

East Asia: Dangerous truth

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“Seeking the truth is dangerous.” My friend spoke those words with thoughtfulness. This was not an offhanded comment made dismissively in the moment. Rather, it was a conclusion reached after much thought, reading and conversation.

In the moment, her conclusion struck me as so obviously wrong. After all, I am a science student at a secular university, which boasts on its central building, “You will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

In my daily life, truth is never presented as dangerous. On the contrary, seeking truth is heralded in my culture. Yet the more I considered her words, the more I understood that I am the one who is wrong.

My friend spoke of the danger of finding truth because it may contradict her family’s beliefs. This was especially distasteful to her because losing her family’s favor or doing anything to bring them shame is an unthinkably painful idea.

I am reminded of Jesus’ words in Luke 14:26: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.”

My friend is right. Truth is dangerous. Yet it is truth alone that frees us.

A few minutes later, when my friend left for the bathroom, a girl she brought with her to meet us that day spoke up. She told me that she wants to find truth. She said she is searching many books and has questions about the Bible and Christianity. She said her friends do not like to speak about these topics with her because they also see the truth as too dangerous to search after.

We had a very good conversation, and by the end of the week, she had received a new Bible from our supervisor. I marvel at the work the Holy Spirit is doing in her life. God alone gave her a desire to seek truth—not in ignorance to the consequences, but rather because God is giving her eyes to see that truth is more valuable than the things we have on this earth. God is the one who connected her with us during our trip, and God will continue to guide her on the journey to truth. I am humbled by how quickly I fail to recognize false truths in my own life and culture that lead to death and comfort in exchange for the ultimate truth that leads to freedom.

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