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Transcending Boundaries, Embracing Others: Nationalism and Transnationalism in Modern and Contemporary Korea 越境、他者の抱擁 ––近現代コリアの国民主義と超国民主義

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Transcending Boundaries, Embracing Others: Nationalism and Transnationalism in Modern and Contemporary Korea[1]

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Nationalist internationalism in modern Korea

If we wish to define Korea's twentieth century in a word, "the century of nationalism" would be the most plausible definition.[2] From the perspective of Korea's internal socio-political situation, nationalism, as Andre Schmid aptly observed, from the very beginning provided the legitimising framework for the modern concept of equal, universal citizenship. Former slaves, members of discriminated hereditary professional groups (butchers etc.), women – all were to be accepted as equal "nationals" since national salvation, prosperity and eventual greatness required national cohesion and everyone's contribution to the national cause.[3] Ethnic nationalism is hardly a popular concept now anywhere, including South Korea (which, at least in theory, switched from the early 2000s to multiculturalism, and strives now to integrate its ethnic minority populations), but, as Henry Em argues, the concept of Korea's ethnic nation (*minjok*) did possess democratic meaning in the early twentieth-century context. The historiography which focused on the progressive development of the ethnic nation was able to do away with traditional patterns of dynastic history.[4] In a word, nationalism was the main discursive force behind the creation of an all-inclusive democratic vision of modern "Koreanness". From the very beginning of the modern age, defining *all* Koreans as first and foremost Koreans became possible precisely in the nationalist context.

Another aspect of nationalism's pivotal role in Korea's modern age is its function as the guardian of Korea's modern identity against external challenges. North Korea's official ideology of *chuch'e*, so often discussed in the Western media, owes much of its legitimacy in the eyes of the North Korean population (and its few isolated South Korean sympathisers) exactly to its (not necessarily unfounded) claim to protect an essentialized "Koreanness" from all foreign threats, notably those originating in the "imperialist" countries. But the spectrum of a defensive, self-protective nationalism is much broader in modern and contemporary South Korea than its contemporaneous North Korean variety. As modernity's onslaught, in the form of imperialist invasions, the almost uncontrolled influx of foreign goods, cultural forms and ideas, seemed to endanger the very foundations of "Koreanness", nationalism came to be seen as an essential condition for the survival of any collective "Korean" identity – one might say as an existential necessity, as fate.

Every socio-political, cultural or religious trend that would enter Korea and develop there had to "nationalise" in order to exert societal influence. In a way, both Communists and right-wing cultural nationalists, who sometimes collaborated but mostly sharply clashed in 1920-30s colonial Korea, were to some degree nationalists. They just adhered to different visions of nation, the Communist one closely linking national liberation with the prospects for socio-economic liberation for the majority.[5] In the same way, in the stormy late 1980s – early 1990s, when Seoul streets were filled with acrid tear gas and expert knowledge of the technology and use of Molotov cocktail production was *de rigeur* for any self-respecting activist college student, two versions of the nationalist creed clashed – establishmentarianism of a conservative developmentalist sort, and anti-establishmentarian underpinned by anti-imperialist zeal, passion for building a pan-peninsular nation state ("Unification") and social concern.[6] The two versions shared certain similarities – a militaristic view of masculinity, for example, and a predominantly ethnic, "bloodline"-based concept of nation.[7] These were among the common denominators for South and North Korean versions of developmentalist nationalism which crystallized by the early 1970s. Both were militantly anti-individualistic and essentially culturally conservative, and both were underpinned by the modernized version of the Neo-Confucian ethical codes.[8]

Where they significantly differed – aside from more autarkic economic ideals in Pyongyang and Seoul's firm intention to integrate itself into a US and Japan-centred international and regional capitalist order – was the international models adopted by each nationalism, that is, the pictures of foreign Others through which they tended to define themselves. South Korea's President Park Chong Hee (Pak Chŏnghŭi, 1961-1979) tended to look to Meiji Japan, post-war West Germany and, interestingly, Israel, as sources for his developmentalist aspirations.[9] Less acknowledged, but no less important was Park's Manchurian connection from the early 1940s – Manchuguo, with its five-year development plans, state-controlled large-scale construction projects, all-out war mobilization, modernized Confucian rituals and state-promoted "physical culture" and sports ("nationalization of the body"), was perhaps the most important prototype of Park Chong Hee's own version of the developmental barrack state.[10] Another main protagonist of authoritarian industrialization drama, Samsung's (Samsŏng) founder Yi Pyŏngch'ŏl (1910-1987), famed for his annual New Year visits to Tokyo, largely copied the way pre-war Mitsui organized its *keiretsu* (networked companies) in a vertical order in his own business empire.[11]

While for 1960-80s South Korea it was mainly Japan that played the roles both of a competitor to surpass and a model to follow, North Korea's relations with its foreign Others were more complex. In fact, by the late 1960s, both China and the USSR, North Korea's main foreign patrons, became simultaneously positive and negative models for the Pyongyang leadership. Both Cultural Revolution and de-Stalinization *à la* Khrushchev were to be prevented at all costs, since they could threaten the stability of the indigenous power hierarchy.[12] In fact, the foreign people mentioned in the most positive way in the official *Explanations* to Kim Il Sung's (Kim Ilsŏng, 1912-1994) report to the Fifth Congress of the ruling Korean Workers' Party (1971), were the "struggling" Vietnamese, Laotians and Kampucheans – the fellow victims of US aggression.

Their struggle was understood to be waged in the name of world peace and for the protection of the whole socialist camp – thus, one of the most important tasks of "South Korean revolutionaries" was to stop the Park Chong Hee "puppet clique" from sending "cannon fodder" (South Korean troops) to South Vietnam.[13] When Park began in earnest to send South Korean military units to South Vietnam in 1965, North Korea issued a lengthy memorandum (January 22, 1965) which accused the "Park clique" of complicity with the "insidious American plot to make Asians fight other Asians in the course of expanding US aggressive wars in Asia."[14] While South Korea was participating in the American invasion of Vietnam, in 1967 North Korea expressed solidarity with the embattled Vietnamese by sending a number of pilots from the Korean People's Liberation Army (Northern Korean army) to North Vietnam to provide training and to participate in combat operations alongside the pilots of the People's Army of Vietnam.[15] Liberation of South Vietnam and South Korea were understood to be the mutually interconnected tasks of the same order. More attention to diverse anti-imperialist revolutionaries in Asia (especially Indochina, although Palestine was also specially mentioned), Africa and Latin America helped Kim Il Sung give the impression of lesser reliance upon China and the USSR, with

Kim Il Sung meeting Che Guevara in Pyongyang, December 1960. Support for the Cuban revolution, together with a variety of other anti-imperialist movements in the Third World, was a major issue for North Korean diplomacy at that time.

whom North Korea maintained close ties.

