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The Importance Of Mount Jiri Mission Site Conservation In South Korea

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Abstract

An aging Christian missionary village has been located on the high peak of Mt. Jiri, which is a famous national park in South Korea and is loved by many hikers. The buildings used by the missionaries at this site extend across Nogodan (the old altar area used for ancestral rites) and Wangshirubong (a very high mountain peak). Almost all of the Nogodan buildings have been destroyed, and only twelve of the Wangsirubong buildings remain. In the early to late mid-twentieth century, these buildings were a space for Protestant missionaries in Korea to recharge while avoiding endemic diseases, such as malaria and cholera. These historic buildings have been neglected and are severely damaged. The best way to preserve these buildings is to register these sites as cultural assets. This way, they would receive national protection and voluntary support from citizens. However, since religious circles, environmental groups, and some citizens have protested against it, they have not been registered as cultural property. Therefore, this study will analyze this opposing logic more specifically and argue that these sites should be registered as cultural assets, and protected as Korea's historical and cultural heritage as soon as possible.

Keywords: Missionary, Mt. Jiri, national cultural asset, Wangsirubong

1.**Introduction**

Protestant missionary work in Korea began in the late nineteenth century and had a profound influence on Korean society. The missionaries did a thorough job not only in the preaching of the Gospel which was their main missionary work but also in the fields of education and medical care. In the process, the missionaries had to make sacrifices. They suffered from dysentery, malaria, and cholera which were terrible diseases for them as they had not been exposed to them before. Sixty-seven missionaries, including their children, who worked in the Honam (south-western territory of Korea) alone lost their lives. Upon receiving the report of these incidents, the American Southern Presbyterian Church (ASPC) mission headquarters recommended the missionaries return to their home country. However, the missionaries of ASPC decided that they could not give up on Korean missions. Instead of returning to their home country, they chose for their own safety to renew their missionary zeal by resting their tired minds and bodies for a while in the high mountains which were relatively free from

endemic diseases in Korea. The missionary place of “refuge” that they chose was Nogodan (1507m above sea level) at Mt. Jiri, where the Honam and Gyeongsang (south-eastern territory of Korea) meet. In 1920, missionaries from the ASPC began to construct a missionary refuge village in Nogodan. The missionary cabins in this area were reduced to ruins after the Japanese imperialist expulsion of missionaries in 1941, the Korean Civil War (1950-1953), and disasters such as typhoons. In 1962, the ASPC missionaries, beginning with Hugh Linton, (1926-1984) set up a missionary resting camp at Wangsirubong (1243m above sea level) not far from Nogodan and there are currently twelve buildings left (Kim, 2020). However, all these buildings are under threat of collapse due to negligence and typhoons, so quick repair work is urgently needed. The wisest and most worthwhile way to do this work is to register some of the ruined buildings in Nogodan and the twelve remaining cabins in Wangsirubong as national cultural assets of Korea. Although attempts have been made for this registration, it has not been completed so far. This is because some religious circles (especially Buddhists), environmental groups, and certain citizens are campaigning against it. Therefore, this study will investigate their reasons for opposition in detail and show that there is no specific basis for objecting to the registration of the historical Mt. Jiri mission site as national cultural assets. In addition, we will examine the meaning and value of these buildings and why they should be registered as cultural assets. In this study, the missionaries who received physical and spiritual rest in this mission village, education, and medical works will be dealt with very briefly due to space limitations.

2.Reasons for Opposing the Registration of the Mt. Jiri Historical Mission Site as Cultural Asset

2.1 Opposition from religious groups, especially Buddhist circles

The Buddhist community, especially Hwaeom Temple, located at the foot of Mt. Jiri, and the monks working at the temples near Mt. Jiri area, have strongly opposed the registration of missionary cabins in Wangsirubong as Korean cultural assets (Beom, 2015). There are two main reasons for their objection. One is that the cabins damage the natural environment, and the other is that these cabins are "byeoljang," which means "special houses," typically luxurious ones. The concept of “byeoljang” will be explained later in the following section - let us first take a look at their argument concerning damage to the natural environment.

Regarding the missionary village of Wangsirubong in Mt. Jiri, Professor Hohyeon Nam has praised it as a cultural landscape that displays an environment of ecological consolidation through the unity of humans and nature (2018). In other words, the Wangsirubong missionary cabins did not damage the natural environment of Mt. Jiri, but rather, they adopted the traditional Korean spatial arrangement and architectural structure which is in unity with nature. In a similar vein, another scholar has argued that “the philosophy of nature-friendly [Wangsirubong] architecture is considered to be the factor that can define the characteristic such as the use of small and weak wood and irregularly sized stones that can be easily obtained in the vicinity” (Jeon, 2018).

