

# STATUS QUO AND CONFLICTING FACTORS FOR THE PROPOSED KOREA-JAPAN TUNNEL PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

For almost a century or so, the mega-project to construct a fixed link crossing the channel between Korea and Japan has been intermittently heralded by a number of scholars, businessmen, political leaders, engineers, speculators, and even would-be gentlemen, mainly from these two countries. In the mean time, the Korea-Japan Tunnel plan has been confronted with a series of explicit and implicit conflicts concerned with *raison d'être* of construction, physical and fiscal feasibility, international or national and regional impact, and route choice. The paper makes a preliminary and guesstimated assessment of its likely policy alternatives between the dichotomized international (external) and national and interregional (internal) conflicting factors. Combined the possible policy alternatives derived from the vertical and horizontal geopolitical dimensions with major conflicting factors, the paper tries to redefine policy priority and implementation procedures of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel.



## **Introduction: Historical Genealogy**

Reflecting from the existing documents, it seems that the very first conceptual ideas for the fixed link between Korea and Japan were intermittently proposed by Japanese military circles and their conspirators under the rule of Japanese Imperialism. For example, the Japanese military authorities conceptualized a railway plan linking Pusan in Korea and Shimonoseki in Japan as a type of main invasion route toward the Continent of Asia during 1920s.<sup>1</sup> In 1939, the second suggestion came from a man named Mr. Kuwabara who later was deeply involved in actualizing Seikan Tunnel, the longest underwater tunnel in the current world.<sup>2</sup> His plan of "Cross Asian Railway" included the mainline crossing the Korea Strait by tunnel from Kyushu to Korean Peninsular, extending to Beijing via Shenyang, and running to Istanbul where it is connected to the Orient Express line and passes through Paris and London via the Channel Tunnel. Regardless of selfish motives of Japanese military groups or their conspirators, their works were no more than unattainable day dreams, simply considering the unfavorable international environment against the ambition of Japanese Imperialism.

After World War II, neither Korea nor Japan raised the topics related to Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel for more than three decades. The first revival movement rather came from civilian or religious groups, not from the public authorities. For example, in 1977, Obayashi-gumi, one of the major general contractors in Japan, published an advertising booklet,

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1 Uiwon Kim, "Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel," *Country and Construction*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (38), 1987. 9, pp.42-43.

2 According to the testimony of Mr. Yasuo Sasa, who first met Mr. Kuwabara in 1946, as a part of railway feasibility research, Japan carried out a geological survey at Tsushima Island in 1941 and a test drilling was bored with a depth of 600m in Kakura Island, close to Kyusu. (quoted from Sasa, Yasuo, "Towards the Realization of the Japan-Korea Tunnel," at <http://www.iijnet.or.jp/IHCC/real.html>)

which put special emphasis on the “road of the sea” between Korea and Japan.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the Iki Tunnel between Kyushu and Iki Island, it proposed a suspension-tube tunnel for the Korean Strait with a width of more than 50km.

In November 1981, Rev. Sun-Myung Moon proposed the International Highway Project at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences held in Seoul, Korea. Rev. Moon proposed the construction of Korea-Japan Highway as a type of religious ideal, totally different from the typical political, economical, or engineering grounds. That is, he has advocated the construction of the Korea-Japan Highway, whose extension composes the International Highway, as a means to realize world peace, going beyond the so-called East-West and South-North confrontations.<sup>4</sup>

In response to this proposal, members of the Unification Church have heralded organizing couples of companies or institutes, including the Preparatory Committee for the Construction of the International Highway in December 1981, the Overall Committee of the Japan-Korea Tunnel Research Project in February 1982, the International Highway Construction Corporation in April 1982, and the Japan-Korea Tunnel Research Institute of the International Highway Project in May 1983. Their activities have not been restricted to Japan. For example, they set up the International Highway Research Institute in Seoul and the Pusan Branch of the Institute and initiated a ground-breaking ceremony for the first boring work on Koje Island in Korea in April 1988 and convened a series of formal or informal meetings with people from China, North

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3 quoted from Sasa, Yasuo, “Towards the Realization of the Japan-Korea Tunnel,” at <http://www.ijnet.or.jp/IHCC/real.html>.

