Korean Soc Sci J
DOI 10.1007/s40483-013-0008-8

Ethical values and social change: Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ahn Chang Ho

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Received: 16 July 2013 / Revised: 4 October 2013 / Accepted: 13 November 2013

Abstract Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ahn Chang Ho exemplify the leaders who brought social change by applying their belief in non-violence and love of humanity to the accomplishment of their respective goals. Gandhi's goal was securing India's independence from British colonialism, and King's was to rid America from racial segregation. Irony about England and the US was that they had a long history of commitment to human rights and democracy. Hence, Gandhi and King's struggle for justice focused on reminding their adversaries of their hypocrisy, a gulf between their commitment and actions. Ahn had to deal with Japanese colonialists, who had little respect for and commitment to human rights and civil liberties. Ahn's job was, therefore, more complicated than Gandhi's or King's. Ahn insisted that for the Koreans to achieve their political independence from Japan, they must build their inner strength first, and do this by self-cultivation of moral and ethical values. Building moral and ethical strength ought to also accompany receiving modern education, acquiring marketable skills, and building financial resources. At the same time he condoned the militant approach to the Korean independence movement, as necessary. Ahn was a complex figure, a blend of a moralist, a strategist, and a pragmatist.

Keywords Gandhi · King · Ahn · Ethics · Nationalism · Politics · Religion

Working assumptions

How does social change come about? There ought to be a stimulus first that impels change. To put it in classic Toynbee's term, a challenge to the status quo arises (Toynbee 1958, pp. 60–67). Response to the challenge follows, leaving in its wake a change. How much change follows from a given stimulus depends on the nature of the challenge and how intense a response the challenge elicits? In the process where a challenge arises and a

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Published online: 03 December 2013

response is precipitated, the crucible is human agency. Challenge spurs human intelligence to give to it a proper response.

The response to the challenge by human agency could come in one of three forms. One is a response where violence plays a crucial role. War and revolution typify violence-driven social change. Mao Zedong's "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" may best represent one's faith in violence's potency as a means of social change (Brainy Quote 2012). Legislative response is another. This is the most ubiquitous response under a stable political and social condition. There is another. It is a social change that the sheer force of one's moral leadership, ethical beliefs, and conviction makes possible.

This paper analyzes three contemporary social and political leaders, who drew on their moral and ethical beliefs to change the course of human history. Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1848) was one. He unshackled the century-old British dominance of India largely by his moral strength. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968), an indomitable religious and civil rights leader, brought his Judeo–Christian principles and beliefs to force a change to deep-seated racial segregation practices in the United States.

There was another comparable figure in East Asia. He was Ahn Chang Ho (1878–1938), who devoted much of his life to awakening his compatriot Koreans to a realization of the importance of the cultivation of moral and ethical virtues and values. To his people who lost their country to the Japanese imperialists, Ahn imbued them with nationalism and a sense of purpose.

Literature review

One can divide the literature on Gandhi largely into two groups, his biography and the books on his beliefs and philosophy. Gandhi developed and honed his non-violent civil disobedience during his twenty some years of stay in South Africa before he applied it to winning the India's independence from Great Britain. Much of literature on his South African period focuses on severe racial discrimination he himself experienced at the hands of the white colonialists impelled him, a young lawyer, to take up civil rights causes for his South African Indian immigrant communities (Moon 1969; Majmudar 2005; Markvits 2004).

Gandhi draws a lesson that serves him well in his social activism from his ecumenical orientation. God is universal. Every religion has elements of Truth. That Truth is that violence begets violence. Non-violence touches the humanity's basic core, love and compassion. Working with the Truth could never be wrong (Prabhu and Rao 1963). He experimented with non-violent marches and demonstrations in South Africa and found it worked (The Progress Report, Gandhi's Life, Part One 2012; Iyer 1973).

Gandhi felt a need to teach and train in non-violence. To this end he founded Ashram, a group living, where residents share the living arrangement and study non-violence philosophy and its practice (Maurer 1948).

Living by one's religious creed and beliefs extends to dealing with politics and governance. That is, a fusion of politics and religion is Gandhi's most salient feature of his political philosophy. Gandhi held a critical view of industrialization, which, he charged, precipitates human greed and materialism. England represented political oppression and industrialism. He refused to buy and wear the British imports. He wore only homespun clothes, covered his body with a simple groin cloth and shawl; and he cooked his own meals (Moon 1969; Power 1971).

