

Religious Pluralism of Korea Today

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1. Characteristics of the Multi-religious Situation in Korea

Historically, the Korean mind has been represented in various religions. That is, the main stream of Korean religion has shifted from time to time. This is why modern Korean religion consist of diverse forms, such as native Shamanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and new religions.

According to the Population Census released in 1995 by the Korea National Statistics Office,¹ there are about 10,320,000 Buddhists, 8,760,000 Protestants, 2,950,000 Catholics and only 210,000 Confucianists in Korea. 50.7% of the Korean population consider themselves to be religious.

Koreans are indeed religious, but more significantly, various religions have coexisted together in an uneasy tension in Korea. A particularly interesting characteristic of Korea's multi-religious

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1 This Population Census has been acknowledged as the most credible religious population survey because it has the most recent statistics based upon the total number of the population

tradition is that Buddhism, Christianity and Confucianism have all maintained a considerable influence on Korean society at the same time. India, China, Japan, and the United States are often considered to be multi-religious, yet further investigation reveals that Hinduism still controls India, Communism hinders religious activities in China, and Shinto and Buddhism are the dominant religions in Japan. Furthermore, the multi-religious situation in the United States, which has instigated theoretical debate recently, is strongly founded on Judeo-Christian traditions. Strictly speaking, the conflict between Presbyterians, Methodists or Catholics in the United States is more a matter of discord between denominations rather than full-blown inter-religious conflicts. Thus, it is clear that the religious situation in the United States, India and Japan is quite different from that of Korea's unprecedented religious pluralism, which encompasses both Eastern and Western religious traditions without one particular religion taking precedence over another.

Of course, Korea's unusual form of religious pluralism often produces tricky situations that would be unimaginable in other countries. Nevertheless, such pluralism serves as a positive social force, as Korean society displays a dynamism that has enabled the adoption of various religious cultures, both Eastern and Western. As the number of countries that are facing multi-religious situations steadily increases, Korea's religious pluralism can be seen as a potential model for a future multi-religious global society. In other words, the current study of Korea's religious situation may help reveal various possibilities for the future spiritual welfare of the world.

Naturally, religious pluralism can cause a number of difficulties for

any society. The presence of various conflicting systems of absolute belief can bring chaos to social values and standards, which, in turn, could lead to social instability. Given the severity of such potential dangers, it is necessary to consider carefully the dynamics of religious pluralism.

Multi-religious Korean society, which has recently seen sharpening conflicts between religious groups, provides an excellent case for the study of religious pluralism. Thus, the Korean situation should be thoroughly investigated and specific methods for overcoming religious conflict must be considered. This paper seeks to reevaluate the logic of harmony and coexistence developed among the different religions in Korea. Our concern is to examine the underlying attitudes of the different religions towards each other in Korea. We will also consider how Korean religious groups have responded to social change and how the logic of Korean religious pluralism has helped form a unique cultural milieu.

2. Traditional Attitudes of Korean Religions toward Other Religions

First, one could imagine possible conflicts between native Shamanism (*Musok*)² as a folk religion and Confucianism as a state

2 It is still very controversial whether Shamanism is truly the first form of religion that reflected Korean people's religious mind. It is because this relates to the degree of influence Korean Shamanism received from Siberian Shamanism. Generally speaking, missionaries or foreign scholars tend to understand Korean Shamanism as an extension of Siberian Shamanism; however, Korean scholars have always stressed the originality of Korean Shamanism.

cult (and even folk Taoism as the pursuit of longevity), which came to Korea with the influx of the Chinese writing system. But there is very little historical evidence to support such a conjecture. In fact, the first religious conflict in Korea is generally thought to have been between Korean Shamanism and Buddhism, which was introduced to Korea around the 4th century by way of China.