According to the evaluation of these experts, the opposition of Buddhist monks is simply seen as an expression of “collective selfishness” which divides the sides into “your religion, my religion.” What if all Koreans were to insist that Buddhist temples and monasteries on famous mountains be demolished with the pretext of caring about the environment? Buddhists should think carefully about the consequences of this logic. Hwaeom Temple in Gurye county, Bulgap Temple in Yeonggwang county, Baekyang Temple in Jangseong county, Jeungshim and Yaksa Temples in Gwangju city, and Yongcheon Temple in Hampyeong county are all located in or at the foot of mountains in Jeollanam Province. However, Christians do not advocate for the removal of these temples or oppose their renovation. The reason is that they consider these Buddhist buildings that have existed for many

years as resources of Korean history and culture. In the same way, Buddhists and other religious people ought to have a deep understanding of the cabins of the Mt. Jiri missionary village, which are a part of Korean history in general and Christian culture in particular. This is because these cabins are a physical, historical manifestation of the desperate struggles of foreign missionaries who lived in Korea for more than a century, after refusing the evacuation order of their home country, in order to better help Koreans. As will be discussed in more detail, these missionaries evaded illnesses, thus making a significant contribution to the development of modern Korea.

2.2. Opposition from the perspective of cultural imperialism

The reason the Buddhists and some citizens argued that the missionary cabins at Mt. Jiri were “byeoljang” and should be demolished can be explained by the concept of cultural imperialism. Gudova defines cultural imperialism as subordinating the components of the cultural system, namely national cultural policy, to the power of the empire (2018). According to this concept, the lifestyle of American missionaries who were active in Korea at that time appears to have the framework of cultural imperialism. This is because the American missionaries who came to Korea at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, had the background of the upper and middle classes which were recognized even in the United States; they were also trained people with high-quality education and financial resources. In contrast, the lives of most Koreans were very difficult due to disease and poverty, and their education was also very backward. Additionally, Japan's forced annexation of Korea, political oppression, and economic exploitation made their lives even more difficult. In this environment, it seems that the relationship between Koreans and missionaries in various fields naturally began not as equal friends but as a “mentor and disciple” relationship (Go et al. 2021). The missionaries taught the Bible, introduced Western education that Koreans had never experienced before, such as the humanities and social sciences, and treated various diseases with simple surgery. It is undoubtedly true that Koreans had to learn all these things from missionaries. In particular, when Koreans were employed in mission stations and worked as cleaners, cooks, gardeners, drivers, and housekeepers, the missionaries' position was not just a mentor, but that of an employer. Discord could arise between the employer and the employee at this time, and sometimes significant tensions or frictions arose due to intercultural differences and misunderstandings. And sometimes the missionaries, not the Koreans, made mistakes. If this phenomenon is seen and interpreted as a “master and servant” relationship from a cultural anthropological perspective, missionaries can easily be branded as “cultural imperialists.” Thus, Matsutani states “Christian missionaries and Japanese colonizers, both of whom tried to inculcate new ideas and values in Korea. Though their ideologies and methods of propagation were different, both missionaries and Japanese tried to create new identities for Koreans, and Korean Christians had to configure their own identity, living among and having frequent interactions with both foreign masters” (2012).

Calling the cabins of the Mt. Jiri missionary village “byeoljang” openly reveals a very weighty logic of cultural imperialism. “Byeoljang” refers to a luxurious and separate residential space that only the highest aristocratic class or the richest could enjoy in Korean society at the time. It was difficult for ordinary people to build a single tiled house that they could live in for the rest of their lives, but imagine that missionaries built luxurious houses in addition to the palace-like mission compound on the peak of Mt. Jiri, which is more than 1200m above sea level. To ordinary Koreans, the life of a missionary would seem similar to that of a king or another powerful figure. According to the instructions of the missionaries, the Korean workers carried materials to build missionary cabins on the top of the mountain. Naturally, envy, jealousy, and similar ideas were mixed in some Korean workers’ hearts. The complaints of the workers may be justified by cultural anthropologists with the

theory of “cultural imperialism” that comes from the relationship between “master and slave.” Expanding on this theory, it is possible to exaggerate and say that missionaries exploited labor by forcibly mobilizing Koreans like slaves. And since the cabins of the Mt. Jiri missionary village are interpreted as symbols of cultural imperialism, those who agree with this theory will try to argue their claim to unconditionally demolish the missionary cabins. However, the actual historical facts are quite far from these interpretations and claims.

