

**Park's Mission Is to Enhance Relations with Japan, U.S.**

Tsutomu Nishioka

Park Geun-hye won in the December 19 South Korean presidential election, obtaining 1.08 million more votes than her rival candidate. She garnered 51.55% of total votes against 48.02% for the rival. Park became the first presidential election winner to obtain a majority since the present constitution took effect in 1987. She will be the first ever woman president in South Korean history.

**S. Korean voters reject pro-Pyongyang candidate**

In presidential election campaigns, her leftist rival Moon Jae-in insisted on North Korea's policies of opposing the North Korean human rights law in the South, abolishing the national security law and realizing a lower-level federation for the unification of the Korean Peninsula. Alarmed by his assertion, conservatives joined hands with former aides to the late President Kim Dae-jung and democratic movement activists in the 1970s and 1980s to support Park.

The presidential election represented a showdown between pro-Seoul and pro-Pyongyang forces. If Park had been defeated, conservatives could have waged a bloody conflict with a leftist government seeking to abolish an alliance with the United States and unify the two Koreas under a federal system. South Korean voters' sound judgment averted such development.

Voter turnout was as high as 75% as elderly, low-income and less-educated voters cast ballots in gratitude for the late President Park Chung-hee, the father of Park Geun-hye, or amid a fear that South Korea could be ruled by communists if Moon Jae-in won the presidency.

A leading conservative Kim Sung-wook, who has toured military units and churches to call for a South Korea-led vision for the freedom unification of the Korean Peninsula, wrote one day before the vote as follows;

"I foresee Park Geun-hye's victory. My foresight is not based on

fluctuating approval rates in polls. I have become confident of her victory through my nationwide tour over the past three months. The Republic of Korea contains many antibodies against disease agents, which have gone beyond a simple approval rate gap.”

### **Youths have grown conservative**

In the presidential campaigns, young conservatives in their 20s were remarkably active. On the Internet, they revealed that a chair of Moon Jae-in who emphasized himself as a commoner cost 10 million won (about US\$ 10,000) and that he lived in a luxury residence which included even illegal additions. Big newspapers conspicuously reported these revelations, dealing a severe blow to the Moon camp. As a result, Moon withdrew his description as commoner.

Meanwhile, leftist Internet television site Nakkomsu made false reports that described Park Geun-hye as linked to the New World cult and as having spent massive money to conduct a shaman ceremony. But these reports turned out to be untrue on the Internet, having adverse effects on Moon.

Young people in their 20s have grown conservative because they have been angered by North Korea's sinking of the South Korean naval patrol ship Cheonan and its shelling of South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 where South Korean soldiers in their 20s were killed. Another reason for their conservatism is that a thorough political education on the modern history of South Korea and North Korean realities has been implemented within military forces. Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin has enhanced the political education of drafted young people, fearing that South Korea could fail to wage a war with North Korea unless young people are liberalized from masochistic education by school teachers belonging to the leftist teachers' union.

Park Geun-hye's victory in the presidential election is historically significant in that it prevented a pro-Pyongyang leftist from taking power in South Korea. But the problem is how Park would behave after the victory. Her historic mission is to fight boldly against pro-Pyongyang leftists within

South Korea and enhance South Korea's alliance and friendly relations with the United States and Japan to pave the way for the freedom unification of the Korean Peninsula. If she fails to do so and adopts a middle-of-the-road policy taken by incumbent President Lee Myung-bak, it may only work to put off a South Korean crisis.

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