Learning from Others, Solidarity with Others

While South Korea's official nationalism operated with images of foreign Others as models, North Korea's state discourse emphasized solidarity with fellow victims of imperialism – and fellow antagonists of imperialism. What is noteworthy here is the fact that both ways of treating the images of foreign Others is deeply ingrained in the modern Korean nationalistic tradition. Big powers (especially Japan, US or Germany) and small but independent states (Switzerland or Denmark) alike were treated as models from the late nineteenth century by Korea's modernist intelligentsia – and at the same time the plight and struggle of Vietnam or the Philippines were deeply sympathised. The cases in which the independence struggle seemed to have been long lost – typically Poland – were negative models. Korea, if it was to survive, had to struggle *not* to follow Poland's example.[16] What has to be noted here is that "benchmarking" Japan did not automatically indicate a pro-Japanese stance. *Bona fide* anti-Japanese patriots too had good reasons to turn to Japan in their search for the secrets of proverbial "wealth and power". Enemies or not, the Japanese in Meiji and after visibly succeeded in fending off foreign adversaries, something Korean patriots had reason to aspire to . A renowned patriot, who later would voluntarily exile himself to China and devote the rest of his life to the political struggle for Korea's liberation, Pak Ŭnsik (1859-1925), contrasted in his famed 1908 article, "Literary Weakness Destroys a Country", the Japanese *bushido* – which, he assumed, had its roots as early as the Kamakura period – to Korea's lamentable "literary weakness" (*munyak*). Armed with their *bushido* spirit, the Japanese managed to develop modern education, patriotic and collectivist spirit in less than thirty years, and then gloriously defeated China and Russia.[17] That was the picture of Japan's modern history with which many modernist intellectuals in Korea accepted in the early twentieth century, regardless of political affiliation. Indeed, *bushido* enjoyed high popularity in Korea – ironically, on the eve of full-blown Japanese colonization. As Korea's fledgling nationalists searched for ways to formulate Korea's *volkgeist*, *bushido* presented an attractive model of a "national spirit" fit to compete in the modern world's Darwinian jungles.[18] Every nation was believed to possess a "spirit" of its own, but Japan's *Yamato damashii* and *bushido*, which enabled it in less than 40 years to become a world-class power, was "peerless".[19] Japan's expansion was the major problem Korea's patriotic intelligentsia would confront – but at the same time, Japan's modern experiences provided a solution as well. Imperial Japan's ideologies continued to inspire South Korea's ruling elite until the early 1990s in its attempts to build an anti-individualistic, militaristic ethos – in a way, a modernized version of the Neo-Confucian ethical codes – for the post-colonial developmental state.[20]

Being a model in itself, Japan also played the role of a powerful cultural intermediary, able to supply knowledge-hungry Korean intellectuals with global – in most cases Western – models of individual and national excellence. One good example is the channel through which Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) – one of the most popular role models in early twentieth-century Korea – became known to Koreans. After a certain Pak Yonghŭi, probably a Korean student in Japan, serialized his *Biography of Bismarck* (*Pisamaek Chŏn*) in the monthly *T'aegŭk Hakpo* (March 1907 – May 1907) published by Korean students in Japan, and emphasized Bismarck's implementation of "state socialism" (rudimentary forms of a welfare system),[21] Hwang Yundŏk (1874-?), a minor central bureaucrat (in 1906-1907, a sixth-seventh rank official at the Ministry of Court) published Bismarck's biography as a separate volume. Hwang's biography, a bestseller in its day, made "Bismarck" a household name among Korea's modernists and popularized the expression *ch'ŏrhyŏl chŏngch'aek* (Steel and Blood Policy) – which Hwang defined as "seeking peace and prosperity by expanding state's might" and thoroughly distinguished from what he saw as the more "reckless" imperialism of Alexander the Great and Napoleon.[22] Neither Pak nor Hwang, however, had to read German or even English to compose a biography of Bismarck. Both most likely translated, in differently rearranged and abridged form, Sasakawa Kiyoshi's (1872-1946) influential 1899 biography of Bismarck.[23] The contexts in which Bismarck was represented in Japan and Korea were patently different, the foremost interest of Korean readers of Bismarck's biographies being to save their country from impending doom than to rebuild it into a Germany-like military power. Certain aspects of these representations, however, could not but overlap. For example, both Japanese and Koreans had reasons to admire the centralized system of popular education in Bismarckian Germany, with its potential to instil statist patriotism in people's minds. Bismarck, with his image of the modern-day "sage founder of a state", became an icon of "model" statehood in early modern Korea.

Another famed Japanese biography of a "modern hero" that captured the imagination of Korea's educated youth in the early twentieth century, was Fukuyama Yoshiharu's 1900 biography of George Washington (1732-1799).[24] It appeared in Chinese translation in 1903[25] and was subsequently rendered by a famed "new novel" author, Yi Haejo (1869-1927), into Korean.[26] Both Chinese and Korean translators of the text – the Korean translator seemingly owed a good deal to his Chinese colleague's earlier rendering[27] – are assumed to have been interested in the more revolutionary version of political modernity that George Washington's "righteous uprising against British king's greed and oppression" was understood to represent. Another important reason, however, why this biography is worth reading, is the appearance – if in passing – of a new, heterogeneous element which most biographies of "great" Europeans popular in early twentieth-century Korea did not display – namely, the "aborigines" (*t'oin*), against whom George Washington waged a brutal campaign in 1755-1758, and whose land he, as an official surveyor earlier, worked to appropriate. In Yi's rendering of Fukuyama's book, the "aborigines" were "savage people whose main business was murder".[28] Battles against them seemed an essential part of the proverbial *mission civilisatrice*. However, could not Koreans, facing the impending threat of Japanese colonization, find touching similarities in the plight of other colonized peoples across the globe? American Indians, seen by most modern Korean intellectuals who bothered to write on them as simply "savage" casualities of evolution, did not elicit much sympathy in the Korean modernist elite. Some other, presumably more "civilized" peoples of Asia, however, were seen through a different prism.