4 According to materials provided by the Unification Church, the ideal behind the International Highway Project is given to the realization of one united world where all man kind is one family. (<http://www.ijnet.or.jp/IHCC/hist.html>)

Korea, and other countries.<sup>5</sup>

Since the early 1990s, reports on the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel have appeared more frequently in the newspapers and magazines in Korea and Japan.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, it seems that the public authorities did not pay due attention to the Korea-Japan mega-project until the mid-1990s.<sup>7</sup>

In March 1996, the then President Yong-Sam Kim made an announcement that the ASEM Summit agreed to construct Trans-Asian Railway, linking South Korea, North Korea, China, Indochina Peninsular, and Singapore. The ex-president Kim also explained that all the members concerned, except North Korea, came to an agreement toward the schematic plan, but he predicted that sooner or later North Korea would also join them. In the same year, the Ministry of Construction and Transportation proclaimed that ESCAP (Economic and Social Committee for Asia and Pacific) would promote the construction of Trans-Asian Highway in a full-scale. The route under consideration

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5 For the details, see a collection of articles in the Journal of the Nikkan Tunnel Study Group (No. 16, 2000), which is compiled by the Japan-Korea Tunnel Research Institute.

6 Meanwhile, around the end of 1994, a Korean daily newspaper quoted an article from Hongkong-based newspapers, which reported the news that Japan and China agreed to construct international highway passing three Eastern Asian Countries of Korea, Japan, and China. At the same time, the article misinformed about the Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel, mentioning that the ground-breaking work for the Tunnel was already initiated solely by the Japanese government. (The Korea Economic Daily, December 15, 1994)

7 In the mid-1990s, Koreans took a growing interest in the feasibility of a long-range underwater tunnel as official inauguration of the Channel Tunnel occurred on May 6, 1994. But its service was not open to the public until the end of the year. Also, many Koreans have been familiar with news of the financial chaos and woes of Eurotunnel in the second half of 1990s.

included the Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel, connecting Tokyo, Seoul, Shenyang, and Beijing, where South and North lines would further bound for Europe. (Donga Ilbo, November 8, 1994; Chosun Ilbo, November 9, 1994) Even though ex-President and high officials publicized the grandiose plan, however, it has not taken any concrete shape in the following years. In reality, all of sudden the issues ended in smoke: they were temporarily utilized as political achievements or simply political rhetorics without any fruition.

The most recent report related to this mega-project came from President Dae-Jung Kim's remarks. During a briefing on the fourth article of the inter-Korean accord on economic cooperation,<sup>8</sup> following a three-day visit to Pyongyang where he and North Korean leader Jung-Il Kim produced a five-point joint declaration, President Kim announced a new dream for the Koreans, dubbed the "a new silk road of iron." Kim explained that the agreement envisions the linking of railway systems between the two Koreas and the subsequent creation of a railway system stretching from Japan to Europe via Korea. He expected that, if the railroad is linked, transportation cost will be slashed by 30 percent and reaching Europe by railroad can be possible. In addition, he stressed that, if the Koreas' railways are reconnected, Japan would likely construct an undersea tunnels to connect its railway to the Korean lines.

## **Classification of Key Factors**

### **South-North Cooperation**

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8 The fourth article of South-North Joint Declaration includes the following contents:

The South and the North decided to build up trust between each other by developing a national economy in a balanced manner through economic cooperation and by stimulating cooperation and exchanges in such various fields as society, culture, sports, health and environment.

Even though Korean high ranking personalities including current President Dae-Jung Kim and ex-President Young-Sam Kim have repeatedly stressed the necessity of Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel or Trans-Asian Railway, it does not seem that top policy priority is given to the proposed tunnel project. Since the South-North Summit, South Korean decision-makers of the ruling party have regarded that their partners in North Korea have also been positive about the inter-Korean railway project, especially in light of its profitability.<sup>9</sup> It is guesstimated that the main reason why Korean leaders do not bring the issues related to the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel to the national attention, among others, comes from heavy financial burden of South Korea itself. Confronted with the so-called IMF crisis in 1997, a majority of Koreans has to endure painful economic down-and-ups. Even though government-initiated reforms under the slogans of liberalization and globalization have been strongly implemented for more than a couple of years, Korea is still vulnerable to dynamic transformation of internal and external factors. In addition, it should be acknowledged that Seoul cannot bring about North Korea's reconstruction by itself: help is necessary from not only South Korea, but also Japan, the United States, Western Europe, and international aid agencies.