The biggest misconception is that they view missionary cabins as “byeoljang.” Although the architecture of these cabins is wonderful and they are surrounded by Korean nature in the majestic environment of Mt. Jiri, far away from the city, they were by no means “byeoljang.” In other words, it should be borne in mind that these were not “resort houses” enjoyed by those with money and power, but “refuge cabins” to avoid midsummer sickness. Because the cabins were shelters, practicality rather than splendor has become the hallmark of each cabin, and they all have a rustic and humble look (Tokola, 2011).

The missionaries had Koreans bring materials to the top of Mt. Jiri in the afternoon to avoid the scorching day sunlight, and they paid more than double the wages of Korean workers at the time for their hard work. On 18 August, 1939, the Dong-A Daily News wrote, “fifteen men and thirty-six women . . . used by the foreign missionaries . . . at the Nogodan resort in Mt. Jiri received seventy coins each time as consolation money from the missionaries.” According to the same newspaper on 12 February, when female missionaries or patients went to a missionary village in Mt. Jiri, they were carried up on Jigae, the traditional Korean wooden carrier, and the workers who carried the Jigae received a large sum of money enough to buy a rice paddy field. It was a great privilege to transport missionaries or missionaries' families because they made a lot of money in a short time. The contents of these newspapers prove that the missionaries never exploited Koreans economically or forced them to work. Another thing to note is that this missionary village was constantly under Japanese surveillance. Although some people argue that the missionary village should be removed because it is a symbol of the Japanese colonial product, that is not true at all. The extortion of wages and exploitation of labor from the Korean workers are either a malicious rumor with no basis at all or a kind of fabricated impeachment aimed at accusing missionaries. The missionaries of ASPC who formed the refuge village at Mt. Jiri were not perfect human beings without faults, but they should not be denigrated as cultural imperialists.

The ASPC missionary Eugune Bell (1868-1925), who is called the father of the Honam mission, loved Korea so much that as soon as he came to Korea in 1895, he set up a vigil with a pistol in the evening to protect the then Emperor Gojong (1863-1907) of the Korean Empire. At that time, when Japanese atrocities such as the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the assassination of Empress Min (8 October, 1895) were prevalent, he joined with other American missionaries in an ecumenical alliance to protect the Korean ruler. Both Soongil Boy’s School and Speer Girls' School in Gwangju started in the residence of missionary Bell. These two schools became the cradles of the 1919 March First Korean Independence Movement in Gwangju (Go et al. 2021).

When the missionaries were sick and came to Mt. Jiri, they rode up on donkeys or palanquins. The people who drove the donkeys and carried the palanquins were Korean workers. If we interpret this as the missionaries harassing Koreans and treating them as slaves, how could we explain the story of Wiley Hamilton Forsythe (1873–1918)? This medical missionary of ASPC put a female Korean patient dying of Hansen’s disease on his horse in Yeongsanpo, Jeollanam Province and brought her to Gwangju Jejung Hospital operated by ASPC. Forsythe hugged the leper's body, laid her on a kiln site in Bongseon district, Gwangju, and continued to treat her until she died peacefully. Shortly before her death, she said that no one including her own parents and siblings had ever paid attention to her and that only Forsythe and his missionary medical staff at Gwangju Jejung Hospital had shown her favor. Many who saw Forsythe called him “Little Jesus” and expressed their respect for

him. Today, we need to know that the Hansen community located in Yeosu city began with the noble healing act of Forsythe (Seo, 2020). If we look at these historical facts in the broad framework of politics, society, and religion, it would be irrational and ignorant to attack the trivial mistakes of missionaries with the logic of cultural imperialism.