The records of persecution and martyrdom in the 6th century demonstrate the initial difficulties Buddhism had in Korea. Nevertheless, Buddhism adapted, prospered in Korea, and eventually overwhelmed Korean Shamanism. It could be said that over time the relationship between Buddhism and Shamanism changed from one of conflict to one of assimilation or coexistence. This change was, of course, not confined to the fields of scholarly religious doctrines. For instance, the original popular tradition of performing religious services for the heavenly god and the war dead became transformed into the Buddhist *Palgwanhoe* (National Festival of Eight Vows)

Considering this and similar examples, the spirituality of Koreans is often characterized as a harmony of various forms of belief. It is said that Korean Buddhism contains a harmonization of doctrinal teachings and mediation practices, while at the same time maintaining a mixture of Shamanist and Taoist elements. Even today the mixture of Buddhism and Korean indigenous religions can be seen in the widespread Buddhist belief in the folk mountain spirits and the dragon god. In urban areas, one can often find shamans using the Buddhist emblem (卍) in temples. Similarly, Buddhists have accepted shamans in the training programs of Buddhist seminaries and Buddhist colleges for laymen. All of these examples show the tradition of harmony between Buddhism and Shamanism

When it was first introduced to Korea, Buddhism came into conflict not only with Shamanism but also with Taoism and Confucianism. A politician in the 7th century gave a metaphorically rich speech to the king to advocate Taoism. "Just as a cauldron has three legs, a nation should have three religions. Yet our country has only Confucianism and Buddhism but no Taoism. Thus it is in danger." By looking at this statement we can see the rivalry between the newly transmitted Buddhism and Taoism, while at the same time we notice the underlying logic of the harmonious coexistence of religions. First, this underlying logic might appear to derive from the loose organizational characteristics of Taoism in Korea. However, it is more important that Buddhism already acculturated in China tended to be open to Taoist rituals and symbolism. In Buddhist temples, one finds buildings - such as *Chilseonggak*, where lay people pray for successful pregnancies, and *Myeongbujeon*, where the memory of deceased persons' souls are cherished - which contain Shamanist and Taoist elements.

The severest religious conflict in traditional Korea was the fight between Confucianism and Buddhism in the 14th century, when the Chosun dynasty was newly established with Confucianism as the ruling ideology. Confucianism, which was introduced to Korea prior to Buddhism but had lost influence, started attacking and systematically criticizing Buddhism. Confucianists blamed Buddhists for being corrupt and not fulfilling their duty of filial piety, and they criticized Buddhists for focusing too much on otherworldly views. Confucianists also argued that Buddhism was a religion foreign to Korea and that Buddhists ignored moral codes and advocated a false idea of retributive justice in the universe. Furthermore, Buddhist monks were criticized for consuming resources while not performing

any agricultural labor or military service. As the anti-Buddhist movement gradually gained support, Buddhism itself made efforts to incorporate Confucianist humanistic morals into the Buddhist value system and demonstrate the compatibility of Confucianism and Buddhism. Buddhists also emphasized the congeniality of Buddhism and Confucianism by translating the Confucianist idea of the unity of heaven and man into Buddhist terminology. As such, it was asserted that Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism had developed separately into different forms but that they would all converge into one ultimate truth. This is, in a sense, the logic of the weak to survive the attack of the stronger. From the standpoint of Confucianism, Buddhism could no longer be a competitor for institutional power. In other words, the conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism, which was thought to be irreconcilable, started laying the logical foundation for the coexistence and harmony of the different religions.

Furthermore, after the 18th century, the strong influence of Catholicism, which came with the influx of Western culture, gave Confucianism and Buddhism an opportunity to bond together against a common foe. As traditional religions of Korea, Confucianism and Buddhism were almost able to overcome their differences, and Buddhism was no longer a formidable rival of Confucianism, since Confucianism had firmly established its position as the national ideology. Actually there has not been much conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism since modern times and this trend continues until today. Catholicism that is fundamentally different from the traditional religions of Korea, instead, has confronted Confucianism. The partnership between Confucianism and Buddhism under the rubric of tradition developed while both of these religions

attempted to cope with the invasion of heterogeneous Western religious culture.

It is interesting to note that the introduction of Catholicism in Korea is often said to be quite particular. Namely, in Korea, unlike in China and Japan, Western priests did not directly introduce Catholicism, instead, Koreans themselves imported the religion from China. This indicates that when Catholicism was first introduced there must have been less shock in Korea than in China and Japan. Nevertheless, there were still many difficulties in the 'indigenization' of Catholicism in Korea. After the Japanese Invasion of Korea in 16th century, there were Confucianists who showed an interest in (and even some who worshipped) Western scientific technologies that accompanied Catholicism. However, anti-Catholicism developed as Catholicism gradually revealed its conflict with the established Confucian order.