Lately, we begin to see some critics of Gandhi's life. They are coming from the Indian minorities of the "untouchables," Sikhs, and what remains of Muslim groups. The "untouchables" have a legitimate gripe against Gandhi. It has had to do with Gandhi's

attitude toward the India's age-old caste system. Gandhi deplored and condemned the existence of the "untouchables." He campaigned to stamp it out. Yet, he did not denounce the caste system, the root cause of the "untouchables" (Moon 1969, p. 115).

Caste system is illegal but still forms India's social stratification. Disadvantaged low-status groups challenge Gandhi's revered status, their way of objecting the status quo. They are bent to tarnish Gandhi's reputation as a moral leader by harping on a fact, which was kept under wrap at least publicly during Gandhi's lifetime and thereafter until this time. That is, how Gandhi slept naked with his grandnieces; they charge he molested the girls. Gandhi was open about it, saying that sleeping with his grandnieces was his experiment with his celibacy (Organization for Minorities of India 2013; Lelyveld 2011; Roberts 2011).

Just as many as Gandhi's are various works on Martin Luther King, Jr. Emergence of ethnic studies and African American studies program at many American colleges and universities brought forth many books and articles on King. Most books spell out King's views and perspectives in a common thread. That is, King regarded freedom, justice, and equality as ethical values deeply rooted in the Judeo–Christian beliefs, which inspired American founding fathers. He charged that denying these values to American Black citizens on the part of the whites was committing a grave error to God himself.

What distinguishes King is that he was a thinker and a doer. Much of his biography documents what shaped him to be a doer. For example, King's Ph.D. from Boston University's School of Theology could have landed him in an academic position. Instead, he chose a preaching and social activist career. King's biographers attribute his choice of activist career not only to his action-oriented disposition, to begin with, but also to his exposure to social gospel movement at Boston University's theological seminary, an institution known for its strong social gospel emphasis (Sitkoff 2008, p. 41; Coloiaco 1993).

Social gospels idea is that one ought to apply Christ's message to social reform and a correction of social injustices. That is how we make gospel a living message by changing reality. Coming from this social gospel background, for King focusing his theological training on ridding racial segregation from American society was natural. Plus, he was an action-oriented person. As for how to do it most effectively, he found Gandhi. Gandhi's non-violent approach showed him a way to do it. Some covers King's connection to Gandhi but most gloss over it or hardly mention it (Sitkoff 2008, p. 41).

A description of King's imprisonment and his bloody confrontations with law enforcement authorities occupy most of the chapters in the literature that covers King's civil rights movement era. Doggedly threatening King's record of accomplishments are his sexual escapade, his alleged Communist connection, and his anti-Vietnam War position.

King often shared his bed with women some of whom were his admirers whenever he was on the road. The FBI bugged his bed and threatened to divulge his sexual encounters to the public. The FBI also charged King to be a Communist sympathizer. Some of his lieutenants were Communists but they were all ex-communist party members; they were not subversive. Another was King's opposition to the Vietnam War. King considered the U.S.–Vietnam War immoral. This cost him a lot of support (Smith 1981; Bennette 1968, pp. 12–13).

The literature on Ahn Chang Ho, in English and Korean, has grown a great deal. Three types of literature dominate writings on Ahn Chang Ho. They are Ahn as a morally and ethically driven patriot, as the early Korean U.S. immigrant community organizer, and as a militant revolutionary. The majority of works focus on Ahn's moral and ethical teachings and his moral leadership. For example, his exhortation: be sincere, honest, love others as you do yourself, no violence to your fellow Koreans, love your country, do not lament over a paucity of leaders, and consider yourself becoming a leader, to quote a few salient ones (Choo et al. 1987, pp. 190–195; Ahn 1979, pp. 33–37).

While some zero in the ethical aspects of Ahn's life, others analyze his pragmatic aspects. To cite a few examples of Ahn's pragmatically driven exhortations, have a skill, be educated, build trust, and do lose sight of the importance of finance. Still, others focus on his contributions to the Korean independence movement, as a political organizer and a politician (Han 1993; Gu 1994, pp. 101–105)

Lately, we hear the revisionists' criticism that the past writers portrayed Ahn too much as a moral leader. They argue that as much as Ahn was moralistic in his social outlook, he was also a militant revolutionary; they cite it as evidence. He was a firebrand, as a speaker. He supported militant approach to the Korean independence, as he did the progressive elements. In short, Ahn was a moralist as well as a fighter (Kim 2013; Hong 2003).