Vietnam was typical of a foreign Other easy to sympathise with. It was part and parcel of what is often referred to as the Chinese cultural sphere and its plight, described in elegant classic Chinese, made it worthy lamenting for educated Koreans. In early twentieth-century Korea, the main source of information on the enslavement of Vietnam by the French was Phan Bội Châu's (1867-1940) masterpiece of nationalist polemic, *Việt Nam Vong Quốc Sử (History of the Loss of Vietnam*, 1905).[29] One chapter of the book ("The Future of Vietnam")[30] was a record of the dialogues between Phan and his enthusiastic sponsor Liang Qichao (1873-1929), who actually recommended that Phan write and publish the book and helped him prepare the additional chapters containing general information on Vietnam, the history of Vietnam-French relations etc. Liang Qichao was perhaps the most popular contemporary foreign writer in early twentieth-century Korea, and his involvement with the book undoubtedly increased its popularity and readership. The book was partly serialized in daily *Hwangsŏng Sinmun* (August 28 – September 5, 1906) and then translated, as *Wŏllam Mangguk Sa*, into mixed Sino-Korean script by Hyŏn Ch'ae (1856-1925), a professional Chinese interpreter who did not forget to add to the translated volume Liang Qichao's 1904 essay, "Japan's Korea", in which Korea under Japanese protectorate was aptly compared to Japan's first formal colony, Taiwan.[31] It was fully evident that both for Hyŏn Ch'ae and his readers the plight of colonial Vietnam was both analogy and allegory for the sad fate awaiting their own country. One of the ways to prevent Korea from becoming a "second Vietnam" was to spread patriotic awareness through popularizing the narrative of Vietnam's enslavement. This task was to be performed by two translations of the book into pure vernacular, by Chu Sigyŏng (1876-1914) and Yi Sang'ik (both were published in 1907, by Seoul's Pangmun Sŏgwan and Hyŏn Kongnyŏm respectively). Vietnam's destruction through the weakness and corruption of its rulers became a part of Korea's nationalist canon; it also prominently figured in religious polemics. While some Protestant missionaries used the book to encourage their audiences' patriotic spirit and implicitly warn of the dangers Catholic expansion could present for an Asian country (the connection between Catholic missionary enterprise and French colonization being one of the main themes in the book), a vernacular Catholic newspaper, *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, serialized in April-May 1908 a long article refuting Phan's main points.[32] The radical anti-imperialist criticism deployed by Phan, with its Social Darwinist and racialist undertones, was an important contribution to the formation of Korea's nationalist

meta-narrative. However, it was understandably disliked by such institutions as the Catholic Church, which did not stand to gain from the development of radical nationalism.

In colonial Korea – where sales of "subversive" *Wŏllam Mangguk Sa* were strictly prohibited[33] – solidarity with the Vietnamese independence struggle mainly developed in the context of the Communist movement. When in 1916 the pioneering revolutionary socialists of colonial Korea – then Waseda students Kim Ch'ŏlsu (1893-1986), Kim Myŏngsik (1890-1943) and others – together with their Chinese and Taiwanese comrades decided to build the New Asia League Party (*Sina Tongmaengdang*) as an internationalist anti-imperialist organization, they searched for Vietnamese students or intellectuals in Tokyo (where their "Party" was based) to participate.[34] Later, Vietnamese and Korean as well as Chinese and Mongolian Communists studied together at the Comintern-run Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV: 1921-1938) and, to a lesser degree, the International Lenin School (MLSH: 1925-1938). It is known that the legendary leader of Korea's underground Communists, Pak Hŏnyŏng (1900-1956), for example, met Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) when living in the USSR as a student and political refugee in 1927-1933.[35] In South Korea, media coverage of the First Indochina War (1946-1954) after 1948-49 was rather inimical towards Ho, seen as a Communist Chinese and Soviet "puppet"; by contrast, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam proclaimed in 1945 was from the beginning seen as a close ally by North Korean leaders.[36] Aside from intimate political ties, significant intellectual and cultural exchanges had been taking place. One good example is the 1957 *Vietnam Diary* (*Wŏllam Ilgi*) by a veteran proletarian writer, Song Yŏng (1903-1977), the leader of the North Korean Union of Drama Writers (Pukchosŏn Yŏn'gŭk Tongmaeng). The diary, based on Song's lengthy 1956 Vietnam tour, features detailed descriptions of the battles and tribulations of the First Indochina War, and interviews with the main actors on the North Vietnamese literary and artistic scene. Vietnamese – all their names being given in Chinese characters – are presented as Korea's closest comrades in struggle, their fight against the French seen as running parallel to North Korea's own battles against American imperialism.[37]

While North Korean descriptions of "struggling Vietnam" did not explicitly exhibit exoticizing or patronizing tendencies, South Korean descriptions of the Vietnamese started to display "Orientalist" attitudes after 1965 when South Korea began dispatching troops to South Vietnam. South Vietnam, as a recipient of South Korea's large-scale "military aid", was understood as standing below industrializing South Korea in the international pecking order. Thus, it could be safely described as an eroticized exotic place more remote from "modern civilization" than Korea. Song Kŏnho (1927-2001), a well-known South Korean journalist who later became an anti-government dissident and one of the founders of the country's premier left-liberal daily, *Hangyoreh* (1988), in 1965 described Vietnamese women as completely lacking intellect, having facial features saliently different from those of Koreans ("high cheekbones, deep sunken eyes, thick lips"), and "exotically" dressed in the national female costume, the *ao dai*. "Exotic" Vietnamese women were often viewed by Korean soldiers as legitimate booty – "barbarians" who were not ashamed of providing commercial sex for money.[38] The "enemy", the Viet Cong, were typically shown in the news as dwarfish people, who were supposedly easily "caught" by the better-built South Korean soldiers. The "superiority" of South Koreans was further buttressed by the graphic depictions of the enemy either as helpless prisoners or dead bodies strewn around the roads and fields.[39] In Vietnam, South Korea, itself still a relatively poor military protectorate of the US, found its own "Orient" – a country which could be regarded as permanently inferior vis-à-vis Korea, a country to which the Orientalist stereotypes conventionally applied by Japanese or Euro-Americans, could be re-applied by the Koreans themselves.

In a word, from being a fellow victim of colonialism in early twentieth-century perceptions, Vietnam eventually became South Korea's own "sub-colony" of sorts in the post-1965 South Korean mainstream view.