A private institute in Seoul estimated that around 10 trillion won (\$8.93 billion) would be required to push through infrastructure project in North Korea for smooth inter-Korean economic cooperation such as highway, railroad, and power station construction. It is estimated that building and expanding the railroads would require about 4.9 trillion won, almost a half of total expense. (Korea Herald, June 13, 2000). Furthermore, as the two Koreas use different signal systems, even when the inter-Korean railway lines are connected, passengers and cargoes would have to be transferred to the connecting point or expensive

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<sup>9</sup> It is known that the late Leader II-Sung Kim also wanted inter-Korean rail routes to be constructed. In addition, if the routes are reconnected, the North is expected to make at least over \$100 million per year.

conversion systems would have to be installed, all of which would require additional cost and time.

At this stage, the top priority in Korea hinges on the restoration of Kyeongui and Kyeongwon Lines.<sup>10</sup> If these plans are actualized, it will make it possible to establish V-shaped two-tier railway lines bound for Europe. The Kyeongui Line which stretches along the regions near the West Coast is set to the Trans Chinese Railway (TCR) and the Kyeongwon Line along the East Coast to the Trans Siberian Railway (TSR).

### **Russian's Interest**

Among neighboring countries surrounding the Korean peninsular, Russia seems most active to boost construction of inter-Korean railways. The Russian proposals appear to be mainly aimed at increasing the profitability of its Siberian railroad by connecting it with inter-Korean lines. In South Korea, President Dae-Jung Kim mentioned that he agreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin through a telephone conversation on August 1, 2000 to make a joint effort for the restoration of the Kyeongwon Railway Line linking Seoul and Wonsan, a North Korean port city in East Coast, which could be interconnected with the Trans Siberian Railway (TSR). Again, on September 8, 2000, the two top leaders endorsed the plan during summit talks held on the sidelines of

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10 Even though the railway reconnection project and the family reunion program are regarded as the jewels of the South-North Joint Declaration signed by the President Dae-Jung Kim of South Korea and North Korean leader Jung-II Kim on June 15, 2000, it should be also reminded that the issues concerned with the South-North railway reconnection are not utterly brand-new. In fact, the two Koreas reached an accord under the 1991 basic agreement to connect the Korean-war damaged section of the Kyeongui Line. The subsequent crises on the Korean peninsular, however, including matters touched off by the so-called nuclear weapons' program in the North Korea, blocked the progress of the project.



the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York. They agreed in principle that they would promote the railway link as part of their economic cooperation. Government documents interpreted that the agreement would help realize President Kim's conception of establishing what he called "a new silk roads of iron," one of which will be linked to Europe via China and Mongolia and the other by way of Siberia.

The same story is repeated by Russian leaders who recently visited North Korea. It is well known that Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov proposed that South and North build railway networks connecting the divided peninsula and extending to Siberia during his visit to Pyongyang on February 9 to 10, 2000. In addition, it was also publicized that Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed a proposal to link the inter-Korean railroads with Russian railways with North Korean leader Jung-Il Kim during his visit to Pyongyang in July, 2000.

### **Japanese Alternatives**

In contrast, the official opinion of Japanese government related to the proposed Korea-Japan underwater tunnel is not disclosed, at least, to the authors. Nonetheless, the implicit direction could be observed from other sources. For example, in September 1999, Japanese Ambassador to Korea Kazuo Ogura mentioned that it is crucial for the two countries to implement large-scale economic cooperation projects to deep their bilateral partnership, such as the joint hosting of the 2002 World Cup. Noting that it is time to work for the new vision of the Korea-Japan relations, the ambassador exemplified such ideas as an undersea tunnel, the joint launch of a weather satellite, the establishment of a Eurasian gas pipeline, and a free trade zone. (The Korea Times, September 30, 1999)