Some writers focus on Ahn's community organizing role among the early Korean immigrants in the U.S., Mexico, and Hawaii. His organizing skills are credited with having brought the immigrant groups together and inculcated them with nationalism. Ahn gave a life and a purpose to the early Korean immigrant communities during the times when they lived a forlorn life (Cha 2010, pp. 192–193; Rhee 1998; Gardner 1979).

Methodological orientation

With respect to this study's methodological orientation, the interpretive sociologists' V*erstehen* approach may be the best characterization. That is, stepping into the actors' shoes, attempting to understand what their thinking and actions meant to them. It is a qualitative understanding rather than a quantitative inference. What was it that they perceived and understood that moved them to do what they did?

This meant that how many works a given researcher read and reviewed was not as important as how deeply he thought about what he read and researched in terms of what this may have meant to the actors under study.

Three sages' values and perspectives: stepping outside of oneself

When one fights a system as formidable as the state, imperialism, and the military, he/she ought to have more than intelligence or wisdom. Intelligence, wit, and wisdom will not take one very far. Three sages, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ahn Chang Ho realized this early on in their struggle for justice.

When Gandhi faced the British colonial officials and their unscrupulous apartheid policy in South Africa, his initial reaction was one of powerlessness. After all, he was confronting the almighty British Empire and its administrative and military apparatus. King also faced overwhelming odds when he was challenging the deeply embedded segregation in the American South. Ahn had the same helpless feeling when he decided to fight Japanese imperialism and military. Gandhi, King, and Ahn each drew their respective strength from challenges outside of themselves.

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi started from a view that oppression of one group of human beings by another group of human beings was contrary to what means to be human. What makes us human is not our flesh or appearance but our soul. Imperialism, colonialism, slavery, and racism are

designed to enhance one group's materialism. Materialism corrupts the human soul and obviates humanness.

The soul does not lie or cheat. Embedded in the soul is truth. Truth defies hatred. Truth never betrays. Truth values and loves all things, seen and unseen. It seeks to coexist with all beings. Therefore, the oppressor as well as the oppressed should strive to save their soul from corruption and redeem their soul's goodness.

To do this, to borrow Gandhi's term, one has to cleanse himself. He called it self-purification. That is, become loving and caring. Stay away from malice, violence, and materialism. Confront injustice with love, compassion, and understanding. This will help save your soul as well as your oppressor's. This way you touch your oppressor's heart and soul.

Once you reach your oppressor's heart and soul, Gandhi believed, they will change. With it, their institutions and values change. Thus, Gandhi's non-violent resistance was born.

Gandhi called this soul-driven approach, *Satyagraha* (satya—soul; graha—force) (Iyer 1973, p. 41; Moon 1969, pp. 48–61).

To Gandhi, you approach politics or social action not so much to reach your political or social goal as to realize your spirituality. This is what the Satyagraha way of engaging in one's endeavor means. Thus, Gandhi's fast, ascetic life and pacifism were extensions of his effort to achieve his spirituality. The primary difference between an ordinary religious person who could lead such spiritual life and the one Gandhi led was that he fused his beliefs and values with social reform.

Satyagraha applied to politics means an inseparability of politics and religion. Here, religion does not refer to sectarian religions. Gandhi is quoted to have said that "By religion I do not mean formal religion or customary religion but that religion that underlies all religions" (Moon 1969, p. 287; Prahbu and Rao 1963, pp. 246–247). Underlying all religions is the human soul, its goodness, love, and truth.

Where did Gandhi's beliefs come from? Identifying Gandhi solely with Hinduism is too simplistic. Gandhi accepted the Hindu creed, the caste system but abhorred its product, the "untouchables," calling it sinful (Moon 1969, p. 133). He devoted much of his civil rights effort to freeing the "untouchables" from their squalor and discrimination. One can trace Gandhi's pacifism and asceticism to Jainism's stress on non-violence and sacrificial life. Serving suffering humanity and thereby, cleansing oneself was following in the Buddha's footsteps. A Christian hymn was often sung in his prayer meetings, as there were recitations from the Koran and the Upanishads (Iyer 1973, pp. 156–157). Gandhi was ecumenical.

If *Satyagraha* served Gandhi in his social activism, what was his political philosophy? Gandhi said that he was his own socialist. He meant he was very much in favor of just distribution of income and wealth, but objected to doing it by the state; for the state uses violence and coercion. He preferred persuasion, self-reform, and volition as ways of achieving distributional justice to socialism's state intervention and hierarchy (Bose 1971, pp. 79–90; Moon 1969, pp. 133–135).