Vietnam's proud record of the victories over the French and American imperialists fascinated a tiny minority of 1970-80s' activists, but it was a minority indeed.[40] The case is by no means unique. India, seen by modernist authors of the early twentieth century as the very symbol of colonial enslavement, came by the 1920s-1930s to be perceived as the epitome of the anti-colonial struggle. As such, it was a beacon of hope for Koreans – to be celebrated in poems like this one by Kim Tongmyŏng (1900-1968):

"[They] Never Run Away: International Marriage" – advertisements like this may be seen in many places in South Korea. "International" brides, mostly women from China, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries, are often treated as sexualized commodities; one of the underlying factors in their abuse is the denigrating view of Southeast Asia in mainstream opinion in South Korea.

O, how glorious!

Are you rising up at last?

Clenching two fists

Prepared to play the part of iron hammers in the bloody struggle.

The chains on your feet –

Thousands, tens of thousands of them.

But who can change your mind

Directed towards your lover, [independence]?

March forward,

The brave fighter of the East

Won't the Red Sea divide

Everywhere you put your gallant steps?

How can you hesitate at the sight of high mountains

Or deep waters?

On that hill, under colourful clouds.

The lover, [independence], is waiting.

Go quickly to meet him![41]

The Indian struggle was also Korea's. And, just as French behaviour in Vietnam was used in the early twentieth century polemics in Korea, issues of the Indian independence movement were easily later extrapolated to the Korean situation. As more moderate "cultural" nationalists that coalesced around the influential daily *Tong'a Ilbo* were increasingly interested in achieving a form of home rule (local autonomy) from Japan rather than "unrealistic" full independence, *Tong'a Ilbo* ran a lengthy article on the Imperial Legislative Council and the elective Provincial Councils in India, summarizing ambitions of more moderate Indian politicians as a "wish to be a self-governing dominion, like Canada" (July 21, 1925). More radical *Chosŏn Ilbo*, by contrast, explicitly characterized India's fight as the struggle for full independence and – justly – emphasized that dispatch of the Simon Commission and all the other British attempts to placate the Indians by "improving" their governance in India were nothing more than concessions obtained through Indian sacrifices in the independence fight (Editorial, February 7, 1928). While

the moderately nationalist monthly *Tonggwang* printed in volumes 18-26 an abridged translation of the autobiography of "sacred hero (*sŏngung*) Gandhi", a leftist intellectual, *Chosŏn Ilbo*'s Shanghai correspondent Hong Yangmyŏng (1896-1950), saw Gandhi as just a "representative of the Indian national bourgeoisie, who is afraid of violating the interests of his landlord allies and is criticized not only by workers and peasants but also by petty bourgeois circles" ("Class Confrontation in Indian Movement", *Samch'ŏlli* Vol3, No. 9, September 1931).[42] "The Indian movement" – thought to be the archetypical anti-imperialist liberation struggle in the world-historical sense – was, in a way, a "mirror" through which all the possible collisions and clashes inside a nationalist movement could be studied in detail. By using the Indian analogy, left-wing/right-wing and radical/moderate conflicts in Korea were "globalized" – India, after all, figured much more prominently at that point on the world scene.

Anti-imperialism and sub-imperialism

The centrality of India in colonial intellectuals' *weltanschauung* is, however, scarcely visible in contemporary South Korean media. As nowadays, South Korea, a heavily industrialized world-level manufacturing centre with per capita GNP on the level of the peripheral EU countries, regards itself as standing above still predominantly (72%) rural[43] and much poorer India in the international hierarchy. India's image is defined by what presumably differentiates it from Korea rather than by any perceived similarities in the two countries' historical trajectories. In the India travelogues that appeared in the South Korean printed media since the early 1990s, India emerges as a representative *oji* (hinterland) – mystically religious, exotically charming but also incomprehensible and dangerous. For example, in Prof. Yŏn Hot'aek's travel diary published in *Tong'a Ilbo* (April 24, 1997), Southern India that he travelled through is described as "backward and remote" with "strange and outlandish customs". The most "outlandish was a Murugan festival in Tamil Nadu which featured *vel kavadi* - a portable altar attached to the devotee's body with metal skewers piercing the devotee's skin. The South Korean professor found this feat of self-sacrificing religious devotion "worth respect", but concluded that Tamil villages were living "far from civilization". The professor's Eurocentricism sometimes bordered on racism: for his cultivated ear, "Tamil" sounded as *ttae mil* ("to scratch the dirt"), while Tamils had "especially blackish skins".[44] While colonial-era periodicals tended to criticise the colonialist racism of the British in India, the later South Korean mainstream seems to have appropriated it. Exoticised and "downgraded", India is described as a (supposedly grateful) receiver of "advanced" Korea's largesse: a 1994 article in *Tong'a Ilbo* featured, for example, Korea's Won Buddhist parish in southern Seoul's richest ward, Sŏch'o, sending warm clothes to a Himalayan village in India, whose inhabitants supposedly spend eight months of the year "without any tolerably useful clothing".[45] In contrast to colonial-era intellectuals who sought lessons from India's independence movement, today's middle-class South Koreans seem more interested in showing their ability to clothe "poor and uncivilized" Indians who are presumably unable to solve this task themselves!

Did the political culture of anti-imperialist solidarity which inspired pre-colonial and colonial-period Korean intellectuals to look at the trials, tribulations and desperate struggles of faraway Indians, Poles, Vietnamese or Filipinos as continuation of or parallel to Korea's own distressed attempts to stay afloat and sail further in the troubled seas of the modern world, die with the end of the colonial period? It does not appear to be the case to the degree that the anti-imperialist struggle remained a pressing task for divided Korea, encircled by mightier and often troublesome powers. As mentioned above, some North Korea-produced descriptions of "comradely" Third World states seemed to be refreshingly free from both Eurocentric, uniform visions of "civilization" and ethnocentric stereotypes. Han Sŏrya's (1900-1976) 1958 account of travel to Nasser's Egypt, *On the Shores of the Nile* (*Nail kangban esŏ*) features, for example, a stereotypical description of "camel-riding Egyptians", but otherwise treats anti-British struggles of Egyptian revolutionary nationalists and North Korea's confrontation with the US as two parts of the same worldwide process – "Asian and African people moving from being slaves to being the owners of their countries". Egypt, the country with long pre-colonial history and proud traditions, mirrors Korea while both oppose the US where "existentialist philosophy denies the validity of traditions, absolutises the present day and absolves the imperialists from any responsibility for their crimes". While Americans, "the harmful insects" who "can benefit humanity only by dying and disappearing from this planet", are depicted as egoistic individualists, the "natural" collectivism of both Egyptians and Koreans is seen as almost anticipating the modern socialist spirit. The anonymity of ancient Egyptian art, according to Han, would be further developed by socialist experiments in collective writing. While visibly essentializing and vituperatively inimical portraits of the "imperialists" do pose a problem for contemporary readers of this text, the discursive equality of the subjects and objects of the description in the face of "imperialist threat" is noteworthy.[46]