At the same time, it should be noted that Japan could still pursue an alternative north-bound route, even if construction work of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is delayed or even cancelled because of

various reasons.<sup>11</sup> In July 1999, using Russian new sources, a Korean newspaper (The Korea Economic Daily, December 15, 1994) reported that Russia would revive the plan of Sakhalin Underwater Tunnel which was secretly carried out under the leadership of Joseph V. Stalin.<sup>12</sup> The similar movement comes from Japan. For instance, a group of Japanese businessmen also proposed the similar route which would directly link Japan with Trans Siberian Railroad. It includes construction of two underwater tunnels: the 43km tunnel under the Soya Strait between Wakkanai in northern Hokkaido and Sakhalin as well as the 8km tunnel under the Tatarskiy Strait between Sakhalin and Russian mainland. According to the schematic proposal, Japan would install new railroad up to Amursk or Komsomolsk, but the rest section would use the existing facilities. (Jungang Ilbo, August 18, 2000) In addition to the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel, Japan could also co-work with Russia to interconnect its railways with Trans Siberian Rail. Based on the report, it would take about 10 years to construct the tunnel linking the Russian main land and Sakhalin under the Tatarskiy Strait. The estimated construction cost reaches almost \$100 billion, a huge amount of money for Russia who is still confronted with relatively heavy financial burdens (The Korea Economic Daily, July 9, 1999). If this project is actualized, it is possible for Japan to directly interconnect with China, Russia, and EC members, even without passing through Korean Peninsular.

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11 Of course, the best option for Japan is given to completion of both Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel and a north-bound route. In this paper, it simply argues which one should take precedence over the other.

12 Mr. Kuwabara, who suggested Korea-Japan railway under the rule of Japanese Imperialism, also dreamed about the "Circum-Japan Sea Railway," running from Honshu to Hokkaido crossing the Tsugaru Strait and then to Sakhalin over the Soya Strait and via the the Tatarskiy Strait to Siberia, connected with the Manchurian Railway at Harbin and joining the "Cross Asian Railway" at Senyang as a branch line of the "Cross Asian Railway."

## **Interregional and Regional Perspectives**

Adding up controversies in the international and national dimensions, there still remain diverse value questions to be resolved in the interregional, regional units or individuals. In Korea, the interregional spatial impact of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is still regarded as a kind of terra incognita. The only exception comes from Professor Hur's study (Hur, 1999). Applying economic potential model, he predicts that construction of the Tunnel would contribute to decreasing regional inequality between the Capital Areas and the Non-Capital Areas, owing to encouragement of economic potential in Non-Capital Areas. He judges that the Tunnel would strengthen both Pusan and Kwangju Metropolitan Areas, which in turn would conduce to transformation of multi-centric spatial structure, departing from the current mono-center overly skewed toward Seoul Metropolitan Areas.<sup>13</sup>

In the regional dimension in Korea, presently Pusan seems the only local unit with explicit concern and interest. For instance, Pusan included construction of Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel as one of long-term leading projects. (The Korea Economic Daily, June 1, 1994). Also, scholars who has been active in Pusan Areas held a round-table talk under the title of "Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel and Urban Planning of Pusan" in 1995. The pros and cons debates among participants were focused on topics of physical and fiscal feasibility, *raison d'être* of construction, and relationship between Pusan and Kyushu. (Ideal Architecture, May 1995). In the similar context, Kim, Kwon, and Lee (1998) suggest that construction of 'land bridge' between Northeast China and Japan is the most important task in Korean territorial planning and policy priority for forging external linkage should be given to both the Yellow Sea region and the Korea-Japan strait zones

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13 In addition, he estimated that the spatial impact of the Tunnel in Japan would be much lower, compared with that in Korea. (Hur, 1999, pp.105-115)

encompassing Pusan and its vicinities and Japan's Kitakyushu region. In another research, considering major economic indicators and industrial composition, Chung, Park, and Ogawa (2000) stress that formation of economic sphere and interurban functional cooperation is highly preferable in Korea-Japan strait zones.