Marin Luther King, Jr

King's struggle for civil rights in the depth of the American South was an uphill battle. Segregation laws and policies were so entrenched that the White people were not going to peacefully give up their privileges. Drawing on his Christian beliefs, King made an

important decision: love fellow whites. They are the same human beings as Negroes. The only difference is skin color.

Upon being released from jail in Montgomery after the bus boycott in 1955, King returned to the pulpit of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery and said this:

> —If we are exploited everyday, if we are trampled over every day, don't ever let anyone pull you so low as to hate them. We must use the weapon of love. We must have compassion and understanding for those who hate us. — I want you to love your enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love them (Sitkoff 2008, p. 41).

Love conquers your fear and gives you strength. At the same time it changes you. In turn, it changes your enemy to a loving creature. A white librarian wrote a letter to the editor of *The Montgomery Advertiser*, the major newspaper in Montgomery, testifying how King and his followers' quiet yet dignified demonstration changed his mind. He wrote:

> It is hard to imagine a soul so dead, — as not to be moved with admiration at the quiet dignity, discipline, and dedication with which the Negroes have conducted their boycott. Their cause and their conduct have filled me with great sympathy, pride, humility and envy. I envy their unity, their good humor, their fortitude and their willingness to suffer for great Christian and democratic principles (Smith 1981; Sitkoff 2008, pp. 36–37).

What King as a Christian believed was that human beings have a great capacity for transformation and redemption. Although King himself admired Gandhi and even went to India for inspiration from Gandhi's legacies, his sources of beliefs remained within the Judeo–Christian tradition. While his beliefs remained Christian, Gandhi's non-violent resistance provided him with the means by which to implement his approach to social reform. King said that "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation –while Gandhi furnished the method" (Sitkoff 2008, p. 222).

In the later years of his movement, King was despondent over the slow pace at which Black Americans were making progress. Notwithstanding the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, abject poverty, racism, exploitation of the weak, and inequality all around made King conclude that American society ought to be restructured. About poverty in America, King said in one of his speeches in reference to restructuring:

> Why are there 40 million poor people in America? When you ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth.—You begin to ask the capitalistic economy.—an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring (Sitkoff 2008, p. 224).

Quoting Thomas Jefferson's saying that "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." King went on to conclude that we may need "Christian democratic socialism." In his, *Where Do We Go from Here*? King wrote that he wants a "socially conscious democracy," where there is no such gulf between "superfluous wealth and abject poverty." Everyone has "a decent house, an adequate education and enough money to provide for basic necessities for one's family" (Sitkoff 2008, p. 155).

Ahn Chang Ho

Ahn was born in 1878 in Korea's northwest to a family of a literate but a poor farm background. He was born in troubled times in Korean history. Korea's traditional patron

state, China, was declining, as was the corrupt Korean Kingdom. Rising Japan was bent to overtake Chinese influence in the Korean peninsula. As a 16-year-old teen, Ahn witnessed Chinese and Japanese fighting in his hometown during the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. The war was a fight over who was going to have the upper hand over the Korean peninsula. The Japanese won the war and Korea was soon to lose its sovereignty to Japan, which it eventually did in 1910.

When the Japanese and Chinese were fighting over Korea, the Koreans themselves were largely helpless. This awakened young Ahn Chang Ho to nationalism. He questioned. Why cannot the Koreans be the master of their own destiny? He reached a startling conclusion for a 16 year old. This was because Korea was powerless. How did the Koreans end up this way? How could they recoup themselves to be their own master?

Three personal events shaped Ahn's quest for a response to the foregoing questions. The first was his Confucius upbringing and his early education in the Chinese classics. The second was meeting American missionaries, followed by his conversion to Christianity and enrollment in a missionary-run school that gave him modern education. The third was going to America to further his study. His attaining an American education did not materialize in any formal sense, but he gained 13 years of life experience in the US.

The foregoing three sources of influence made Ahn Chang Ho multifaceted. His Confucius background shaped a part of his political outlook. It was a Confucius-based humanism. He believed that how well a society and the state are run depended on how virtuous a person or persons ran it. Hence, reform individuals; you will reform society (Chang 1993).

