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A Review of *Marginal Man's Notebook of the History of Contemporary Korea* by Jin Guangxi

Introduction

This article reviews the Korean translation of an introductory book to Korean contemporary history published in China. The author of the book, Jin Guangxi (K. Kim Gwanghui 金光熙), is a history professor at Yanbian University in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China. Jin visited Korea many times to converse with Korean scholars and to conduct an extensive survey and review of Korean research. This book is the extended edition of his 2014 publication, *History of the Republic of Korea* (*Da Han minguo shi*), which was based on the author's doctoral dissertation on the economic development during the Park Chung-hee regime. The author's academic background and research trajectory shows us the extensive nature of his research that resulted in this book. And the contents also include substantial amount of research done by Korean scholars.

The expression in the title, "marginal man" (*gyeonggyein*), is worth noting. Jin Guangxi appears to have a dual sense of identity of being an ethnic Korean with a Chinese nationality. Perhaps because of this position, Jin makes his own identity as a marginal man quite clear. In the preface, Jin writes that after publishing the *History of the Republic of Korea*, a Chinese reader called him leftist while at the same time his teacher Jin Chenggao (K. Kim Seongho) assessed that the book contains many rightist aspects. The author then adds that most Korean historians of contemporary history will agree with the latter.

It is not common for a single book to receive such opposite reviews. Aside from the book's contents, this is also closely related to the fact that Jin's book is not only published but also situated in a time and place where the two nation-states of Korea and China crossing paths. The distance between China as a socialist country and Korea as a capitalist country might be seen as the main backdrop of such different assessments, but things are not that simple. It is hard to see the socialism in China as a pure form of socialism—so mixed has it become with the market economy of capitalism. Korea is also basically formed on capitalism and liberalism, but a leftist tendency exists in several strata of social

and political movements. The respective hybrid realities of China and Korea are in turn compounded by the fact that the author and his book are placed in a crevice between the two countries. These multiple hybridities probably led the author to contemplate his own identity as a marginal man.

As a Chinese national, Jin Guangxi is situated outside of Korea, which means his point of view is inevitably that of an outsider. It is common for aspects not readily discernible to an insider to catch the gaze of an outsider. One of the benefits of an outsider's perspective is thus the way it sheds light on what one fails to see in one's own self. At the same time, Jin is not purely on the outside. He is an ethnic Korean living in China and therefore is an overseas Korean, conditions that curiously connect him to Korea/ns. He resembles a Möbius strip in which the inside continues on to become the outside.

Although the book does not clarify why the Chinese reader assessed it as being left wing, it is nevertheless intriguing that the book could be considered as containing a leftist perspective in China. This fact inversely shows how much China has moved to the Right. As Jin predicts, it is quite possible that Korean contemporary history researchers will judge the book as having a rightist tendency. This, in turn, is because the critical academic trend in Korea has a leftist streak. Therefore, an examination of the status of the author and the book—both of which exist between two countries/nations—is warranted. Completely opposite conclusions may be reached depending on the criteria used to review the book as well as the standpoint from which it was evaluated. This also means that a review of the book's status may reveal how two different axiomatic systems interfere with each other.

Marginal men both exist at and move across the border. The life and thoughts of these moving bodies, by way of a Möbius strip connecting the two disconnected axiomatic systems, can be as dangerous as a double-edged sword. The two opposing reviews of the book that call it left wing and right wing may well be the manifestation of how this double-edged sword can cut both axiomatic systems. At any rate, the book deals with the Korean history—contemporary Korean history at that—meaning that the blade of the sword primarily points towards Korea. It is difficult to conclude the significance this book will have in the unique axiomatic system called Korea. It may overlap with or diverge from the history of Korea as seen from Japan, Russia, or Europe.

Putting Jin's personal background aside, it would not have been an easy task for Jin to find a stable position given the long history and complicated

nature of the relationship between Korea and China. For a long time, review of Korean history from the outside was majorly done either through the modern Western view of the United States and Europe or through the colonizer's view of Japan. Considering the geographical conditions of Korea and its history of being colonized, the breakout of a war in Korea, and the overall state of the Cold War, this was perhaps inevitable. The gaze of China and the Soviet Union, or Russia, was concentrated on North Korea and could not readily expand to south of the 38 parallel. But now, the geo-political situation and history of the twentieth century is behind us, and the twenty-first century calls for a new vision. It is clear that China cannot be left out in that regard. This book is perhaps the product of a certain border that both divides and connects the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The Topology of Hybridity

The beauty of this book is in its hybridity. Given how Jin Guangxi straddles both Korea and China and how the book was published in both countries, hybridity seems unavoidable. Jin is an ethnic minority in China and also a minority in the context of Korea as an overseas Korean. As Jin himself emphasizes, his position at the border leads him to be identified as a minority from both sides of the border. Being a minority in turn means to deviate from the mainstream point of view. This decentralized position is a good place to sit and obliquely observe the hegemonic perspective of a axiomatic system. The gaze from the border also provides grounds for a counter-hegemony.