### **Individual Opinions**

In the individual dimension, there have existed diverse suggestions and self-diagnoses toward this mega-project. On the one hand, some people urges construction of Korea-Japan Tunnel, regarding that the mega-project is essential to improve the relationship between Korea and Japan. Otherwise, people from this group think it inevitable in the long run in this period of global networking. Applying élan vital (Qi) theory, without sufficient evidence, a professor in Seoul even suggested that construction of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel would favorably transform Japanese attitude towards Koreans (The Korea Economic Daily, June 29, 1994).

On the other hand, some people hold totally different interpretation. For instance, reflecting from the unhappy moments in the past between Korea and Japan, a professor in Pusan suggested that it is necessary for Korea to keep a certain distance from Japan, implicitly referring to the topics of Korea-Japan Tunnel (Chosun Ilbo, February 22, 1994). In addition, a person dealing with real estate did not hesitate to insist that the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel should not be materialized, considering the Fengshui (Chinese geomancy) location of Korean Peninsular and its locational value as gateway toward the Continent of Asia as well as the Pacific Ocean. He worried that the unique value as the beak-like ideal place from the perspectives of Fengshui would be diminished when the proposed tunnel interconnects Korea and Japan, limiting the main role of the former as a typical transit-oriented spot (The Korea Economic Daily, July 5, 1997).

## **Scenario Buildings**

### **Policy Directions**

For Korea, in order to strengthen role as a transport hub in the East Asian Region, the linking of railway systems between the two Koreas and the subsequent creation of a railway system stretching from Japan to Europe via Korea seems the most idealistic proposal. For the time being, nonetheless, it is expected that South Korea will be busy finding suitable financial sources to support its own South-North railway networking. Korea may leave the issue of Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel as the second best choice, or at best another centennial mega-project.

In contrast, as mentioned above, even if construction work of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is delayed or even cancelled, it should be reminded that Japan still has another option connecting Japanese north-bound route with Trans Siberian Railroad. The main question between these two mega-projects is given to which one should take precedence over the other. The authors guess that a priori expectation or reasoning attached to the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel seems more popular, considering various internal and external factors such as ideological and political similarities as well as bustling transaction of people and materials between Korea and Japan, compared with those between Japan and Russia.

Considering relatively weak financial status and policy priorities of Korea, Japan may have to take charge of most of financial burdens. In any circumstances, it should be reminded that Japan's main role is not solely confined to raising enough capital funds to construct this type of mega-project and devising concrete construction and management strategies in advance. By analogy with the Channel Tunnel and similar cases, as economic changes and international finance have made possible a wider involvement of private sector in the delivery of public

infrastructure, project financing initiated by the international corporations and banks seems quite promising in terms of fund-raising if commissions or other similar forms could be guaranteed through legal agreements between two neighboring countries. Rather, first of all, its real intention and *raison d'être* of construction concerned with an inter-country transport network, followed by political determination, should become transparent.

### **Lessons from the Channel Tunnel**

As shown in Table 1, about the time when Margaret Thatcher and Francois Mitterrand signed the Channel Tunnel Treaty in Canterbury Cathedral's chapter house and granted a 55-year concession to Transmanche-Link, which was selected as the most promising bidder in 1986, British attitudes toward the tunnel project became remarkable in comparison to those of other Europeans. Only 30 percent of British citizens were for the proposed tunnel project, considerably less than the 66 percent for all of Europe (Darian-Smith, 1999).

**Table 1. European Attitudes to the Channel Tunnel, 1986 (percentage)**

Country	Against	Neither	For
Great Britain	50.0	19.2	30.9
Belgium	11.4	32.4	56.2
Northern Ireland	16.7	22.7	60.5
Denmark	20.7	18.5	60.7
West Germany	7.8	27.1	65.0
France	6.8	27.5	65.7
Netherlands	9.0	23.6	67.3
Luxembourg	5.0	26.2	68.8
Ireland	11.0	14.4	74.6
Spain	5.0	18.7	76.3
Italy	5.1	17.4	77.5
Portugal	2.7	15.8	81.5
Greece	3.1	11.3	85.7
All Europe	12.6	21.2	66.2

Note: N=10,225

Source: Directorate General of the European Commission, Eurobarometer No. 25, *Public Opinion in the European Community*, Spring 1986 (Quoted from Darian-Smith, Eve, *Bridging Divides: The Channel Tunnel and English Legal Identity in the New Europe*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, p.208).