However, for the purpose of the social reform Korea needed, as for how virtuous a person one ought to be, he does not rely on Confucianism. He draws on his Christian beliefs and American life experience. This is evident in his reasoning as to why his fellow Koreans lost their country and what they ought to do to regain it (Han 1993, pp. 128–130; Han 2000, pp. 58–74).

Ahn chided his fellow Koreans to never blame Japanese for the loss of their country. He asked them to look at their inner selves. How weak they were, how morally bankrupt they were, and how divided they were! They were hardly the type of individuals Korea needed in a time of a Darwinian competitive world. Ahn encouraged Koreans to become truthful, morally upright, well informed and educated, task-oriented, and have a mind-set capable of placing collective interest above self-interest.

In addition, Ahn argued that Koreans must believe in love and equality, and spurn the literati, hierarchy, and status. Do not use violence on compatriots. All Koreans ought to learn to love each other. Be respectful of each other. Be a good listener and help others (Lee 1998a, b).

Since the Korean officials and masses are deficient in these qualities and attributes, they lost their country to Japan. Therefore, blame no one but oneself. Virtuous and moral, yet, practically oriented individuals add up to a nation's strength. Once these individuals are united, they may yield enormous strength and power.

Ahn Chang Ho's perspective is that an individual can grow and develop over and beyond one's culture and social milieu. He was open to learning from and acquiring new ideas and values from a wide range of sources from the East and West. It did not particularly matter to him whether ideas came from the right or left.

As long as the ideas were useful to the cause of Korean independence and nationalism, he accommodated them. His open-mindedness to ideas and isms served to carry all factions to the road of national independence and development. He called it a grand public interest-driven coalition (Kim 2013; Lee 1998a, b).

Since Ahn placed an enormous trust in human capacity for change, cultivation, and development, he counseled patience, instead of instant gratification, preparation over short-term success, a gradual build-up of inner strength first, and then material development. He also highly valued unity.

In fact, Ahn stressed that even if Koreans do everything right but if they are not united, they would not accomplish anything. Another area of Ahn's emphasis was finance. Entrepreneurial effort capable of setting the independence movement on a stable financial footing was uppermost in his mind.

The foregoing shows that Ahn Chang Ho was eclectic, he blended many ideas into a single workable prescription. One can trace his concept of task, finance, job, and unity to his exposure to American capitalism and pragmatism, Ahn's belief in non-violence, love, and equality to his Christian faith. Honesty and faithfulness come from Protestant work ethic and Confucius piety. Being a good listener and seeking mutual respect stems from his observance of American democracy.

Nonetheless, if there was one value close to his heart, it was egalitarianism. He said that for a decent society, three equalities ought to be guaranteed: equal economic, political, and educational opportunities. In this regards, Ahn spoke highly of the British Fabian society, Robert Owen's type of social democracy and the welfare state (Gu 1994, p. 101).

Discussion

Non-violence, civil disobedience and a morally and an ethically driven social change effort elicits three consequences. One is that your non-violent approach as well as your morally and ethically respectful endeavor moves your opponents to answer your goodwill and peaceful intention likewise; that is, talk, negotiate, and amicably reach an agreement. The other is that your otherwise goodwill and pacifism provokes your opponents to react with violence. The state authorities rough you up, handcuff you, and even maim you, being a good example. The last is legacy and symbolism. To the violence-ridden world, your non-violence philosophy and high moral grounds rarely seen in ordinary people leave a lasting lesson and an inspiration.

In varying degrees and kinds, Gandhi, King, and Ahn had experienced all of the above three consequences of their actions. Gandhi had both success and failure. He failed to keep Indian continent from splitting into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India. Nor could he succeed in preventing massacre between Hindus and Muslims. Nor could he make much dent in the eradication of the "untouchables." But he succeeded in securing from the Britain the independence of India after over a century subjugation of his people to the British colonialism. He did it with an extraordinary means, non-violence.

King too has largely succeeded in laying a foundation for the eradication of racial segregation and discrimination in America. The political and social gains American Blacks made by their civil rights movement gave hope and aspiration to the minorities the world over suffering from discrimination be it based on color, class, or gender. Had it not been King, the civil rights movement may not have yielded the results it did. That includes King's legacy to the humanity: a non-violent direct action approach to social change.

Ahn could not see his homeland's independence from Japan in his lifetime. In this respect, his political accomplishment does not appear as substantive as Gandhi's or King's. The difference has a great deal to do with the different political cultures and systems each dealt with. Gandhi and King dealt with the English-speaking world; in fact, England and America, two different countries but made out of the same culture and heritage. Gandhi's

political opponent was Great Britain, where democratic and human rights tradition runs deep. Think of the British Magna Carta of 1215 and the Bill of Rights of 1688. Open debate, tolerance for differences, and compromise distinguish the British political culture.