From the viewpoint of China, Korea is not only just another foreign country; it is a small country along its borders, which makes it difficult to draw much interest from China. To China, which constitutes the Group of 2 (G2), Korea is simply a country along its northeast border. On top of that, the existence of North Korea relativizes the value of South Korea, leading the latter to be perceived as only half of what it originally constitutes. The relations between North and South Korea are intricately entangled with the North Korea-United States and North Korea-China relations, somewhere along which lies the relationship between South Korea and China. Thus, every time a jolt runs across the international state of affairs, China's perception of South Korea accordingly fluctuates as well.

As China proceeded to reform and open its economy, the rapid industrialization strategy adopted by South Korea appears to have functioned as a fairly important model. Currently, with China's industrialization having progressed considerably, South Korea is seen as China's competition as well as a small hill to surpass. Then there is also the fact that Korea is the motherland of the ethnic Koreans living in China, who are ethnic minorities living along the border that must be managed and controlled from China's point of view. This is backdrop of the so-called China's Northeast Project. From China's perspective, it must deal with the military and political effect of the alliance between South Korea and the United States. China's tense response to the placement of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is a good example. Simply put, Korea is for China an example to refer to in terms of a state-led industrialization project, a competitor in the market, a country affected by the international politics of the G2, and an ethnic minority along the border that needs to be managed. This hybridity is what makes the image of Korea multifaceted in the eyes of China/the Chinese.

Further complicating things is the uniqueness of the area where Jin Guangxi was born and bred, namely, the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, or more broadly, the three provinces of Northeast China encompassing Manchuria and Jiandao. Beginning from the modern period, Manchuria was a place of intense turmoil. Millions of Koreans migrated there; it was the base of armed anti-Japan struggles; and after the Manchurian Incident, Japan ruled the region through the apparatus of Manchukuo. Manchuria was also plagued by the Chinese Civil War and the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution. The area is currently undergoing enormous social changes due to industrialization following economic reform. Amid all this, a reverse diaspora unfolded after the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China in 1992, during which hundreds of thousands of ethnic Koreans formerly living in China flowed into South Korea while tens of thousands that escaped North Korea flowed into Manchuria. If the earlier half of the twentieth century was marked by colonization, war, and revolutionary movements, the latter half was swept up in huge socioeconomic changes due to economic development and industrialization. Manchuria, like the Korean Peninsula, was a time and place that reflected the raging waves of the modern and contemporary history of Northeast Asia.

Consequently, ideological hybridity is only natural. Beginning from the twentieth century, various ideologies including socialism, nationalism, anarchism, statism, totalitarianism, liberalism, and democracy became entangled, and diverse discourses deriving from them ran rampant. The far right and the far left contended with and infiltrated each other, while different nationalist ideologies clashed against each other and resulted in numerous tragedies. Political situations shifted. Socialism turned conservative; nationalism newly rose to power; capitalism and the market economy spread; and liberalism and individualism have been gaining strength anew.

This book was born from a period and place in which this massive hybridity repeatedly formed, dissolved, and re-formed throughout history. As a result, the book is marked by clear traces of the complex entanglement of the gazes of China, Korea, and of the ethnic Koreas living in China. Accordingly, Jin's position as the author is always unstable. He does not remain in one place and see things from a single point of view. Instead, he relentlessly moves around in the attempt to examine the contemporary history of Korea with a multiple, varying, and at times even contradictory gaze. Like a bird that cannot stay still, Jin traverses the peninsula's twentieth century and takes shots of the aerial view from several different angles

Jin's perception shows a considerable difference from the flight path taken by the southern half of the peninsula. As Jin experienced in person, the southern half is where the absence of English is regarded as degrading academic conversation. It is a unique axiomatic system whose decades-long, intimate association with Western, American, and Japanese academic circles has formed a firm institutional, discursive, and conventional structure of academia. This axiomatic system is as hybrid as Yanbian and China. For instance, in some cases even over 90% of the faculty is made up by people with doctoral degrees received overseas, although it depends on the academic department. In 2010, 80% of professors teaching in the humanities and social sciences in Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Korea University had studied abroad and received doctorates overseas (*Hanguk daehak sinmun*, 2010, July 13). With the exception of some specific majors such as national history of Korea, Korean literature, and Korean classical music, it may well be said that the center of academia in South Korea lies overseas.

That being said, the field of national history of Korea is also not completely free from the intellectual hegemony of Western academic circles either. This is inevitable, as modern academic disciplines for historical studies

used today originated from the West. On top of that, the academic foundations built by Japanese scholars during the colonial period also influenced the field substantially. Of course, the influences of nationalism structured by figures such as Sin Chaeho and Jeong Inbo as well as the influences of Marxism by Baek Namun cannot be dismissed. Ideological competition between the Left and the Right after liberation, efforts to overcome colonial historiography, the new rise of nationalism, and the revival of Marxism all suggest a formidable degree of complexity in the hybridity of Korea's contemporary history.