2.3. Opposition from animal lovers

Some of the animal lovers in South Korea argue that the reason for the evacuation of the Mt. Jiri missionary village is that the habitat of the rare Manchurian black bear is in the area around Mt. Jiri (Lee, 2021a). Because of the rarity of bears, this argument, in terms of protection, is quite persuasive. The Manchurian black bear with a half-moon-shaped white pattern on its chest was at one time highlighted as an endangered rare animal due to indiscriminate overfishing during the Japanese colonial period, habitat destruction during the Korean War, and poaching for body protection. The Korean government has designated it as a natural monument (No. 329) and an endangered wild animal and is legally protecting it. Fully grown half-breasted bears are 140-180 cm tall and weigh 60-120 kg, with some weighing over 200 kg just before hibernation. Black-breasted bears follow an herbivorous diet of mostly tree fruits, soft grass leaves in early spring, and wild vegetables. In the summer and rainy season, they mainly eat the larvae and ant larvae of insects living in old trees, and also eat small animals, but they are not in the habit of eating large animals. The exact lifespan of black bears is unknown but is generally believed to be around 25 years. Bears live in a much wider range than ordinary people think, and in June 2017, it was confirmed that these Jiri bears also live in Gimcheon, Gyeongsangbuk Province. The area of the national park is about 440 km2, and the number of them has increased enough to inhabit this large area. The government planned to breed up to fifty in Mt. Jiri by 2020, but as of 2019, it has grown to more than sixty, and twenty-eight of them are said to be untracked (Shon, 2019).

These bears are usually gentle in nature, but they are quite strong, and in some cases, they are known to injure humans. In fact, on 8 June, 2014, a bear in Mt. Jiri, which weighed more than 100 kg, ran into two hikers resting near the Byeoksoryeong Shelter in Mt. Jiri. Stalling for time, they threw their sleeping bags and then called for rescue. Fortunately, shelter workers rushed out and fired tear gas and blank bombs to drive the bear away (Sohn, 2019). According to the Ministry of Environment, the bear that caused the accident was a black-breasted bear that was released in 2010, and it is supposed that it approached after smelling food from the sleeping bags. The National Park Service is demanding that visitors collect leftover food waste in plastic bags to help wild animals adapt to nature. In general, black-breasted bears eat a lot in autumn when food is abundant, and then go into hibernation in winter around mid-December when snow falls. Black bears wake up around February of the following year and begin their activity (Lee, 2002).

Looking at the above, it seems that animal lovers who oppose the registration of missionary sites ought to give up their opposition. Rather, those trying to preserve the missionary village should be careful not to be attacked by the bears. Now, the number of these bears in Mt. Jiri is increasing so quickly that the Ministry of Environment needs to manage them more closely.

3.Reasons to Register the Mt. Jiri Mission Site as a Cultural Asset

3.1. Hangeul, Korean language, dissemination

Hangeul is the only scientific text in the world that can express more than 11,000 characters and sounds with 24 consonants and vowels. Hangul is the only character in the world that satisfies the 6W principle of when, where,

who, what, how, and why (Lee, 2021b). Hangeul is not just the pride of Koreans, it is the great intellectual heritage of humankind. Professor Geoffrey Sampson of the UK asserts that Hangeul is undoubtedly one of the greatest intellectual heritages created by humankind (2015). Nobel Prize winner Pearl Buck (1892-1973) praised Hangeul as "the world's simplest and most wonderful script"; Missionary James Scarth Gale (1863-1937), a theologian and Korean language specialist, praised King Sejong (1397-1450), who invented Hangeul, as a prophet sent by God (Yim, 2021). Hangeul Hunminjeongeum (Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People) was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage and designated as National Treasure No. 70 in South Korea. Currently, the craze for learning Korean is growing all over the world. In 2020, about 76,000 people from 82 countries took Korean language courses abroad through the King Sejong Institute supported by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (Seo, 2021). This is a significant increase compared to 740 people from three countries in 2007. Reuters reported that Korea has become an entertainment hub thanks to the performances of the Korean boy band BTS and the Oscars for the movies “Parasite” and “Minari” (Kang et al. 2021; Seok and Chung, 2021). In addition, it mentioned that 26 new Korean words were added to the latest edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, including the Korean words “Hallyu, galbi, gimbap, noona, enni, skinship, aegyo, Konglish, trot, and daebak” (Seo, 2021).

However, if we look back at Korean history, the elite class of Korea regarded Chinese characters as important letters to learn until the end of the nineteenth century and ignored Hunminjeongeum as a lowly writing. In the 1910s, Hunminjeongeum was called Hangeul by a Korean linguist Ju Si-gyeong (1876-1914) and gradually gained recognition. The birth of Hangeul as the popular language of the Korean people was hastened by the missionaries' translation of the Bible into Hangeul. The Korean New Testament was translated from Manchuria in 1876 by missionary John Ross (1842-1915) from Scotland. This Bible, which was brought to Korea in 1882, was a great help to the first Korean Protestant missionaries, Horace Grant Underwood (1859-1916) and Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902). Afterward, the missionaries organized the Bible Translation Committee in 1887 and began to translate the Bible into Korean in earnest.