While North Korea of the 1950s is often described as an assiduous "pupil" eager to learn the Stalinist modernity from the USSR and its more "advanced" Eastern European satellites, it is "solidarity" rather than a vertical master-pupil relationship that emerges as the explicit keyword in most descriptions of the USSR and Eastern Europeans by North Korean authors and travellers in the 1950s. While almost all of these descriptions appear unambiguously propagandistic and were visibly written by people who had no illusions about the real nature of the relationship between the USSR and its junior ally on the Korean Peninsula, it is also obvious that one of their tasks was exactly to represent the relations between the Soviets and Koreans as horizontal solidarity-based rather than hierarchically unequal and patronizing. Typically, a volume of short stories on the Soviet "friends of Korea", *Unforgettable People* (*Ijŭl su ŏmnŭn saram tŭl*, Pyongyang, 1955), by Im Sundŭk (a well-known left-nationalist female writer from Wŏnsan, who chose to remain in North Korea after 1945), represents Soviet Russian liberators as plain, simple and kind-hearted people "just like us", with the same set of good human impulses – defined, in fact, rather in Confucian ways. A Siberian native, Andrei, for example, is a warm-hearted lad popular with the womenfolk in Kangwŏn Province village where his platoon is stationed after the liberation of Northern Korea by the Soviet Army in August-September 1945. No superhuman, he is and remembered for more quotidian exploits – saving a child from drowning, or catching two trouble-making soldiers of the former Japanese Imperial Army ("Andori ho"). Army doctor Smirnov from Wŏnsan military hospital, remembered for successfully treating a limping girl from a poor rural family, is no superhuman either – he is represented rather as a people's enlightener, an amateur author who was eager to popularize Russian and Soviet classics among the Koreans he encountered. His brother Konstantin, a soldier stationed in Pyongyang, was able to contact locals quite easily since he managed to pick up usable Korean and always used polite and respectful forms of speech ("Kiu"). Another young Soviet soldier, Ivan Semenovich Suslov, a "plain-hearted lad" stationed in a Kangwŏn Province village, did not demonstrate any special linguistic talents, but was good at repairing the village water mill and teaching local children to play popular Soviet melodies, like *Katyusha*, with his accordion. He was also remembered for convincing a local elder that "in the new epoch of democracy", shaking hands with the younger villagers was more suitable than requiring the latter to present ritual deep bows on important occasions ("Sonp'unggŭm").[47] While the images of "benevolent", easy-going, enlightened and compassionate Soviet "brethren" are undeniably heavily idealized (although not completely unrealistic), they do not appear alien in the North Korean settings of the mid-1950s. And they are not made to look overwhelming or awe-inspiring. A compassionate doctor could well be a Korean Communist instead of a Soviet one – the ways of portrayal would be similar. The Soviets were depicted as "elder brothers" – but not as overpowering "parents" or "masters", to be blindly followed or worshipped.[48]

The horizontal "bonds of solidarity" implied that the "socialist countries" of Eastern Europe and East Asia, together with their sympathizers elsewhere, would take serious interest in what was seen in North Korea as the main plight of the Korean people – the forcible division of the peninsula, with American troops being permanently stationed in South Korea after the Korean War. Expressions of solidarity from abroad with the North Korean demands concerning the withdrawal of the American troops from South Korea were often published in North Korea in the 1950s – in newspapers and journals, but also in the book form. One such book-length expression of "worldwide" solidarity with the Korean people was a 1959 poetry collection suitably entitled *The Anger of the World* (*Segye ŭi Punno*) – aimed at putting together the "solidarity poems" written by Soviet, Eastern European, Chinese, Mongolian, and also "progressive" Japanese, Turkish and even Indonesian writers for the sake of Korea in the 1950s. Some of the poems are interesting, as they seemingly were intended to give the impression that their authors – in most cases, citizens of countries much stronger and richer than both states on the war-torn Korean Peninsula – were eager to admire Koreans and learn from them, rather than to show condescending empathy with Korea's predicament . The poem "To the fighters of Korea" (Russian: *Boitsam Korei*, Kor.: *Chosŏn Chŏnsa tŭl ege*) by a very popular Soviet poet, Lev Oshanin (1912-1996), emphasized, for example, that what he – and, presumably other Soviet citizens he claimed to represent – felt at the sight of bombed and ruined Pyongayng and the North Korean fighters, "the people who never would give up the freedom they have won", was "admiration rather than compassion". The "unsubduable" North Korea was also an example to follow for a certain Sakai Masao, presumably a Japanese Communist or Communist sympathiser, whose poem, with its telling title "Like the Koreans under Japanese Colonial Rule" (Kor. translation: *Ilche ha e ittŏn Chosŏn saram tŭl ch'ŏrŏm*) described Koreans, "massacred" during the colonial rule but "as red and strong as pepper" and never subdued, as the vanguard of the worldwide revolutionary struggle.[49] Solidarity as understood in Pyongyang – where all these poems were carefully selected for inclusion in the collection – meant Koreans establishing their revolutionary dignity in the eyes of the admiring world, rather than the "progressive world" simply helping Korea. It did not imply that the outside help was not needed – but nationalist self-assertion was needed as well.

Kim Namju (1946-1994) was a renowned poet and prominent activist in the underground National Liberation Front of South Korea (Namchoson Minjok Haebang Chonson, or Namminjon, 1976-1979), which sought to liberate South Korea on the model of the Vietnamese revolution. Interest in anti-imperialist movements in the Third World was widespread among radical activists in South Korea in the 1970s and after, but was not shared by mainstream opinion which was more accustomed to comfortably ranking countries by their economic performance and perceived degree of Westernization. Within this framework, industrialized and formally democratic South Korea eventually took a place qualitatively different from that of most Asian and African countries.

