human rights in North Korea. Director Han passed on a sentiment learned from a visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp, "It is better to light a candle than to complain about the darkness" and proposed, "Let's light the candle of freedom and human rights!" He also introduced Dr. Suzanne Scholte's "Activities to Improve Human Rights in North Korea" and emphasized, "Human rights are the basic values of all humankind beyond nationality, skin color and political understanding, and a human dignity that everyone on the planet should protect together."

Secretary General Cho Hyung-guk (Think Tank 2022 Policy Research Institute) moderated the Peace Madang (Peace Discussion Session) with Moon Byung-chul, director of THINK TANK 2022 Policy Research Institute, and Kakudani Yoko, director of the Gangwon branch of the Multicultural Welfare Center. They discussed the direction and tasks of North Korean human rights policy, peace, and a heavenly unified Korea, and discussed in depth ways to raise North Korean human rights issues and cooperate with the international community in today's situation on the Korean Peninsula.

After that, they had time to revisit the entire content of the day through a Q and A session with field participants and responses from presenters. The Peace Forum on a Heavenly Unified Korea is a forum where leaders from various fields including politics, economy, religion, diplomacy, security, culture, media, and academia, gather to share their views on the future path toward the realization of peace on the Korean Peninsula and a heavenly unified Korea.