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# < Full text of Konkuk University professors' declaration of state >

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## The subject of 'national reform' is the people

On April 16, 2014, the moment the Sewol ferry capsized, the people expected that the 300 or so remaining passengers on board would be rescued soon. Had they known the government's absurd incompetence and irresponsible attitude, the people would have run and rescued the sinking ship with chains. Passengers died while waiting for rescue, and the whole nation watched the scene and had to fall into a nightmare and shock that they were buried along with the passengers. Everyone prayed earnestly for a safe return, but only the agonizing sadness and boiling anger increased day by day.

As we watched the sinking process of the Sewol ferry, the rescue operation, and the treatment of the bereaved and the families of the missing, we deeply felt the contempt of human beings by the state power and capital. He was terrified of the catastrophe caused by injustice, corruption, greed and irresponsibility, and he felt disillusioned with the media that tried to cover the public's eyes and shut their ears and mouths. At the same time, as an older generation, I couldn't help but blame myself for the broken world. This is because we ourselves have either been sitting on the ivory tower of the university, riding on the sidelines or ignoring the social atmosphere that pursues only efficiency and economy.

Immediately after the accident, there were many voices calling for awakening and analyzing the overall insolvency and problems of Korean society, but the anger and guilt gradually eased and the political interest shifted to other issues. The ruling power desperately gathers supporters from the election campaign to bury the Sewol ferry disaster. However, we do not think it is time to return the Sewol ferry disaster to the past.

The state of affairs that emerged after the Sewol Ferry incident was as shocking as the disaster. At every opportunity, President Park Geun-hye evaded responsibility by accusing the captain of being a murderer, embarrassment to the people by bringing up the dismantling of the maritime police, and instigating the reform of the country by designating an absurd person as the prime minister. Some religious leaders did not hesitate to speak in vain, even abandoning their duty of mourning under the pretext of national stability. Government officials said they felt the responsibility, but behind the scenes, they monitored the movements of the bereaved

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Furthermore, in order to imprison and punish the participants of the Sewol ferry candlelight protests, the police induced crimes and carried out random arrests. Accordingly, we reaffirmed the fact that even though the authorities do not have the ability to save lives, they still possess the skills of repressive government.

The tragedy of the Sewol ferry is not limited to the victims and their families. Government authorities should know that they cannot solve this tragedy by freezing them in moderation. Even while the people feel a deep sense of guilt as survivors, the Blue House and the government are putting all responsibility for the accident, the Sewol ferry operator, and the Coast Guard and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries. Now, rather than revealing the truth of the Sewol ferry disaster, he is concentrating his energy on broadcasting the hunting of the Yoo Byung-eon family.

The only way to prevent absurd and inhumane accidents like the Sewol ferry disaster and to create a society that respects life is the realization of democracy that values the will of the people. Also, it is revealed that national reform is not something that the Blue House or a single government can carry out, but is only permitted to the people who are awake. The government must understand exactly what the people want, even for a moment, and manage the current situation. The people are demanding a complete reform of the government and institutions, not a proper tinkering. Accordingly, we demand the following while deeply aware of our social responsibility as scholars and our intrinsic obligations.

**1. Together with the bereaved families, we will never forget the '4.16 Sewol Ferry Tragedy', and we demand an investigation into the truth without a single suspicion and the punishment of those responsible.**

**1. We urge the establishment of a support system that heals the pain of all people involved in this tragedy and a fundamental social system that enables all citizens to live in peace.**

**1. We make it clear that disciplinary action, arrest, and containment alone cannot solve this dilemma. The government should immediately stop trying to stop the disciplinary pressure on teachers and the citizens' just voices of criticism with police force and punishment.**

**1. We demand the realization of the constitutional spirit that 'the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea rests with the people and all power comes from the people' and a true 'national transformation' in which the people, not the government, are the subjects.**

Expressing my deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the Sewol ferry disaster and the families of the missing,

2014. 6. 12.

Konkuk University Professor Ildong

Cheol-gu Ko Chang-woon Kwon Ji-hyang Kwon Hyung-jin Ki-seok Kim Kwang-su Kim Do-shik Kim Min-hee Kim Seong-min Kim Soo-young Kim Sook-jin Kim Young-beom Kim Young-jun Kim Eun-hyeong Kim Jae-mi Kim Jae-hyun Kim Jong-gap Kim Jong-gap Kim Ji-yoon Kim Ji-in Kim

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