Compared with the case of the Channel Tunnel, neither Korea nor Japan has not properly taken care of the general public opinions with regards to the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel. A handful group of political members, religious leaders, experts, and other interested individuals has even dared to monopolize facts and data pertaining to the mega-project, sometimes making an irresponsible statement or a biased interpretation. Simply speaking, most of laymen are totally ignorant of its necessity and future impact. Far ahead of debating gains and losses of the project, the wishes of people should be confirmed with a series of public opinion censuses provided with various data and information. And then, application of appropriate

public negotiation techniques is a prerequisite requirement to handle the issues of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel.

Concurrently, the fortune of the mega-project would be heavily dependent on the political determination. As well demonstrated in the case of Great Britain, Prime Minister Thatcher who strongly advocated European unification did not hesitate to sign the Channel Tunnel Treaty even when she had to endure extremely low popularity.<sup>14</sup> In these contexts, neither rosy optimism nor groundless pessimism skewed on individualistic interest should be included in the decision-making itinerary between two countries. Again, it should be reminded that the British and French government altogether formed the Channel Tunnel Study Group and commissioned to begin a geological study and full-scale inquiry into possible forms of fixed link in 1957, almost three decades ahead of tunneling on December 1, 1987. Considering the more government-oriented planning practices in the Eastern Asian Regions, compared with the situation in the western hemisphere, it seems more difficult for the private entities to take the initiative in the early period of project implementation. Inevitably, the public authorities backed up systematic political decisions may have to play leading roles to carve out the mega-project's own future. Furthermore, even if the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel were preferred, its necessary and sufficient conditions to be materialized require the passionate support of neighboring countries including North Korea, China, and Russia. Not only the government-initiated institution buildings including task force research teams, but also the organization of the international consortium to deal with diverse explicit and implicit conflicts should be coordinated

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14 According to another survey result on the British attitudes to the Channel Tunnel in 1986, the highest percentage of people against a tunnel was recorded among residents of East Kent (63.0%), encompassing those immediately living near the terminal site and along the coast in Dover and Folkestone. Apart from a more pronounced antagonism to the tunnel in east Kent, there is not much regional variation in opinions on the subject across Britain. (Darian-Smith, 1999, pp.205-206)



between the two protagonists.

### Internal Tasks

In case the proposed project is worth pursuing, one of the most urgent tasks in the domestic dimension is given to re-evaluation of national and regional plan. In Korea, neither the 4<sup>th</sup> comprehensive territorial plan nor its transport master plan, whose term stretches over 20 years (2000-2020), take no thought of the proposed tunnel. Even though the territorial plan presents the conceptual ideas of the interregional, South-North, and Eastern Asian integrations as its basic development ideologies, its key concerns are only confined to the internal restructuring of the Korean peninsular itself. It seems that the long-range master plan does not care about the issue of the proposed tunnel in its implementation strategies. Under the transport master plan, which would need a total of 335 trillion won in investment for two decades, seven south-to-north and nine east-to-west expressways would be built in preparation for an era in which Korea's motor vehicles will outnumber 20 million. Also, it delineates the country's railway system heavily dependent on high-speed rails: in addition to the Seoul-Pusan high-speed railway systems now being built, a new line linking Seoul to the western regions would be constructed. Even though the transport master plan sets a goal of establishing a high-speed network crisscrossing the Korean peninsular, it has nothing to do with the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel Project and it also remains doubts whether the government could raise such a huge amount of money to finance the proposed projects.

Considering the network effect and the fact that no transport infrastructure can be operate separately from the network in which it is a link and the necessary effect and the fact that an infrastructure can hardly be given up once it is built (Marcou, 1993), it seems unavoidable that its territorial and transport master plans as well as their sub-plans may undergo major revision if the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is materialized within their planning period. As well exemplified with the Channel Tunnel, Koreans critically analyze the fact that