In 1890, Underwood published a Korean-English dictionary, an English-Korean dictionary, and a Korean grammar book. In 1892, the Presbyterian Missionary Council stipulated that “the goal should be to use pure Hangeul beyond the constraints of Chinese characters in all documentary activities in Joseon [Korea]” (Yim, 2021). In 1907, Ju Si-kyung established a Korean language school at Sangdong Church, and the relationship between Christianity and Hangeul deepened. In 1937, missionaries gathered in an interdenominational manner at Nogodan in Mt. Jiri and translated all the Old Testament into Korean except Jeremiah. William Davis Reynolds (1867-1951) was the most active missionary to translate the Old Testament. He planted Presbyterian churches in the Honam area as an ASPC missionary for thirty-five years from 1892 to 1937, taught for a long time as a biblical language professor at Pyongyang Theological Seminary, and participated in translating the Old and New Testaments into Korean. His linguistic genius was recognized as the best of all missionaries. Reynolds, besides Underwood and Gayle, contributed the most to the translation of the New Testament, and the first publicly recognized Bible in Korea was published in 1906 (Ryu, 2010). His contribution to the Old Testament, published in 1911, was so outstanding that it was practically a personal translation of Reynolds. The Revised Korean New Testament translation project was carried out at the Mt. Jiri missionary village for five years from 1932 to 1936. John C. Crane (1888-1964), Frank William Cunningham (1887-1981), Samuel D. Winn (1880-1954), Reynolds, Korean theologian Nam Gung-hyuk and other Korean assistants participated. The missionary Cunningham, mentioned above, was from the Presbyterian Church in Australia and had excellent language skills. He trained theological students while working in Jinju, Gyeongsang Province (Kim, 2009). By using the purified Hangeul

during the revising of the Bible translation, and refining spacing and grammar much more precisely than in the past, it laid the foundation for today's Hangeul to hold its own as a world language (Park, 2011). Afterward, Reynolds led the revision of the Old Testament translation, which was completed in 1937. It was Reynolds who made the greatest contribution to the publication of the 1938 official Bible, the Revised Version of the Bible, which is a huge legacy of the Korean Church. In fact, in the history of Korean Hangeul, foreign missionaries rather than Koreans paid more attention to the excellence of Hangeul and awakened the importance of it. Thanks to the missionaries' support of Hangeul, today's Hanguel has become a documented cultural heritage recognized around the world. Although it was King Sejong who invented Hangeul, it was the missionaries who developed Hangeul and contributed to its popularity. Because of the missionaries who loved Hangeul, Koreans were finally able to love and honor their country properly. Many of the missionaries who did this important work transcended denominations and cooperated with each other in the Mt. Jiri missionary village, so the value and meaning of the Mt. Jiri missionary village is indescribable.

3.2.The place of remembering the spirit of Korean independence

Wangsirubong missionary village has historical value and significance as it was a place that held the spirit of the Korean independence movement. The house of Charlotte Witherspoon Bell Linton (1899-1974), is in Wangsirubong. Charlotte, the daughter of missionary Eugene Bell, married William A. Linton (1861-1960) with whom she had four sons. Their third son, Hugh M. Linton was a major contributor to the establishment of the Mt. Jiri Wangsirubong missionary village. Of particular note here are the deeds of William Linton. This is because he was one of the first Westerners to inform American society when the March First Korean Independent Movement broke out in 1919. He wrote in The Atlanta Journal in May 1919:

> [Korea's March First Independence Movement is] the most remarkable rebellion in the history of the world . . . On March 1 great throngs of men, women, and children in Seoul, the national capital, a city of 300,000 inhabitants, and in other parts of the country, paraded the streets . . . Korea's fate depends upon the allied nations (Linton, 1919).