In the 1960s-1980s, however, with the strengthening and dogmatisation of noticeably Korea-centric *chuch'e* (self-reliance) ideology,[50] the discursive position of the non-European Others in the North Korean political and literary rhetoric suffered a downturn of sorts, the Asian and African peoples, especially those who benefited from North Korea's then considerable foreign aid, being often portrayed as "led" by the "light of *chuch'e* ideas".[51] A comparable process, albeit on a different scale and in different form – "export of revolution" of sorts, but not on the state level – could be observed in post-1990s South Korea too, where left-wing labour activists has been busy trying to teach the (mostly South and South East Asian) migrant workers the history of South Korea's labour and democratization movement as a "standard shortcut" to socio-political liberation in the Asian context.[52] However, all the patronizing or self-centric treatments in the relationship between post-1960s North Korean authorities or post-1990s South Korean leftists and their non-Western interlocutors notwithstanding, neither of them could outrival or even approach the South Korean mainstream in its incessant attempts to contrast South Korea's developmental splendour with the "backwardness" of all the places South Korean capital and its middle classes happened to use as suppliers of mineral or recreational resources or labour. As the examples with the portrayals of Vietnam and India mentioned above amply show, South Korea's mainstream media exhibit a distinctive sub-imperialist consciousness in relation to the non- Euro-American world. Not really even being an independent imperialist actor itself, South Korea uses its semi-privileged position in the world economy and politics (a sub-imperialist US ally, middle-level military power and a major manufacturing centre) to project itself as a part of the global "core" and contrast its "advancement", richness and power with the squalor of most parts of the continent it is a part of. The contrast with the palpable feeling of solidarity in the pre-colonial description of Vietnam or colonial portrayals of India is conspicuous.

Or is it really a contrast? Structurally speaking, the vision of the world as a lineal hierarchy, or a hierarchy of concentric circles, with the distinctive centre and the peripheries around it, seems to have endured for the last one hundred years. Another enduring feature is the central placement of the Euro-American world – the world which gave Korea Bismarck and Washington, the "heroes" on which modern Koreans were supposed to model themselves. The place of Japan as the all-important cultural intermediary seems, however, to have changed in the affluent 1990s – with the boom in learning English and study in the US – much of the centrifugal cultural flow from the world's Euro-American core to its Korean periphery now goes directly, without the "double translation" via Japanese.[53] With South Korea after the 1997-1998 financial crisis being an overzealous adept of neoliberal globalization, the significance of Japan's erstwhile statist, collectivist models of "modernization with Asian characteristics" and its older neo-traditional ideologies seems to be greatly diminished.[54] What changed even more is South Korea's place in this elaborate hierarchy. It is no longer part of the exploited and oppressed colonial world – and inside the constellation of the "liberated colonies" it enjoys a status which, from its own viewpoint, is incomparable with that of the likes of Vietnam or India.[55] Korean nationalism of the early twentieth century was discursively developed through analogies between Korea's plight and Vietnam's suffering, and colonial era Korean nationalism, oppressed by Japanese censorship, found a way to euphemistically express itself through lengthy reports on India's heroic anti-British struggle. Today's mainstream South Korean nationalism, however, affirms itself by denigrating the non-Western Others, partly in attempt to represent South Korea as a more influential state than it really is. Whether this "discursive colonialism" will be offset by a more egalitarian worldview and colonial-period traditions of anti-imperialist solidarity, and whether South Korea will see the emergence of truly internationalist movement able to redefine its relations with its non-Euro-American Others, is the question for the future.

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Notes

[1] An earlier draft of this paper was presented at Cambridge University as a part of the Ra Jong-Yil Lectures Series on October 28, 2011. (link)

[2] See: Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Geneology, Politics and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[3] Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires, 1895-1919* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 38-42.

[4] Henry Em, "*Minjok* as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography," Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson eds, *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1999), 335-362.

[5] Chŏn Myŏnghyŏk, *1920 nyŏndae Han'guk Sahoejuŭi ŭi Undong Yŏn'gu* [The Research on the 1920s Korean Socialist Movement] (Seoul: Sŏn'in, 2006), 21-83.

[6] Lee Namhee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 21-145.

[7] Kwŏn Insuk, *Taehan Min'guk ŭn Kundae da* [Republic of Korea is an Army] (Seoul: Ch'ŏngnyŏnsa, 2005).

[8] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea*.

[9] On the positive image of Israel in Park Chong Hee's South Korea, see: Ch'oe Ch'angmo, "Han'guk Sahoe ŭi Yudaein Imiji ŭi Pyŏnch'ŏnsa Sogo" [Jewish Images in Korean Mind: Past to Present]. *Han'guk Isŭllam Hakhoe Nonch'ong* 18/1 (2008): 113-139. On Park's developmentalist ideology and its use of foreign antecedents see: Han'guk Chŏngch'I Yŏn'guhoe ed., *Pak Chŏnghŭi rŭl nŏmŏsŏ* [Beyond Park Chong Hee] (Seoul: P'urŭn Sup, 1998).

[10] Han Sŏkchŏng, "Pak Chŏnghŭi, Hogŭn Manjuguk p'an Hai Modŏnijŭm ŭi Hwaksan" [Pak Chong Hee, or the Spread of Manchuguo-Style High Modernism]. *Ilbon P'yŏngnon* 3 (2010): 120-138.

[11] Kim Yŏng'uk, "Yi Pyŏngch'ŏl ŭi Ilbon Mobang kwa Ch'uwŏl e kwanhan siron" [An Attempt to Inquire into Yi Pyŏngch'ŏl's Imitation of and Overtaking of Japan]. *Ilbon P'yŏngnon* 3 (2010): 192-216.

[12] Balazs Szalontai. *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[13] *Hyŏngmyŏng ŭi widaehan suryŏng Kim Il Sŏng tongji kkesŏ Chosŏn Rodongdang che 5 ch'a taehoe esŏ hasin Chung'ang Wiwŏnhoe Saŏp ch'onghwa pogo e taehan haesŏl* [Explanations of the Great Revolutionary Leader Kim Il Sŏng's report to the 5th Congress of the Korean Workers' Party on the activities of its Central Committee] (Pyongyang: Inmin Ch'ulp'ansa, 1971), 205-240.