The early Confucian criticism of Catholicism focused upon Catholic doctrines from a scholarly viewpoint; there was little persecution of concrete religious practices. However, the Catholic/Confucian conflict deepened when Catholicism moved beyond underground activities and came into collision more directly with traditional norms. It can be epitomized by an incident in the late 18th century, when a Catholic in Korea did not follow the Confucian way of memorial service for his mother's death. Another relative of this Korean Catholic burned his ancestral tablet and eventually abolished religious services. When the public knew this incident, it became a controversial social issue. The Beijing Church had previously notified Korean Catholics that appointing a Catholic priest on their own and performing religious services were not legitimate. They were also told

that performing traditional religious services for ancestors was superstitious and should be forbidden. Thus, it was inevitable that the Catholic faith became a social and political issue in Korea. Catholics were continually persecuted and many of them became martyrs. It was only after the official opening of Korean ports to foreigners that Koreans were able to distinguish between Catholicism as a religion and Catholicism as a part of Western political and military power.

Despite the problems, there were quite a few opportunities to establish a harmonious relationship between Confucianism and Catholicism in Korea. Since Catholicism was introduced by way of China, Korean Catholics referred to God as "*Cheonju*" (the Heavenly Lord) or "*Sangje*" (the Supreme Ruler), Confucian terms that appeared in the Chinese Bible. In addition, Catholic doctrinal contents were absorbed on the basis of a Confucian ritual framework. This can be understood in reference to Matteo Ricci's attempt to assimilate Christianity to China by dressing in a Confucian style and having his hair grown like a Confucianist. In fact, this Confucian attempt to 'indigenize' Catholicism continued in the studies of Confucianism by Korean Protestant scholars after 1970. Not all of these efforts were successful, as many conservative Christians sharply criticized other Christians who dressed in Confucian garb or other traditional clothes.

Nevertheless, Early Morning Prayer meetings and fervent Holy Spirit theology in Korean Christianity cannot be seen in western Christian countries and they are thought to have been influenced by morning meditations of traditional religions and Shamanist ecstatic beliefs. Catholicism has also changed in terms of its attitude toward other religions since the second Vatican Council of 1962 - 1965.

Recently, a new methodological suggestion of a ministry project for the improved indigenization of the Catholic Church in Korea shows that there is increasing support for the idea that grace does not destroy nature but completely fulfills it. This idea can be seen as a continuation of Matteo Ricci's missionary tradition. It is also significant that the Pope quoted a passage from Confucius' *Analects* during a speech he gave on the occasion of his visit to Korea in 1984

On the other hand, Catholics seemingly had conflicts with new folk religions like Eastern Learning. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that Eastern Learning's doctrine and organization borrowed much from Catholicism.

3. Contemporary Relationships between Korean Religions

After the Liberation from the Japanese colonial regime in 1945, the new constitution codified the freedom of religion and the principle of separation between church and state in Korea. This meant the actual institutionalization of religious pluralism in Korean society, as conflicts among religions began to be considered in terms of institutional aspects from then on. Since there is no longer an Established Religion and the problems of heresy cannot be raised, inter-religious conflicts become problems of organizational collision rather than doctrinal or ritual conflicts.

Meanwhile, Buddhism and other traditional religions gradually worked to modernize their organizations. They were attempting to

redraw the religious power map in the era after the Liberation when Christians dominated the religious landscape. There was a reevaluation of Shamanism, which had been ostracized for being superstitious during the Japanese colonial era. It is true that hostility against Shamanism still remains today. A Shaman who prays at *Mt. Samgak* near Seoul says that she is more afraid of fanatic shaman-persecuting Protestants than gods or spirits. There are also Protestants who cut off the heads of traditional Korean 'totem' poles (*Jangseung*), which have long been the symbols of tutelary deities in towns. Nevertheless, Korean Shamanism is increasingly considered to be an important and basic part of the spirituality of Korean people.

New religions that have their roots in Korean folk traditions have also been in conflict with fanatic Protestantism, while they are on relatively good terms with Catholicism which has adopted a policy of tolerance towards other religions. This conflict is best exemplified in the debate on the construction of the *Tangun* (the legendary founder of Korea) sanctuary in the 1980s. Statements were issued from both new folk religions, which supported such construction, and Protestant groups, which disfavored worshiping *Tangun* as an ancestor. The issue of statements caused a great social controversy. A Korean Gallup poll showed that 67% of the population approved of the construction of *Tangun* sanctuaries and 75% supported the worship of *Tangun* as an ancestor.