He went on to say that this movement was the first attempt to inform the world that Korea was under Japanese oppression. Despite their peaceful resistance, Japan trampled on Koreans with guns and military forces. Therefore, the international community was under obligation to respond to the uprising against the Japanese government which was attempting to wipe out the identity, history, and culture of the Korean people (Seok et al. 2020; Seo et al. 2021; Park and Chung, 2022). On 5 March, 1919, Linton participated in the Korean independence movement in Gunsan county with the teachers of Yeongmyeong School in Jeonbuk Province, where he was the principal. After he moved to Shinheung High School in Jeonju city, he, together with missionaries from all ASPC mission schools including Gwangju Soong-il and Speer, closed the school on 6 September, 1937, in opposition to Shinto shrine worship which was forced by Japan. In remembrance of his devotion and service to Korea, the South Korean government conferred the National Founding Order to him in 2010. His son Hugh Linton born in Gunsan county fought for South Korea during Korean War as an American naval officer.

3.3. A wonderful place to develop spirituality

In the Bible, the mountain is described as a training ground for self-reflection and leading to a more sublime and holy life. In the Old Testament, Moses was called by God on Mount Horeb. At this time, God said to Moses, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:6, NIV). A prerequisite for

Moses to have a personal relationship with God was to take off his sandals. Here, “sandals” means “dirty sin.” When a person walks around in sandals, all kinds of dust and dirt from the world are found not only inside the sandals but also around the sandals. Therefore, it is impossible to meet God while wearing unclean sandals. A man full of unclean sin must first purify himself in order to meet the holy God.

Humanity in the twenty-first century is living in a more convenient time and with more material abundance than any other era in the past. However, we are experiencing postmodernism in which life is chaotic and divided due to too many obsessions and desires. Humans are getting lost in the misguided consumption culture of highly developed individualism and materialism. If we take a break, products like our proprietary patents fall behind overnight. In order to survive in such a society, we give most of our lives over to deep despair and pain. Our lives are not really easy, and the world is a battlefield that is difficult to survive. For human beings in the image of God to pursue a meaningful life on this battlefield, we need time to take our shoes off like Moses. How can we wisely take off our dirty shoes? A high mountain surrounded by stillness and silence can be a very effective place to see rightly the problems of the shoes of sin that surround us like air. We can develop our own spirituality by stepping away from the various obsessive and distorted desires that dominate our lives, even for a moment, and entering the missionary village of Mt. Jiri alone or quietly with our family (In, 2019). Here we can develop the disciplines of silence, solitude, prayer, abstinence, work and reading according to our own circumstances (Chung, 2004). These training procedures will enrich and meaningful our spirituality and give us a better life and strength. During these procedures, we suggest that staying in silence in missionary cabins be developed most urgently. After leaving the world and people for a while and entering the missionary village of Mt. Jiri, even in this desolate and lonely place, we can refrain from unnecessary conversation and achieve purification of our souls through silence. Just as proper and meaningful conversation is a great energizer in our lives, silence is food for the soul. In the times we live in, dialogue and communication are so important that silence is even considered something to be avoided. When people are alone or not speaking, it is easy for them to feel insecure about themselves or to be misunderstood as having problems with others. However, when they turn around and are alone, the stories they pour out after receiving so many conversations and consultations make their inner emptiness even greater. Why? This is because the inside of our souls is so fragile and unstable. True peace does not come from talking a lot, being self-disclosed, and being recognized by others, but from finding and purifying ourselves. We may need to step into the quiet missionary cabins of Mt. Jiri to find ourselves and separate ourselves from our own distractions, inner anxiety, and agitation.

Silence is very helpful in guarding the mind. No matter how spiritually good words are, there will be people who have experienced a time where they felt frustrated and exhausted after speaking a lot. Obviously, they had a meaningful and valuable conversation, but they must have felt confused and not understood why they felt so exhausted. This is because, just as spiritual life escapes through an open door, words spoken by compulsive impulses take away our spirituality. If the window is opened and the wind blows in, the candle in the room is easily shaken. In that sense, our mouth is the window to our soul. If we leave the window open all the time and let anyone come and go freely, the fire in the room will not last long.Silence also teaches speaking. It may sound paradoxical, but it is true. Ordinary superficial greetings or words that are spit out without thinking and with poor content are just passing sounds. However, the words that have been cultivated through solitude - that is, after deep meditation - have a great effect even with a single word. Silence is a sacred discipline that helps us take control of our souls, preserve our inner spirituality, and speak life into us. Through silence, we can hear our inner voices and discover our true selves. The place where self-reflection is possible is in silence. If we live in Mt. Jiri for a few days while maintaining inner serenity, we will be able to discover our own contaminated shoes and