In sum, this book is constituted by the compounded hybridities of China, Yanbian, and Korea. Although the book is nominally about Korea's contemporary history, the context that gave birth to the book is difficult to limit to the narrative of a single country and instead spans across several strata. The examination of the topology of this book therefore needs a unique interpretive horizon connecting the axiomatic systems of China and Korea. This is why comprehending the book is not a simple task. As an introductory book, it is an easy read, but between the lines are complicated contexts that cannot be skipped over.

The Pitfalls of Factuality

Although all history is destined to face the issue of factuality, the complicated context of this book makes the task of fact-checking even more important. If the factuality of an event is understood differently, grasping the already complex context of a book that spans two axiomatic systems can become even more convoluted. Even for the sake of progress in any future discussion, making sure both sides are on the same page regarding the basic facts is essential. Of course, it is difficult for any book to be perfectly based on facts, not to mention a book that surveys the complicated contemporary history of Korea spanning over 70 years. Nonetheless, in this book there are quite a number of factual errors hard to simply overlook.

The errors are especially concentrated in the section on the Space of Liberation (*haebang gonggan*), the period that immediately followed Korea's liberation from Japanese occupation and continued until the outbreak of the Korean war. Understandably, fully detailing the complicated situation of this period in an introductory book is daunting. Books published in Korea are no exception. Some errors, however, are too important to browse over and instead

warrant an inspection. For instance, the account that the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) government gave its approval to the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (hereafter, Provisional Government) needs a reexamination (Jin 2019, 17). Although the Chiang Kai-shek regime attempted to approve of the Provisional Government, it had no choice but to defer its approval after being met with opposition from the United States (Go 2009, 14).

Next, Jin (2019, 20) writes that during late August of 1945, both the People's Committee and Security Squad commissioned by the Committee for the Preparation of National Construction were founded in 145 cities and counties across both North and South Koreas. However, the proclamation of the People's Republic by the Committee was in early September, when it was announced that the US military forces would be stationed in Korea. That means there was no People's Committee in August. Some areas may have used the term People's Committee, but for the author it would have been prudent to refrain from referring to the existence of a People's Committee of the Committee for the Preparation of National Construction in August 1945.

The statement from the author that the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) or Lieutenant General John R. Hodge held themselves like occupation forces and maintained a domineering attitude because they regarded Korea as a second-rank country unlike the USSR, China, or Japan is also controversial (Jin 2019, 21). The attitude of the United States can be analyzed from several different angles. First of all, there is a fair chance that racial prejudice or a Western-centric attitude led to them to depreciate the non-West. This was not a problem limited to America; it concerned the entirety of Western imperialism. In fact, it was how the modern West generally saw the non-West. As terms such as *jap* or *gook* show, the West, including the United States, looked towards the non-West, be it China, Japan, or Korea, through a gaze full of prejudice. This is directly connected to the issue of colonialism. Western imperialist countries tried to keep their colonies from the past after World War 1 and even after World War 2. Accordingly, fierce struggles for independence broke out in places such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Although the United States recognized the independence of the Philippines, it still resembled other imperialist countries, which meant that America barely acknowledged any political statement made by the colonies as it led the postwar efforts to deal with the aftermath. Although it distinguished Japan from Korea and approved of Korea's separation from Japan, the United

States, like other imperialist countries, did not regard Korea as a liberated country. Given this context, the account that America saw Korea as a second-rank country unlike its view of other countries not only is misleading but hardly is an accurate explanation of the circumstances during then.

Using a categorization similar to how the USAMGIK grouped the political camps in Korea, that is, left wing, moderate, and right wing, Jin (2019, 22) confusingly includes the New People's Party of South Korea both under moderate and left wing. Although this may simply be a typographical error, a more meticulous assessment of the political forces is nonetheless needed. The USAMGIK divided political forces during then into right wing, moderate-right wing, moderate-left wing, and left wing. Using this classification and dividing the moderate into a left and right moderate may be a more accurate depiction of the political landscape during then.

Jin (2019, 23) also writes that the Provisional Government was unable to earn the trust of the United States because it argued for the establishment of an independent and autonomous government. This view is quite misleading. From America's point of view, the Provisional Government appeared to be an organization under the strong influence of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), whose interests would clash with those of the United States. Establishment of an independent and autonomous government, however, was something nearly all political camps at that time were espousing; it was not only voiced by the Provisional Government. Syngman Rhee and the Korea Democratic Party also argued for this as did the Communist Party on the Left. The issue was more about what independence and autonomy would entail. It is thus hard to conclude that only the Provisional Government was supportive of independence and autonomy while the others were not.

In the following page, H. Merrell Benninghoff is described as the political advisor of the then Military Governor of Korea, Archibald V. Arnold (Jin 2019, 24), when the more accurate description would be that he was Hodge's political advisor, or, in broader terms, the political advisor of the US Armed Forces in Korea. Because the military governor was merely a subordinate of Commanding General Hodge, Arnold would not have been able to have a separate political advisor. The correct description would be that the US Department of State sent a political advisor to assist the commander-in-chief, who was Hodge.