But more than any other religion, Buddhism takes the main position among Korea's traditional religions. Of course, Buddhism still is limited in its rejuvenation of lay Buddhist religious life, since for many years, its practice was restricted to remote mountain temples. It was not until the Japanese colonial era that the Buddhist monks were

allowed to have access to the capital city. Prior to this, Buddhism had been under strict Confucian control. However, active Buddhist missionary work in urban areas has helped increase the actual influence of Buddhism in Korea. Buddhism has gone beyond its historical domain and gained enough influence to speak up in contemporary Korea to the extent that it has become impossible for Protestantism to pursue missionary work without taking Buddhism into consideration. The need for institutional communication between Buddhism and Christianity has become an urgent issue nowadays. The leaders of Buddhism and Christianity have often called joint meetings and issued proclamations against religious slander and aggressive propagandism.

It is noteworthy that conflicts among religions became aggravated after Korea's 1945 Liberation. That is, it became impossible for any religion to evade the circle of conflicts. It is historically true that Koreans have learned to live in a society where multiple religions coexist together. And religious conflicts are not a chronic phenomenon in Korean society, thanks to the prevalence of religious pluralism that has been institutionalized in Korea since Liberation. Nevertheless, the bigger religious groups grow, the more serious their problems of organizational collision become today. In this context, Korea's various religions still must continue to learn the logic of coexistence and produce their own pluralistic perspectives in order to survive in Korea's complex of multiple religions.

In other words, religious groups have started taking the initiative in solving inter-religious conflicts. Above all, Christian groups have tried to overcome their serious sectarian breakups and have made great strides toward unity with the so-called ecumenical movement.

Inspired by international religious events held by Christian groups, Buddhist groups also held an international assembly under the slogan, "One World" in 1970. International exchanges began with Japanese and Western Buddhist scholars in the 1980s.

To combat the rapid growth of Christianity, traditional religions, including Buddhism, *Won* Buddhism, Confucianism, and *Cheondogyo* (The Religion of the Heavenly Way), formed a union under the title of 'Young Men's Association for Folk Religions' (*Minjokjonggyocheongmyeonhoe*). The union of folk religions became quite active especially after the *Tangun* sanctuary controversy. In 1985, *Cheondogyo*, *Jeungsangyo* and 33 other small folk religions came together to form a similar union and sponsored activities together. Since the 1960s, not only have there been serious communications between several religious groups, but also there have been sincere efforts to commence inter-religious dialogues. In response to the prevailing trend toward secularization, religious leaders, after the late sixties, gathered together to achieve a new goal with the motto, "Truth is one, let's fulfill our mission with a unified campaign." There are a number of organizations working towards this new goal. Above all, the Korean Association for the History of Religions (*Hangukjonggyohakhoe*), an association composed mainly of scholars, and the Association of Religion in Korea (*Hangukjonggyohyeopuihoe*), a body run by the religious leaders, are two major organizations both founded in 1970.

Starting in the 1980s, the Korean Association for the History of Religions has been much more active and has sponsored regular conferences that have encouraged academic exchange between scholars of various religions. Founded by religious leaders, the Association of Religion in Korea encourages the development of inter-religious

cooperation and sponsors various social projects. In addition, religious festivals have been held by college students to go beyond the religious differences. Furthermore, students who major in religion at several universities have sponsored conferences in an attempt to "overcome the wall between religions." The most popular topic at these conferences is: "Is it possible to presuppose one world for multiple religions?"

4. Multi-religious Reactions to Social Change

After the 1970s, with the rapid organizational growth of religions, the multi-religious situation in Korea became a more complicated issue. As religious organizations gained power, they used their organizational apparatuses to influence Korean society in various ways. For example, Buddhists successfully lobbied the government to have Buddha's birthday recognized as a national holiday. Catholics invited the Pope to address the painful past of anti-Christian persecution. Protestants were able to gather millions of supporters together for a revival service at a plaza in Seoul without any propaganda of which to speak. In March 1984, the *New York Times* noted that Christianity in Korea had doubled in size during the past 10 years and would double again in the next 10 years. According to the Population Censuses of 1985 and 1995, the number of Catholics increased by 58% while the number of Protestants increased by 35% during this 10-year period. Currently, there are over 42,000 Christian churches and more than 12,000 Buddhist temples in Korea. It goes without saying that the *Yoyuido* Full Gospel Church in Seoul is still the biggest Christian church in the world and the *Yongnak* Church

and the *Kwangnim* Church are among the world's largest churches in the Presbyterian and the Methodist denominations, respectively