[14] The memorandum may be found in the Archive of Russian Federation's Foreign Policy (АВПРФ: Фонд 102 Опись 25, Папка 50, Дело 2, Листы 1-59). See it cited in: Pak Chonghyo, *Rŏsiya Yŏnbang Oemusŏng Taehan Chŏngch'aek Charyo* [Materials on Russia's Korea Policy from the Archives of the Russian Federation's Foreign Ministry] (Seoul: Sŏn'in, 2010), Vol. 2, 289.

[15] See: "*Signing of a Protocol Agreement for North Korea to Send a Number of Pilots to Fight the American Imperialists during the War of Destruction against North Vietnam*"**.** Vietnam Ministry of Defense Central Archives, Central Military Party Committee Collection, File No. 433. 30 September 1966. Obtained and translated for NKIDP (North Korea International Documentation Project) by Merle Pribbenow and included in NKIDP e-Dossier No. 2.

[16] Yi Minhŭi, *P'aran, P'ollandŭ, Ppolsŭkka!* [P'aran, Poland, Polska!] (Seoul: Somyŏng, 2005).

[17] Pak Ŭnsik, "Munyak chi p'ye nŭn p'ilsang kiguk" [Literary Weakness Destroys a Country]. *Sŏu* 10 (1908): 1-6.

[18] "Chŏngsin kwa kamgak" [Spirit and Senses]. *Hwangsŏng Sinmun*, February 6, 1907: 2 (*Hwangsŏng Sinmun*. Seoul: Han'guk Munhwa Kaebalsa, 1971, Vol. 14, 310).

[19] "Kuksŏng paeyangnon" [On Cultivation of Nationality]. *Hwangsŏng Sinmun*, August 22, 1909: 2 (*Hwangsŏng Sinmun*. Seoul: Han'guk Munhwa Kaebalsa, 1971, Vol. 19, 386).

[20] Andrew Eungi Kim and Gil-sung Park, "Nationalism, Confucianism, Work Ethics and Industrialization in South Korea" *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33/1 (2003): 37-49; Hong Sŏngt'ae, *Kaebalchuŭi rŭl Pip'anhanda* [Criticizing the Developmentalism] (Seoul: Tangdae, 2007), 236-290.

[21] Pak Yonghŭi, "Pisamaek Chŏn" [Bismarck's Biography] *T'aegŭk Hakpo* 8 (March 1907): 21-26; *T'aegŭk Hakpo* 9 (April 1907): 28-30; *T'aegŭk Hakpo* 10 (May 1907): 33-37.

[22] Hwang Yundŏk. *Pisamaek chŏn* [Bismarck's Biography] (Seoul: Posŏnggwan, 1907).

[23] Sasakawa Kiyoshi, *Bisumāku* [Bismarck] (Tōkyō: Hakubunkan, 1899).

[24] Fukuyama Yoshiharu, *Washōton* [*Washington*] (Tōkyō: Hakubunkan, 1900).

[25] Ding Jin, trans., *Huashengdun* [Washington] (Shanghai: Wenming Shuju, 1903).

[26] Yi Haejo, *Hwasŏngdon Chŏn* [Biography of Washington] (Seoul: Hoedong Sŏgwan, 1908).

[27] Ch'oe Wŏnsik, "'Hwasŏngdon chŏn' yŏn'gu: Aeguk Kyemonggi ŭi Choji Wŏsington suyong" [The Reception of George Washington in Korean Enlightenment Period – on 'Biography of Washington']. *Minjok Munhaksa Yŏn'u* 18 (2001): 273-299.

[28] Yi Haejo, *Hwasŏngdon Chŏn*, 5.

[29] Liang Qichao. *Yingbingshi Heji* [Collected Works from an Ice-Drinker's Studio] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), Vol. 6, fasc. 19, 15-28.

[30] Liang Qichao. *Yingbingshi Heji*, 23-28.

[31] Hyŏn Ch'ae trans. *Wŏllam Mangguksa* [History of the Loss of Vietnam] (Seoul, 1906).

[32] Ch'oe Kiyŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Kyemong Sasang Yŏn'gu* [Research on the Modern Korean Enlightenment Ideology] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2003), 294-326.

[33] Ch'oe Kiyŏng, "Kugyŏk 'Wŏllam Mangguksa' e kwanhan koch'al" [A Research on the Korean Translation of the 'History of the Loss of Vietnam']. *Tong'a Yŏn'gu* 6 (1985): 487-506.

[34] Pak Chongnin, "1910 nyŏndae Chaeil Yuhaksaeng ŭi Sahoejuŭi Sasang Suyong kwa 'Kim Ch'ŏlsu kŭrup'" [The Acceptance of Socialist Ideas by the Korean Students in Japan in the 1910s and the "Kim Ch'ŏlsu Group'], In *Panjŏn ŭro pon Tong'asia* [East Asia Viewed through Anti-war Ideas]. ed. Pak Chinsu and Chŏng Munsang (Seoul: Hyean, 2008), 119-145.

[35] An Chaesŏng, *Pak Hŏnyŏng P'yŏngjŏn* [The Critical Biography of Pak Hŏnyŏng] (Seoul: Silch'ŏn Munhaksa, 2009).

[36] Pak Sŏnggwan, "Pukhan ŭi Tae Tongnam'a oegyo pyŏnhwa" [The Changes in North Korea's Southeast Asia Policy]. *Kukche Chŏngch'i Nonch'ong* 43/3 (2003): 235-253.

[37] Some of the stories recorded by Song in Vietnam mix human sympathy and boundless admiration for the Vietnamese comrades. Such is the story of a former female guerrilla leader – later to become a professional soldier – from the rural district of Kiến Xương in Thai Binh Province, Red River delta. She is described as a young woman with a kind and welcoming face, who was, however, tempered by a tribulations – hungry childhood in the service of a greedy and cruel landowner, the efforts to overcome the patriarchal prejudices of male partisan leaders who initially did not want to allow a women to fight the French together on an equal footing, inhuman tortures by French military intelligence, loss of beloved elder brother tortured to death by the French etc. She was, however, anything but a passive victim of abuse and prejudice – Song describes her as a self-confident initiative-taker trying to influence wider society through her work at the village Women's Federation. Song Yŏng, *Wŏllam Ilgi* [Vietnam Diary] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Chakka Tongmaeng Ch'ulp'ansa, 1957), 217-227.

[38] Song Kŏnho, "Tongnam'a Yŏsŏng ŭi imo chŏmo" [Various Traits of Southeast Asian Women]. *Yŏwŏn* 3 (1966): 201-203. Cited in: Kim Mi-ran, "The Vietnam War and Sexuality: An Analysis of the Images of *Ao Dai* and Vietcong as Represented in the Meida". *The Lines: Asian Perspectives* 2 (2011): 81-107.