So, while the British colonial officials were at times intransigent and obstinate with Gandhi, the liberal elements of the British society were quite sympathetic with Gandhi's struggle and respected his saintly approach. When he visited London to attend the Round-Table Conference to discuss India's future in 1931, the British received him with a rousing welcome. He had an audience with the King George in his loincloth at Buckingham Palace. He liked the Englishmen—their culture and values. He disagreed with their government policy.

King had as his object the United States of America, another country of a long-standing democracy. The American Bill of Rights is enshrined in its first ten amendments to its constitution. It too has an open political culture and civil liberties tradition. As King eloquently pointed out, the problem was that whites considered their good laws and values applicable only to their kinds. Nonetheless, white liberals' support for King was considerable. Both U.S. presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson warmly received King at the White House. Eventually, the U.S. Congress responded with the passage of Civil Rights Act in 1964, followed by the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Ahn had to deal with an entirely different system of government and political culture. The Japanese ruled Korea with an iron hand. Their officials were full of hubris, rigid and autocratic. They were come-down-hard imperialists who looked down on Koreans. Ahn and his compatriots were struggling against close-minded oppressors. When Ahn was called to meet with Japanese imperial architect, Ito Hirobumi in 1907, King's equivalent to meetings with Kennedy and Johnson, Hirobumi's intention was merely to co-opt Ahn in Japan's behalf. Ahn summarily rebuffed Ito's disingenuous offer (Lee 1998a, b).

When we look at Ahn's background, he too shared with Gandhi and King an affinity with the English-speaking world, however. Although Ahn spent much of his time in China and some in Korea, his home was in the United States. He and his newly wed wife came to America to study in 1902. Their five children were all born and raised in California. All in all, Ahn lived in the U.S. intermittently for 12 years.

He received his education in a Korean Christian school under American missionaries' instruction. He was baptized and became a Christian. An American missionary officiated at his wedding a day before he and his bride were to embark on their journey to the United States (Yi 2003).

After he and his family settled in California, he organized his fellow Korean immigrants into a self-help community. He made sure that they learned English, went to church, and learned American customs and values. He himself did a variety of jobs, picking oranges, domestic work, and went to school. Given his acute intelligence and sensitivity, Ahn had observed and absorbed American life styles and values.

In hindsight, his exposure to America, its people, customs, and values constituted an important source of his political perspectives and ideas. His vision of long-term preparation was to train and educate his people not to become good citizens of monarchy, or autocracy but to function in democracy.

Also, Ahn learned from capitalism the value of savings, capital formation, and good credit. He also learned that in a capitalist society such as the United States, what counts is not who you are but what you can do. Hence, his emphasis on learning and education in new knowledge, his insistence on the one person one skill rule and his openness to all regardless of region, gender, and status.

To bring up his people to live and function in this type of free and democratic independent Korea, he concluded that they ought to be prepared for it. The Young Korean Academy (Heung Sa Dahn) was built for this purpose, to produce leaders who could spearhead preparation for good citizenship and provide leadership to it.

Here is Ahn's global message. Any country aspiring to establish itself as an independent democratic nation drawing on either its indigenous or acquired moral and ethical beliefs or both can look up to Ahn's teachings and ideas. His agent, Young Korean Academy (Heung Sa Dahn) could serve as a model by which to accomplish their goal.

Conclusion

Violence is primordially rooted human trait. So are our love and compassion. Gandhi, King and Ahn attempted to draw on humanity to change their respective part of the world. Their non-violence philosophy was founded in their belief and trust in human goodness. But reality is that violence does not recede. In fact, it is an everpresent phenomenon. Why so? Here is our dilemma.We have the state to maintain law and order. The state checks violent impulse. But the state in its nature is a violence-ridden institution. It monopolizes the use of violence. Expecting the state to rid itself of the use of violent means is a fantasy, at least, at this stage of human civilization. This means one thing. For the chance of non-violence, its values and perspectives taking roots in human affairs is slim, as long as the nation-states remain the constituent parts of the world. It is somewhat ironic that Gandhi, King, and Ahn never questioned the raison d'etre of the state. In fact, their goal was a restoration of their respective nation-states to their rightful place.

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