Jin also describes Song Jinu as a figure who believed that only the Provisional Government in Chongqing should seize power after the liberation,

while Kim Seongsu was allied with those who supported Syngman Rhee. This cannot be overlooked. Kim Seongsu and Song Jinu were best friends since they were young and were practically indistinguishable in terms of political stance or opinion. As is well known, Han Hyeonu, who assassinated Song Jinu, was not unrelated to the Provisional Government. On the day he was assassinated, Song engaged in a fierce argument with the key figures of the Provisional Government. The Korea Democratic Party's support of the Provisional Government was a political strategy to oppose the Left, not a recognition of the Provisional Government's political hegemony. Kim Seongsu and Song Jinu shared the same opinion. Therefore, a narrative that places both on opposite places along the political spectrum is quite problematic.

The assessment of the Left-Right coalition and the Workers' Party of South Korea is also one-sided and misleading (Jin 2019, 36). Specifically, Jin writes that the Communist Party of Korea did not properly grasp America's intention of carrying out the Left-Right coalition, reduced the activities of the Democratic People's Front, and that its rapid radicalization helped justify the right wing's criticism that the progressive national movement was a movement of the Reds. However, the Communist Party accurately saw through the US's efforts to coalesce the Left and the Right—it was to excise the moderate leftists from the Left and pull them towards the Right. The Communist Party accordingly warned Yeo Unhyeong several times and remained critical from beginning to end. Therefore, arguing that the Communist Party misjudged the situation without providing any supporting evidence is hasty and dangerous. Jin also does not give any particular evidence regarding why the Communist Party reduced the activities of the Democratic People's Front. His narrative that the Left-Right coalition weakened the Democratic People's Front is factually untrue. Yeo Unhyeong remained with the Democratic People's Front to the very end and did not give up his stance as moderate-left.

The author's reference to the alleged rapid radicalization of the Communist Party and the Workers' Party of South Korea is an ahistorical assessment that does not consider the state of affairs during then. The USAMGIK set out to conduct a large-scale oppression of the Left as soon as the US-Soviet Joint Commission went into recess. Repressive measures the Communist Party found hard to endure were carried out, beginning with the Joseon Jeongpansa incident, the suspension of leftist newspapers, and orders to arrest Bak Heonyeong and Yi Gangguk. It was more or less inevitable that the Communist Party

shifted political course in response. The general strike of September and the October Uprising were not just events preplanned and led by the Communist Party. Instead, they were large-scale struggles formed by the concentration of widespread public anger against the misruling of the USAMGIK. It does not make logical sense to argue that a single party, which was then only a year old, could organize a mass struggle by mobilizing millions of people. The October struggle was more of a spontaneous uprising which was not controlled by anyone.

After the October Uprising, the Communist Party merged with the People's Party and the New Democratic Party to form the Workers' Party of South Korea. This was not the rapid radicalization of the party but an attempt to go closer to the public. Considering how it sought to become a popular party and increase its party members even as the general state of affairs grew worse, the factuality behind the author's so-called rapid radicalization of Workers' Party of South Korea requires careful deliberation. It is hard to agree with the author's argument that the Communist Party justified the demagoguery of the right wing that denigrated the progressive national movement as a movement of the Reds. To blame leftist political movements using the far right's anti-communist language, including denigrating the Left by calling them the Reds, does not help at all the task of obtaining an accurate assessment of the situation.

The description of the founding of the Workers' Party of South Korea is also problematic. Despite the fact that the Workers' Party of South Korea was made by the coming together of three parties—the Communist Party of Korea, the People's Party, and the New Democratic Party of South Korea—Jin (2019, 38) not only writes that it was formed by the merging of the Communist Party and the New Democratic Party but also erroneously calls the Workers' Party of *South Korea* the Workers' Party of *Korea*. As is well known, the Workers' Party of Korea was the official title of the party after the Workers' Party of both North Korea and South Koreas merged in 1949. Prior to that, there were separate parties in the north and south, which were each called by their respective titles. The official title of the party that was formed in 1946 was thus the Workers' Party of South Korea, not the Workers' Party of Korea.

Because this book is a Korean history book geared toward Chinese readers, the author needs to be particularly cautious in its narration. Since Chinese readers who do not have any background knowledge will likely accept the contents as they are written, it may end up providing them with incorrect

facts of Korean history. Simply stating the facts, albeit dryly, would be a more appropriate choice of narration.

The account of the May 10th general election also shows errors even in the basic facts. Jin (2019, 44) writes that the turnout barely reached 30% without providing any supporting evidence. According to official statistics, however, the turnout was more than 95%. Even taking into account how much confusion existed during the era under the USAMGIK, a 30% turnout is hard to accept. The figure—the source of which I have no idea—seems to have been emphasized in order to critically assess the occupation of the USAMGIK. Be that as it may, the most important and basic requirement in narrating history, however, is to base it on accurate facts.