[39] Kim Mi-ran, "The Vietnam War and Sexuality," 100-101.

[40] It is well-known, for example, that the name of the National Liberation Front of South Korea (*Namchosŏn Minjok Haebang Chŏnsŏn*, or *Namminjŏn,* 1976-1979), an underground group which aimed at liberating South Koreans from Park Chong Hee's regime through en eventual workers' armed uprising, was modelled on the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which the South Korean activists enthusiastically admired. "Munhak ŭro mannanŭn yŏksa 33. Kim Namju ssi 'Chŏnsa 2'" (The History met through Literature: 33. Mr. Kim Namju: "Militant 2") *Han'gyŏre* October 15, 1996: 15.

[41] Kim Tongmyŏng, "Tongbang ŭi yongsa: Indo ege" [To India, Orient's Valiant Warrior], *Sinsaeng* 4/4 (April 1931). Cited in: Yi Oksun, *Singminji Chosŏn ŭi Hŭimang kwa Chŏlmang, Indo* [Colonial Korea's Hope and Despair, India] (Seoul: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2006), 41-43.

[42] Cited in: Yi Oksun, *Singminji Chosŏn ŭi Hŭimang kwa Chŏlmang, Indo*, 30-125.

[43] Karl Haub and O.P.Sharma, "*India's Population Reality: Reconciling Change and Tradition*". *Population Bulletin* 61/3 (September 2006).

[44] Yŏn Hot'aek, "Munmyŏng ŭi twian, oji ŭi saram tŭl" [Beyond the Civilization, the Hinterland Peoples]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, April 24, 1997: 21.

[45] "Himallaya Ch'uwi Nogil Han'gukmin ŭi Chagŭn Onjŏng" [Small warm-heartedness of the Korean People Melted down the Cold of Himalayas]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, April 21, 1994: 31.

[46] *Chonghap Kihaengmunjip: Nail Kangban esŏ* [Collected Travelogues: On the Shores of Nile] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Chakka Tongmaeng Ch'ulp'ansa, 1958), 5-41.

[47] Im Sundŭk, *Ijŭl su ŏmnŭn saram tŭl* [*Unforgettable People*] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Nyŏsŏngsa, 1955), 5-15, 101-123127-145.

[48] One of the very few Anglophone researchers to study North Korean 1940-50s' "friendship stories" featuring Soviet characters, Brian Myers, alleges that the attitude towards the USSR in these stories was "obsequious" and that the Soviet personages were seen as "parents" (rather than "teachers" or "elder brothers/sisters") supposed to "care for the emasculated Korean men". See: Brian Myers, "Mother Russia: Soviet Characters in North Korean Fiction". *Korean Studies* 16 (1992): 82-93. Analysis of Im Sundŭk's book (which Myers did not deal with in his article), however, does not support these conclusions. Gratitude toward the Soviet Army – which, aside from its role in defeating imperial Japan, was also seen as the ultimate guarantee of DPRK's security – should not be confused with "obsequiousness" or self-deprecation. It did not imply self-deprecation, since it did not diminish Korea people's potential for anti-imperialist resistance or "socialist construction". Most Soviet people in Im's book appear as "teachers" – that is, in connection with certain valuable skills (from medicine to harmonica playing) Koreans had good reasons to learn. The "parental" features in their descriptions ("parent-like care" of Soviet doctors for Korean patients) are part and parcel of the stereotypical Confucian image of a model "gentleman" – perfectly applicable to Koreans as well. The images of Soviet soldiers as skilled harmonica players and singers also seem to have been influenced by the Confucian belief in aesthetic harmony as an outward expression of inner moral perfection. On the aesthetic sides of Confucian moral ideals, see: Nicholas Gier, "Dancing *Ru*: a Confucian Aesthetics of Virtue". *Philosophy East and West* 51/2 (2001): 280-302.

[49] *Segye ŭi Punno* [Anger of the World] (Pyongyang: Kungnip Munhak Yesul Sŏjŏk Ch'ulp'ansa, 1959), 42-44, 153-158.

[50] See, for example, a contemporary North Korean poster, in which a picture of the globe half-wrapped in the North Korean flag, is accompanied by the inscription: "The globe revolves around Korea as its axis". David Heather and Koen De Ceuster eds. *North Korean Posters* (Munich: Prestel, 2008), 275.

[51] On North Korea's "chuch'e" foreign policy of the 1960s-early 80s, see: Byung Chul Koh, *The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). On the diplomatic competition between two Koreas, and North Korea's Third World diplomacy of the 1960s-80s, see also: Barry Gills, *Korea Versus Korea: A Case of Contested Legitimacy* (NY: Routledge, 1996), 50-130.

[52] Lee Jin-Kyung, *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex Work, and Migrant Labor in South Korea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 185-213.

[53] Recently (for years 2009-2010), annual spending on English education in South Korea was approximately three times higher than in Japan: Park Jin-kyu, "'English Fever' in South Korea: its History and Symptoms", *English Today* 25 (2009): 50-57.

[54] For example, the discourse of self-contained, self-centred "national history" (Jap. *kokushi,* Kor. *kuksa*), previously central to South Korean nationalist narratives, became by the late 1990s a target of criticism. Im Chihyŏn and Yi Sŏngsi, eds. *Kuksa ŭi sinhwa rŭl nŏmŏsŏ* [Beyond the Myth of National History] (Seoul: Humanist, 2004).

[55] It is interesting that in the speeches and writings on the issue of a possible "East Asian community" by former South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun (No Muhyŏn, 2003-2008), it is South Korea that emerges as the central driving force of the project, a bridge between China and Japan. See: Pak Myŏngnim, "No Myhyŏn ŭi 'Tongbug'a kusang' yŏn'gu" [Research on Roh Moo-hyun's 'Northeast Asian Project']. *Yŏksa Pip'yŏng* 76 (2006): 148-179. Envisioning South Korea in the centre of "new" Northeast Asia, as its "hub" (a popular expression in the official discourse in Roh Moo-hyun's days), implies a high degree of self-confidence vis-à-vis South Korea's still much stronger neighbours. The root of this self-confidence is South Korea's recent self-perception as a hugely successful new industrial power, in combination with the sense of Japan's relative decline.