remove the “dirty” things from them. Today, we find silence uncomfortable because we are so afraid to look inside ourselves. It is easier for us to pay more attention to the noise outside than to face the hustle and bustle inside us. Through silence, we find ourselves caught up in our distorted and diseased desires and confront our mistakes. When we listen to ourselves through silence, we become aware of our mistakes and our pride, and we learn to match our words and actions. Not only that, but silence is like a door to our hearts, helping us guard our inner treasures. Silence should be understood not as a passive state of not speaking, but as an active contemplation of protecting and caring for one's inner self. In a complex post-modern society, silence in any high mountains will be difficult training for us who are prone to fall into relationships with countless people and groups. Although we face the dangers of losing ourselves in the crowd with anxiety, fear, hostility, and various unstable desires, we can establish a holy life's journey through seclusion and silence in the Jiri missionary village, if this precious village is firmly established.

3.4. The place of reconciliation and unity

Mt. Jiri missionary village was a very inspiring place. This place was built and managed by ASPC missionaries, but the missionaries in Korea as well as in various parts of the world were taken into consideration so that they could rest here regardless of denominational differences. For example, Missionary Frank E. C. Williams (1883-1962), a Methodist who worked in the Chungcheong area, also took a break in this village. He served as the principal of Gongju Yeongmyeong School. His students and teachers at Youngmyeong School led the March First Korean Independence Movement in Gongju city in 1919 (Kim, 2020). From this school, there was Yu Gwan-sun (1902-1920), a brilliant female martyr in the history of the Korean independence movement; Cho Byeong-ok (1894-1960), the first Minister of the Interior after liberation; and Hwang In-sik (1889-1965), the first Chungnam Governor. Williams' son, George Z. Williams (1907-1994), was born in Incheon and studied from elementary school to middle school in Gongju, then went to the United States to study medicine. He became a surgeon and in 1945 became a lieutenant colonel in the US Navy and served as a special assistant to General John Reed Hodge (1893-1963) during the US military government in South Korea.

As we have seen earlier, the Mt. Jiri missionary village contributed greatly to the translation of the Korean Bible and the spread of the Korean language. Here, the best biblical linguists at the time rose above their theological colors and orientations and united with missionaries from other denominations, along with Korean scholars and assistants to translate the Bible into more precise and refined Korean. Working together across denominations was easy in theory, but in reality, it was much harder. Everyone had their own personality, and scholars, in particular, had great academic pride, so working together was not always comfortable. However, here in the missionary village, they overcame all these obstacles and formed a beautiful ecumenical community (So, 2019; Lee, 2011).

Currently, Korea desperately needs the same spirit of unity that was among these missionaries. A small country on the Korean peninsula has been divided into North and South since liberation from Japan in 1945. The pain and scars are causing tears of blood to the separated families. Also, since the Silla Kingdom (57 BCE-935) in Gyeongsang Province in the seventh century unified the Baekje Kingdom (18 BCE-660) in the Honam region by armed forces, the large and small emotional conflicts between the people of the two regions have not yet been completely healed (Lee, 2016; Kim and Chung, 2022). At this point, we need to meditate deeply on the fact that this Jiri mountain is located in the middle of the two regions. It is the duty and privilege given to the people of the two regions to humbly learn the spirit of unity that the missionaries created in this mission village. The spirit of this union should be actively manifested in the healing and restoration of the two regions. Furthermore, the

same spirit should be sublimated into the spirit of North-South unification.

3.5. The great cultural value of mission village sites

Currently, the missionary village at Nogodan has been almost reduced to ruins. It is believed that the chapel and other necessary historical buildings need restoration. The twelve existing buildings at Wangsirubong consist of ten missionary cabins, one warehouse, and one chapel. Let us hear from experts on the need for active conservation of these cultural properties:

> One building of Nogodan Chapel and twelve buildings of Wangshirubong Missionary Training Center located in Mt. Jiri were built in 1921 and 1965. These buildings were built in the middle of Mt. Jiri, and they were built by making use of the topography in an eco-friendly way without damaging the surrounding environment. In particular, Norwegian, British, and Japanese-style floating houses built by missionaries from different countries are architecturally valuable. Therefore, as it is a rare missionary training center in Korea, it has a preservation value corresponding to a modern cultural heritage, so it is recommended to designate it as a registered cultural property and preserve it (Cheon, 2009).