The United Nation's resolution to approve of the government of the Republic of Korea is also inaccurately described. Jin (2019, 51) writes that the UN proclaimed that the "government of the Republic of Korea is the only lawful government within the precincts of Korea," which is incorrect. The resolution clearly specified that it applied to areas where elections had taken place. In other words, it was a resolution that might not apply to areas where there had not been an election. This has long been a controversial issue within Korea, and various interpretations still exist today. Incorrectly writing about such a sensitive and controversial topic may lead to further misunderstanding and dispute.

The size of the damages caused by the Yeosu-Suncheon Incident is stated as resulting in over 9,400 deaths and over 23,000 arrests without evidence (Jin 2019, 57). The damages of this incident, however, vary largely depending on which statistics is consulted. Some state the death toll as being between 2,000 and 5,000. The fact that the author records the damages as such without evidence despite it being difficult to accurately assess the figures at the present is troubling.

Next is the section related to farmland reform. The largest problem is how Jin writes that the USAMGIK's disposal of vested farmland did not happen. More specifically, Jin (2019, 58) writes that the USAMGIK only disposed of small businesses and real estate, and that the vested lands were registered and dealt with by the Korean government. Needless to say, this is clearly wrong. Although the USAMGIK dragged their feet, they disposed of most of the vested farmland by May of 1948, right before the establishment of the government of the Republic of Korea. The New Korea Company (Sin Han gongsa) disposed of

its farmland, which it had confiscated from the Japanese Government General of Korea and from individuals. The farmland reform carried out by the Korean government in 1950 was regarding the land owned by Koreans. Compared to this gross inaccuracy, other errors such as writing land price securities (*jiga jeunggwon*) as land price certificates (*jiga jeungseo*), the rice-collection order (*migok sujimnyeong*) as requisition (*gongchul*), and the Korean National Preparatory Army (Gukgun junbidae) as national security guards (Gukgun gyeongbidae) seem rather trivial.

The casualty of the Korean War is also inaccurately given. Jin writes that 10% of the population of both South and North Koreas, or 3 million lives, was lost. This is an exaggeration. According to records by the Institute for Military History of the Ministry of National Defense, the number of deaths in North and South Korean military forces, civilians, the UN forces, and the Chinese forces are reported to be around a total of 2 million (Bak 2014). Although confirming the exact figures are difficult when it comes to war statistics, 3 million deaths still feel excessive. Furthermore, currently we do not have any verifiable statistics in Korea to argue that the deaths from the Korean military forces and civilians reached 3 million. While Jin refers to a Chinese book titled *Korean History of Today* (*Dangdai Hanguoshi*) as his source, it would have been better had he compared the figure with statistics from Korea. In addition, the figure of 10 million separated family members do not refer to the population at that time but include additional family members from following generations, which makes it inappropriate to use as a number showing how bad the situation was during then.

The argument that there were no longer any camps taking a third line to promote democratic socialism after the Progressive Party Incident and the execution of Jo Bong'am is also incorrect (Jin 2019, 88). As is well known, the reformist line of the moderate leftists since liberation became markedly active after the April 19 Revolution in 1960. In other words, political forces pursuing democratic socialism or socialist democracy outdid Jo Bong'am and the Progressive Party and shook Korean political circles only two years after the Progressive Party Incident. Although their election results were unremarkable, it nonetheless points out the inaccuracy in saying that there could no longer be a political camp walking a third course.

Even the explanation of economical growth shows factual errors. Jin (2019, 99) states that following the three-year economic revival plan, the

government carried out the first of the five-year economic and social develop plans, which led to rapid growth in the heavy industry sector and an average of 20% in annual economic growth between 1954 and 1960. This is completely false. In reality, the figure was 5.3%. Even looking only at the production of the manufacturing industry, the economic growth rate between 1955 and 1960 was 13.6% (Kim 2016). Jin gives no explanation or citation regarding how he came up with the figure of 20%. Moreover, the first of the five-year social and economic development plans was carried out between 1962 and 1966, while the rapid growth in heavy chemical industries occurred in the 1970s. None of the chronological information Jin provides or his understanding of the times matches what really happened.

The part on public safety cases also contains numerous factual errors. Jin (2019, 214) misleadingly writes about the 1968 Incident of the Revolutionary Party for Reunification as if it took place around the time of the constitutional amendment to allow a third term and also writes that four people including Kim Gyunam and Kim Jillak were arrested, which is different from the truth. The number of people arrested due to the Incident of the Revolutionary Party for Reunification reached a staggering 158, with 50 being detained. Three people were sentenced to death and executed: Kim Jongtae, Yi Mungyu, and Kim jillak. Kim Gyunam, however, had actually been arrested during the 1969 espionage incident. Their execution dates are also given in the book somewhat confusingly. In reality, the only one executed in 1972 was Kim Jillak; Kim Jongtae and Yi Mungyu had already been executed earlier. The fact that the South Korean National Liberation Front Preparation Committee incident became known after the death of Park Chung-hee also differs from the truth (Jin 2019, 214). This incident was announced on October 9, 1979, when Park Chung-hee was alive.