Today's new logic of coexistence among the Korean religions is characterized by concrete patterns of cooperation based on the religious groups' organizational power. In other words, communication is not only pursued through doctrinal dialogues, but the mutual cooperation of religions is also demonstrated both in social life and in providing solutions for specific secular matters. In fact, the most crucial characteristic of joint effort made by today's Korean religions tends to clarify a secular goal. We should also note that working partnerships between religions couldn't be efficient without such a goal. These goals might be better achieved if religions put their absolute doctrines aside and devote themselves to actually solving problems.

The secular goals Korean religions have pursued are truly diverse. The March 1st Independence Movement of 1919 is probably the most important production of inter-religious cooperation in modern Korean history. The Movement became a Korean prototype of inter-religious cooperation, showing the potential for religious groups in overcoming of inter-religious barriers to save the nation from a crisis. Long after the Liberation from Japan, religious groups that took part in the March 1st Movement continue to sponsor events on March 1st Memorial Day. Diverse religious groups also actively participated in the fund raising campaign for the construction of the Independence Hall in the 1980s. There was no reason to distinguish between religious groups for events related to the struggle against Japanese colonialism. In addition, the anti-communist movements and the North/South Korean unification movements are other secular goals

that have served to bond Korean religions. Immediately after the 1945 Liberation, joint religious unions were formed to focus on unification issues, and this tradition continues in the recent communications between religious leaders of North and South Korea

At times the secular goals of religious organizations in Korea have been too political. For instance, the Association of Religion in Korea made a declaration "welcoming the extraordinary step" of the dictatorial government in the 1970s. Other religious leaders joined hands to support the political struggles for democratization. Some religious leaders even gathered during elections to declare their own political positions. Accordingly, there has been controversy in Korea regarding the level and intensity of political involvement of religious organizations. Questions have also been raised concerning the Korean government's involvement in religious matters. Therefore, it is important to note the centrality of political issues to inter-religious cooperation.

In the trend toward globalization, peace must be another consequential theme for cooperation between religions. Especially after the 1980s, inter-religious meetings calling for world peace have been frequently held in Korea. Such meetings emphasize cooperation between different religious groups and overcoming religious conflicts as a starting point for the ultimate goal of world peace.

The recent efforts for cooperation among Korean religions have focused on various social issues. In 1993, the "Declaration of Environment Ethics", which was supported by 6 major religious leaders including those in Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Confucianism, *Won* Buddhism and Cheodogyo., emphasized the importance of spirituality instead of obsessive materialism. These

religious leaders also stressed the need for harmony with nature, the importance of thinking globally and considering the future of humanity. This declaration helped unite various religious environmental campaigns of the past and called for a national environmental movement for the future.

Through conferences and mass communications, many religious groups have succeeded in their joint efforts to support women's rights. Christianity, Buddhism, and *Won* Buddhism have all supported diverse campaigns reinterpreting the image of women in a patriarchal society, movements against sexism as well as campaigns against prostitution, etc. It is said that Korean women's religious campaigns were able to enter a new phase of cooperation by expanding into the international arena. In 1996, the International Association of Liberal Religious Women sponsored a meeting at a *Won* Buddhist training center in Korea.

Many religious groups organized joint efforts during Korea's economic depression, as Korean religions cooperated with each other to support campaigns for economic recovery and growth. Most religions participated in campaigns encouraging the use of homemade articles, and Buddhists, Protestants and Catholics took part in the national Gold Gathering campaign to raise money to pay back foreign loans. Religious groups also cooperated with each other in a voluntary effort to relieve poverty and address the needs of the homeless, orphans, the disabled, and the elderly.