Another scholar commented on the rare foreign architecture as follows:

> House of Charlotte Bell Linton had a traditional furnace in its kitchen like Korean traditional private house . . . as a toilet was built with some distance from the house building, Korean traditional hygienic conception was introduced. . . . House of Peter R. M. Pattisson is the case which adopted roof thatch technique from England . . . the house of thatch style was highly influenced by Britain's rural house by a text. . . . The house of Rev. Hugh M. Linton is a building which adopted Japan's Gassyojeukuri and Gayabookie. . . . The house of Dr. Stan Topple is the case which adopted the Norwegian construction style . . . [which] is generally considered as ocean building or mountain construction. A building of this style has a characteristic of great view available from balcony as the building is built on the hill. . . . House of Charlotte Bell Linton is the case which adopted A-Frame of USA in the 1950s (Nam, 2018).

Combining the evaluations of the above experts, the missionary houses in Wangshirubong show very unique characteristics. It is characterized by "the philosophically nature-friendly architecture, the independence of each area for religious life, the continuity of the missionary's own culture, and the inclusiveness that does not exclude Korean culture" (Jeon, 2018). Once these characteristics are lost, they cannot be easily recovered again. Therefore, it is urgent to repair and maintain these buildings that are rapidly deteriorating. In particular, the specialness and importance of the mission sites are highlighted by the fact that the historical buildings built by introducing various foreign architectural styles are located at the summit of Mt. Jiri.

3.6. A treasure trove of rare plants

There are twenty-eight species of rare plants that can be seen on a daily basis in Mt. Jiri. Among these plants, "three critically endangered plants are Allium microdictyon, Kirengeshoma koreana, Cypripedium macranthum, and four are significantly endangered species (Rhododendron tschonoskii, Oplopanax elatus, Juniperus chinensis, Trientalis europaea)" (Shin et al., 2010). In addition to these, there are twenty-one rare plants that we need to

intensively protect: “Parasenecio pseudotaimingasa, Clintonia udensis, Smilacina bicolor, Taxus cuspidata, Orchis cyclochila, Aconitum austrokoreense, Gastrodia elata, Lilium distichum, Clematis koreana, Coreanomecon hylomeconoides, Gentiana triflora, Streptopus, Rhododendron brachycarpum, Viola albida, Abies koreana, Syringa patula var. kamibayshii, Patrinia saniculaefolia, Lloydia triflora, Aconitum chiisanense, Eleutherococcus divaricatus, Rumex longifolius” (Shin et al., 2010). If we protect the species by transplanting these rare plants around the missionary village, this village can also function as a kind of botanical garden. If this happens, it is expected that the plants of Mt. Jiri and the missionary village will be protected together. Therefore, visitors will be fascinated by the mysterious and indescribable deep fragrance and beauty of rare flowers and trees.

4.Conclusion

The historical mission site of Mt. Jiri is not something that only Koreans should protect and preserve. Rather, this is a place where people from all over the world can come to learn many things about Korea and her relationship with the world. Mt. Jiri gave missionaries who were exhausted physically and mentally an opportunity to rest and dream of a more holy and beautiful life. Missionaries of various nationalities with different beliefs and theologies lived here and translated the high-quality Korean Bibles. This Hangeul Bible permeated the Korean people and has become the refined Korean language we use today. Furthermore, it has become a language loved by people all over the world, creating a craze for Korean. The various houses built in this missionary village are very precious cultural assets because the missionaries used their country's special architectural styles. Here, we can appreciate the architecture of various countries around the world, such as the United States, England, Norway, and Japan, and savor the cultural characteristics of each country. It is reminiscent of a living museum that exhibits houses of various shapes. It is also the cradle of an unforgettable national movement in Korean history. In order to better protect Koreans’ suffering from Japanese aggression and train workers for future independence, the missionaries rested here and established various directions and plans. As a result, many mission schools and hospitals were founded and managed more systematically. Many Korean patriots who contributed to the March First Independent Movement in 1919 were disciples influenced by these missionaries. Their selfless devotion and ecumenical spirit that transcended denominations can provide spiritual nourishment to heal the conflict between today's Honam and Gyeongsang regions and to reunify North and South Korea. Under these circumstances, some environmental groups, including Buddhists, and animal lovers should stop their voices against the registration of this site as a Korean cultural heritage, and instead work together to actively support the registration of cultural heritage on a larger scale. This study has shown that their objections are too weak in their justification or reasons for all of us to agree with.

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