Errors can also be discovered in the narration on student movements during the 1980s. Saying that the Constituent Assembly (CA) group separated from the People's Democracy (PD) line is wrong—it should be the other way around (Jin 2019, 312). In the series of events, the CA group was formed before the PD line. Equally problematic is the explanation that the objective of student movements was not the construction of socialism (Jin 2019, 312). After the mid 1980s, most of the student movements made their leanings toward socialism quite clear.

This section has thus far briefly looked at parts of the book that show

factual errors. The sections on the liberation space show the most errors, while the number of errors decreases towards the back, probably because the author's specialty is the Park Chung-hee era. It is also only natural that the more recent the events, the lesser the errors in their narration. In the liberation space, in contrast, many major events happened during a short period of time, and given the many complicated events such as the interference of the US and the USSR, it is not easy to know all the facts in detail. In addition, because reviewing a large number of primary sources when writing a general introduction is usually unfeasible, authors tend to reference secondary sources, which seems to have made fact-checking for this book all the more difficult.

Still, inaccuracies in basic facts diminish the reliability of the book, not to mention convey incorrect information to the readers. Caution on the part of the author is required. Because many secondary sources usually narrate facts in varying ways, it is important to review them closely and select the most accurate way of explaining facts. Jin also seems to have unknowingly included what he already knew as common sense into the narrative. The Chinese Nationalist Party regime's approval of the Provisional Government is a case in point. Many people think the Chiang Kai-shek regime approved of the Provisional Government, but assuming such rumors as fact, which they may turn out not to be, as is the case here, requires utmost caution.

Industrialization and Economic Development Strategies

This book is based on *Park Chung-hee and Developmental Dictatorship*: *1961-1979* (*Bak Jeonghi wa gaebal dokjae*: *1961~1979*), the monograph version of Jin Guangxi's doctoral dissertation. The book reviewed here is in essence an expansion of that monograph both on the period preceding and following economic development of the Park Chung-hee era, the subject in which Jin specialized. For this reason, the part covering economic development during the Park Chung-hee regime is more lengthy and detailed. Economic development during the Park Chung-hee era is a sensitive subject in Korean history as well as socially and politically, and the book provides its readers with a number of issues to debate.

First of all, the book attributes the success of the industrialization model of the Park Chung-hee era to the enactment and execution of the independent

national developmental plan by the elites—in particular, the technocrats from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry such as Kim Jeongryeom and O Woncheol. Instead of blindly following the opinion of the US, these elites carried out the plan, risking conflict in Korea-US relations (Jin 2019, 159). According to Jin, these bureaucrats were capitalistically minded as had been guided and played a role in implementing policies to carry out Park Chung-hee's plan to emulate the Japanese model of modernization. Jin (2019, 158) also argues that the government accepted the US's demand to move towards a free market system in its own way by combining the free market system with the policy of state-protected trade.

This position seems to be related to the developing country model, which recognizes the efficiency of the state- and bureaucrat-led economic development strategy. Notably, Jin relatively downplays the role of the US and highly rates the self-directedness of Korean state bureaucrats. This, however, is a one-sided assessment. From the beginning, economic development was closely related to the changes in the US's policies towards South Korea. The New Look policy of the Eisenhower regime aimed to decrease aid and focus on self-reliant economic development, and Rostow of the Kennedy government pushed ahead with economic development strategies. Thus, the Jang Myeon government of the Second Republic prioritized the economy above all as a direct effect of such changes in US strategies.

The Park Chung-hee government followed this prioritization of the economy and plans for economic development established by the Jang Myeon government. The Korean society was also under the strong influence of the US in practically all areas including politics, the military, economy, and culture. Structurally it was nearly impossible to escape the reaches of the US. Although there may have been some room for conflict between South Korea and the US in terms of certain policies, the structural constraints were all-encompassing. For instance, although the Syngman Rhee regime clashed considerably with the US, the alliance between the two countries remained steadfast. The Park Chung-hee regime also came into conflict with the US concerning currency reform during his military government era and continuously collided with the Carter government during the late 1970s, but none of this fundamentally damaged the relationship between South Korea and the US. There was some difference in opinion between the Korean government and other Western countries including the US regarding the development of key industries such as the steel

industry, but this was a rather small issue.

The supporters of Rostow's economic growth model in the US believed that the nationalism of a liberated country should be proactively used for economic development. In this sense, the Park Chung-hee regime, which actively emphasized nationalism in from the start, was not in opposition with the US's stance. This is particularly apparent in the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. The US valued the role of Japan in regard to security and economic relations and judged that the normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan was of utmost urgency. Consequently, the US persistently demanded and exerted pressure to normalize the relations between the two countries ever since the Korean War. Having no alternative economic solution, the Park Chung-hee government followed their demands. The US wanted to shift a considerable amount of economic responsibility onto Japan, and the Park Chung-hee government accordingly actively sought the capital and technology of Japan to achieve rapid economic development. In sum, although there were certain areas where the US's position was rejected in favor of the independent stance of Korea, they were minor; structurally, it was largely inconsequential. From a larger perspective, South Korea's economic development was in accordance with the order of the Cold War as led by the US.