5. Daily Ritual Dimension of a Multi-religious Culture

The harmonious aspects of Korean religions can be easily found in

daily lives of Koreans. G. H. Jones (1867-1919), a Methodist missionary who came to Korea in the early 20th century, noted that "(W)hile theoretically the Korean recognizes the separate character of the three cults of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shamanism, practically they lie in his mind as a confused, undigested mass of teaching and belief, hopelessly intermixed and chaotic. He believes in all three. He personally takes his own education from Confucius; he sends his wife to Buddha to pray for offspring, and in the ills of life he willingly pays toll to Shamanite *Mu-dang* and *Pansu*. The average Korean is thus a follower of all three systems, in the hope that by their united help he may reach a happy destiny."³ It was too natural for Koreans themselves to notice the uniqueness that was handed down by tradition. Jones, as a foreigner to Korea, was able to spot the "overlapped" and "interpenetrated" aspects of various religious traditions in the daily lives of Koreans.

Another missionary, H. B. Hulbert (1863-1949), reported similar findings "...in every Korean mind there is a jumble of the whole; that there is no antagonism between the different cults, no matter how they may logically refute each other, but that they have all been shaken down together through the centuries until they form a sort of religious composite, from which each man selects his favorite ingredients without ever ignoring the rest. As a general thing, we may say that the all-round Korean will be a Confucianist when in society, a Buddhist when he philosophizes and a spirit-worshipper when he is in trouble... the underlying religion of the Korean, the

3 Jones, G H, "The Spirit Worship of Koreans," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1901) 39

foundation upon which all else is mere superstructure, is his original spirit worship."⁴ This aspect continues in the lives of Koreans today. Koreans have been able to harmonize their multi-religious cultures in their individual lives as well as in larger social terms.

It is useful to consider a few specific examples in Korean daily life. In Korea, both Buddha's birthday and Christmas are national holidays. Buddhists may send Merry Christmas messages and Christians send wreaths for celebration on Buddha's birthday. Moreover, although Confucius' birthday has not been designated a national holiday, Confucianism is widely acknowledged as an important part of the multi-religious culture of Korea. For instance, most Koreans perform Confucian memorial services for their ancestors

National events and celebrations often include three ceremonies. Usually Catholic, Protestant, and Buddhist ceremonies are all performed. In Korea, (as is the case with the national funeral service) one may die once physically, but three times through religious ceremonies. Often multiple religious funeral ceremonies are held simultaneously to accord with the different religions of the various family members. This multi-religious culture can also be seen in the religious life in the military and religious activities held in prison.

It is also natural that a multi-religious environment can still lead to conflict. It has been reported that Christians discriminated against Buddhists in the military. There have also been controversies about parochial schools' strict enforcement of religious education. In

4. Hulbert, H B, *The Passing of Korea*, Seoul Yonsei University, 1969, (Originally, New York, 1906), pp 403f.

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cremated, but almost all Christians are buried in the ground. Nevertheless both Catholics and Protestants have supported the cremation campaign. The campaign seems to be proving the potential power of multi-religious culture in Korea today

6. Prospects of Religious Pluralism in Korea

The ultimate aim of this paper is to explain the religious pluralism of Korea today and to seek the logic of religious coexistence that has overcome inter-religious conflicts in Korea. I have focused on investigating the history and analyzing the recent trends of Korea's religious climate. The current issues surrounding Korean religions actually have deep roots in the Korean historical context. Teachings of coexistence and cooperation between religions are first found in the history of Korea itself rather than elsewhere. The current inter-religious efforts and cooperation in Korea are an inheritance of dialogues between particular religions, as well as universal inter-religious dialogues and academic discourse.

It is important to note that cooperation among religious groups is much more successful when there is a clear secular goal. It is easy to recognize the importance of joint efforts among Korean religions in the realms of nationalism, democracy and peace, and social campaign.

The significance of religio-pluralistic and layered culture in the individual lives of Koreans is immense. Indeed, Korean multi-religious culture is deeply reflected in the daily lives and rituals of Koreans. Of course, the multi-religious situation still brings a lot of troublesome conflicts. Yet, it is through these religious conflicts that Koreans rediscover the creative potentials of their culture. If it were

not for such recurrent conflicts between religions today, Koreans might lose their valuable spiritual heritages derived from the diverse religious traditions. Even in the future, Koreans will continue to regard the complementary harmony of their dynamic multi-religious situation as a precious national heritage and true spiritual resource.

<Abstract>

Religious Pluralism of Korea Today

Kim Chong-suh

In this article, the author presents a comprehensive survey of inter-religious issues in contemporary Korea, including an analysis of current conflicting phases between religions and the logic of religious coexistence that has overcome inter-religious conflicts.

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