investments in other links of a system are decisive in the returns expected from any other link. Judging from the Vickerman's research report on the Channel Tunnel (1987), the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel itself may have a relatively limited impact, but that taken together with other infrastructure investments, there could be more fundamental changes in the pattern of national and regional development. Simultaneously, Koreans should pay attention to Holliday and Vickerman's dichotomized diagnosis (1990): comparing less interventionist policy adopted by Great Britain with more centralized policy implemented by France, the former was more deficient. That is, in France, the mega-construction project is seen as an opportunity to concentrate the benefits in the immediate hinterland of the Channel Tunnel through public and private sector partnership scheme whereas in Britain public policy has sought to diffuse the benefits across the economy as a whole, mainly through publicizing contract opportunities. According to their observation, the evidence suggests that the dispersal strategy has proved more difficult to achieve. These findings imply that certain areas which are spatially detached from the Korea-Japan strait zones and major stations may face a double disadvantage because of the development of a high-speed train network and motorway connection, if there are no clear plans in Korea to link them properly to the new transport systems which will restructure their economy.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

In terms of genealogical perspective, the conceptual ideas for the fixed link between Korea and Japan were introduced by Japanese military circles and their conspirators under the rule of Japanese imperialism. But their works were no more than unattainable day dreams without any follow-up measures. After World War II, neither Korea nor Japan raised the topics related to the Korea-Japan Tunnel for almost three decades or so. The revival movement rather came from civilian or religious groups

in the later 1970s or early 1980s. It seems that the decision-makers have become partially familiar with the ideas of the Korea-Japan mega-project from the mid-1990s. Since then, even though higher echelons in Korean societies repeatedly have publicized the grandiose plan, however, it has not taken any concrete shape in the following years. In some cases, their announcement has been no more than political rhetorics. Furthermore, as Koreans have to endure heavy financial burden for its own economic readjustment and the South-North cooperation, the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel Project has not yet attracted enough national attention to embark on the project.

Since the South-North Summit, the restoration of inter-Korean railway systems including Kyeongui and Kyeongwon Lines both of which would facilitate network linkages to the Trans Chinese Railway (TCR) and Trans Siberian Railway (TSR), respectively, has been dealt as the most urgent political agenda in South Korea. Russia also seems most active boost construction of these inter-Korean railways as means to increase the profitability of its Siberian railroad. In contrast, even though the official opinion of Japanese government is not well known to Korea, it is believed that its policy direction toward the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel has not basically changed, as already vividly exposed by Japanese military circles' ambition during the rule of Japanese Imperialism and other documents. In fact, Japan has two options to pursue: in addition to the Korea-Japan route, it could directly interconnect with the Continent of Asia through alternative north-bound railway system, even without passing through Korean Peninsular.

For the future policy direction, the paper reiterates the common sense: real intention of the two protagonists—Korea and Japan--and *raison d'être* of construction related to the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel should become transparent, ahead of debates on financial allocation and other issues. By analogy with the Channel Tunnel and similar cases, project financing initiated by the international corporations and banks seems quite promising if commissions or other similar forms could be guaranteed through binding agreements between two

neighboring countries. In addition to application of appropriate public negotiation techniques, the wishes of people should be pre-confirmed with a series of public opinion censuses provided with various data and information. If the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is preferred, the public authorities backed up systematic political decisions may have to play leading roles to carve out the mega-project's own future.

Considering both the network effect and the necessary effect in the transport infrastructure, it seems inevitable that major territorial and transport plans in Korea may undergo significant revision if the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel is materialized with their planning period. Judging from results of the previous case studies, the proposed tunnel itself may have a relatively limited impact, but taken together with other infrastructure investments, there could be more fundamental changes in the pattern of national and regional development. If there are no clear plans in Korea to link the less favored areas properly to the new transport system, there exists a danger that the project may exert more detrimental influence as a whole.

In this paper, we have simply sketched out the historical diagram and the bone structure of international and internal policy priority as well as general policy recommendations concerned with the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel. In the meantime, it should be acknowledged that the paper has skipped several key factors such as physical feasibility, cost estimation and resources, and environmental suitability. The untouched question in the paper also includes the symbolic role as a catalyst toward a "new silk road of iron" and formation of the Free Trade Areas or the East Asia Community among neighboring countries in the long run. All these topics are essential to delineate the whole picture of the proposed Korea-Japan Underwater Tunnel. Nonetheless, we still believe the approach outlined here should take precedence over the others because it would decide the very first fate of the project.

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