The stance Jin takes on the relationship between authoritarianism and economic development is also controversial. Jin argues that the authoritarian dictatorship system needed rapid economic growth to maintain itself while the rapid growth of the economy necessitated a stronger authoritarian system. In other words, the dictatorship under the Revitalization Reform (Yusin) order laid the groundwork to forge ahead with the heavy chemical industry policies of the 1970s (Jin 2019, 206). This stance, also called developmental dictatorship, is an extension of the logic justifying the sacrifice of democracy for the sake of economic development, that is, that dictatorship was inevitable or even advantageous for development.

This logic is not new; it is an old argument. What's interesting is how it is emerging anew in China, which is going through a similar process of development. The economic reform policies of China largely accept the market economy of capitalism at the same time it politically adheres to a socialist, one-party dictatorship system. Despite the differences in ideology, both sides share the emphasis placed on the role of the state in bringing rapid economic development.

Clearly, a certain correlation exists between rapid economic development and the authoritarian ruling apparatus—this has been proven experientially. Countries such as Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan are historical examples in which a strong authoritarian system led economic development. This view, however, is predicated on the prioritization of economic development above all. Underlying this perspective, however, is the blind faith in developmentalism that sees anything as being sacrificeable for the sake of development and progress. Although the terms that are used are economic development, strictly speaking it means capitalistic industrialization. The capitalist market economy commodifies anything that exists and makes it exchangeable.

As virtually all industrialized countries including the United Kingdom have shown, industrialization brings with it cruel and brutal violence. The Enclosure Movement of England was no different from a process of "sheep eating men," and it is historical fact that the capital accumulated as a result ultimately led to imperialism. Meanwhile, the logic of the survival of the fittest in Social Darwinism and racism accompanied the process. The ugly history of imperialism and world wars that ransacked the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must not be repeated in the twenty-first century. A new vision that looks beyond the absolutization of economic development is needed.

In this sense, the section in the book explaining the 1997 IMF crisis is intriguing. According to the book, the financial crisis of 1997 was what let the Korean economy enter the transition from the Han River model to the British and American model. Although the Han River model had already lost its effectiveness in many aspects, Jin argues, Korea was ultimately unable to completely build the British and American model. Jin writes that in the past, the entire society rallied behind the shared cry of "Let's live a rich life" (*jal sara bose*), and the national economy moved towards the one goal of development. However, the Korean society during the IMF crisis lacked of a common goal of development the entire society could sympathize with, and it became difficult to mobilize the people's wisdom and energy for new growth and development (Jin 2019, 437).

In short, Jin argues that the economic development strategy of Korea, which has been called the Han River model, was transitioning towards the British and American model of neoliberalism. Jin's analysis that the financial crisis of 1997 functioned as the decisive turning point at which Korean

capitalism entered the road of neoliberalism is true in many aspects. The point is, however, that we should not overlook the fact that Korea's economy had long before—since the late 1970s, at the latest—started to walk down the path of liberalism. The comprehensive economic stabilization policy announced in 1979 in face of the second oil crisis included a variety of liberal policies such as the reduction of state interference, expansion of private sector's economic autonomy, and liberalization of import.

True, the foreign exchange crisis in 1997 did cause things to change more rapidly. However, capitalism in Korea had already been walking down the path of neoliberalism led by the UK and the US. Other countries that did not go through a financial crisis also actively accepted neoliberalism. The financial crisis may have increased the scale and depth of how things unfolded, but it did not force things to flow in a completely different direction.

In addition, it is somewhat excessive to say that the entire society aspired to "live a rich life" in the past, thus moving the national economy towards a single goal. Although it is true that the developmentalism during the Park Chung-hee regime influenced the society enormously, there was no reality in which the entire people—or their wisdom and energy, for that matter—were united as one. Navigating the market economy created by capitalistic industrialization was nothing but life in an arena of intense competition where each man or woman was for him or herself. The saying "Close your eyes and someone will slice your nose right off" reflects just how jungle-like the market economy was. There was no such thing as the so-called gains of the entire people. This was nothing but political rhetoric that rebranded the gains of a special few as the universal gains of all.

At any rate, Jin's explanation that the transition to neoliberalism was led by liberal political forces is quite valid. The book refers to policies during the Roh Moo-hyun government to explicate this in detail. Roh entrusted the decision-making of his economic policies to conservative economic bureaucrats, not the progressive members of his government. Until the end of his term, Roh failed to perceive the importance of economic reform. As a result, economic instability increased; economic growth was not accompanied by employment expansion; the number of temporary positions surged; the unemployment rate soared; the middle class collapsed; inequality of income distribution increased; social polarization intensified; and disparities in areas such as education and culture between the capital and non-capital areas became systemic and structural. In

May of 2005, Roh said that power seemed to have already gone over to the market. Rich and powerful conglomerates (*jaebeol*) became influential beyond imagination. Samsung, in particular, exerted an enormous influence in terms of economic policy during the Roh Moo-hyun government. The idea of the advent of a 20,000-dollar per capital income era, of making Korea into the Hub country of Northeast Asia, and the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the US and Korea towards the end of his regime all resulted from the workings of the Samsung Economic Research Institute's report behind the scenes. A good example reflecting the relationship between the Roh government and the Samsung Group is the way government employees were required to be trained at the Samsung Human Resources Development Institute. The public was surprised when a government agency that was to supervise conglomerates was now to be educated by the human resources development agency of a conglomerate. The major issues related to economic reform during the Roh Moo-hyun government, such as the appointment of Jin Daeje and Hong Seokhyeon to important positions, had to do with Samsung. How the X-file incident was dealt with is a case in point (Jin 2019, 472-73).

What I have outlined above shows just how much the policies enacted during the Roh Moo-hyun regime consistently served big money such as Samsung. Changes in the Gini coefficient can be used here to demonstrate the results of a liberal administration's mismanagement, such as socioeconomic polarization and the skyrocketing of the price of real estate. The figure, which used to be 0.310 under military dictatorship, dropped to 0.282 after democratization but rose to 0.324 during the Roh Moo-hyun government—or 0.358 according to international standards, which take into account small scale businesses. The liberal camp in Korea, which had opposed the conservative, military dictatorship camp during the Cold War, had finally seized power during the financial crisis, but their unconditional implementation of neoliberal policies brought worse polarization than during the military regime: thus was the tragedy of Korean liberalism (Jin 2019, 490).

The abovementioned narrative shows how fictitious the political schema of democratic versus anti-democratic in Korean contemporary history actually was. In fact, the actual contents of the democratization movement after the 1970s contained mostly liberal values. Freedom of press, publication, thought, conscience, assembly, and association; the independence of the central bank and the expansion of the private sector's business activities in the area of

economics—all were in pursuit of liberal values. Simply put, what was written as liberalism was read as democracy. Ever since the formation of the Korea Democratic Party, the precursor of the conservative opposition parties in the liberation space, the liberal camps of South Korea have been a part of the privileged classes. Consequently, many of their politics and policies were aimed at securing the gains of the already vested.

Amid a narrowed ideological landscape after the military coup d'état, the opposition party came to excessively represent the resistance camp, since it appeared that they were going to perpetually remain being the opposition party. However, they were not that different from the ruling party that supported military dictatorship in terms of anticommunism and the emphasis on developmentalism. In fact, they were the ones that unconditionally accepted developmentalism, which the military dictatorship had left to rust. The slogan of the Kim Dae-jung government espousing the harmonious development of the market economy and democracy well represents their position. Roh Moo-hyun's words that power had gone over to the market were, when all was said and done, a confession of having brought that result themselves.

Finally, this book focused mainly on politics and economics. Covering all subject areas on limited paper space clearly is no easy task. At the very end of the book, however, a section titled "Contemporary Korean Culture" briefly touches upon Korean culture. The part related to Confucianism is interesting. Jin's main points in this section are the following. Under the Park Chung-hee regime in the 1960s, the spirit of Confucianism, in combination with Western values and advanced Western scientific technology and its methods of management, led the modernization of the Korean economy. Confucianism is already deeply rooted in the Korean society today, especially in education and social etiquette. Confucianism plays an active role in stabilizing the society amid the rapid development of the economy and the dynamic changes in social life. Confucian morals and values guaranteed the healthy development of the Korean society and still remain the foundations of social ideology and values. Today, the ideals of loyalty, filial piety, and fidelity and the five moral imperatives[1] of the relationship between ruler and subject, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friends are yet the basic values forming

1. The term Jin uses in the book is *osang*, which seems to be a mistype of *oryun* (Five Bonds).

the Korean society. Being respectful of the elderly, carrying out one's filial duty to your parents, obeying your superior, respecting teachers, valuing education, taking care of the disabled, making friends, and being loyal are all basic moral principles of Korea. In the twenty-first century marked by globalization, Korean Confucianism and corporate culture in the market economy have combined to display new spiritual features (Jin 2019, 573-74).

Jin in essence sees the combination of traditional Confucianism and the modern West as an important feature of contemporary Korean culture. There has already been a wealth of discussion about the influence of Confucianism on the economic development of East Asia, namely, regarding East Asia's success in such unprecedented rapid industrialization. The theory of Confucian capitalism is one of them highlighting the role of Confucianism. Although such discussions are not completely without value, given the actual situation in which Confucianism finds itself today in East Asia, including Korea, Jin's explanation seems farfetched.

In particular, seeing how Korea experienced the most radical and violent disconnect with its own tradition, the influences of Confucianism can only be said to be extremely limited. Traces of the past are hard to find in Korea in everyday customs of food, clothes, at home, let alone in the areas of education, culture, and religion. As Jin writes in this book, there are only two countries in the world where Protestantism is prospering: the US and Korea. From the point of view of the Protestant church, this is the miracle of Korea that holds up even in front of the miracle of the Han River (Jin 2019, 578). Across Asia as a whole, there is no other country or region, with the exception of the Philippines, were Protestantism spread as widely as it has within Korea. Therefore, the explanation that capitalism developed due to the influence of Confucianism in a society that experienced such a rapid disconnection with its traditions does not make sense.

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