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## Korean Politics in Transition

Jonathan D. Pollack

Edward Reynolds Wright

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ledger, many of the most important listings are annotated which is a great aid to the student.

One of the principal benefits of Smith's bibliography is that he includes nearly everything. Especially important for the scholar of naval affairs in World War II is his exhaustive rendering of articles in magazines and journals published during the war which suggest many vital issues of public policy largely ignored by postwar historians. Examples include the great "Steel Crisis," the economic impact of Navy procurement practices, and the militarization of innocuous aspects of daily life.

In sum, Smith has compiled a valuable research tool which has long been needed by naval historians. All should hope that his series will conclude with a subsequent set on the U.S. Navy and the cold war.

ROBERT WM. LOVE, JR.  
U.S. Naval Academy

Weigley, Russell F., ed. *New Dimensions in Military History*. San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1975. 419pp.

The greatest schools of professional military higher education have always stressed the importance of military history. Military history is an indispensable substitute for direct experience in preparing the soldier for the problems and crises of leadership at the highest command levels. The object of military historical studies is not to develop a set of precise rules or a checklist with answers to political and strategic problems. Rather, the historical approach is designed to make the student aware of a great range of problems and to acquaint him with a variety of approaches and attempted solutions. Military history also seeks to make the student aware of the complexities of military-political problems and strives to create suspicion of simple answers and analogies.

This anthology, edited by Russell F.

Weigley, consists of lectures delivered in

the *New Dimensions in Military History* course, an elective given at the Army War College. Individual articles naturally cover a wide range of topics including studies of warfare in the 17th century, the problems of the Hapsburg multi-ethnic army, and studies of the problems of counterinsurgency. There are articles dealing with problems of national security and the military role in politics and diplomacy.

Despite the wide variety of topics and subjects there is a consistent and largely successful effort to focus attention on broad general themes and problems. The authors avoid trying to create predictive models. They do not seek to provide concrete rules for solving current problems. Instead they present a broad range of situations and problems. They describe the efforts of individuals and institutions to cope with these problems in order to demonstrate the scope, diversity, and complexity of issues that the modern soldier will have to face. Professor Weigley's anthology does indeed demonstrate that an officer cannot know what path to tread in the future unless he knows where he has been and what paths his and other armies have followed in the past.

STEVEN ROSS  
Naval War College

Wright, Edward Reynolds, ed. *Korean Politics in Transition*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1975. 412pp.

For a region whose political fate has been so substantially enmeshed in American foreign and domestic politics for the past three decades, the current level of specialized and popular knowledge on Korea is appallingly low. Serious scholarly effort remains limited to a virtual handful of American universities, and while substantial works have appeared, they pale by comparison with virtually any other area of comparable significance. The journalistic realm fares

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even worse: Not a single American newspaper has a regular correspondent literate in Korean assigned to the peninsula. Not surprisingly, then, past and present judgments on this sensitive topic frequently reflect opinions derived from politics in other societies and regions, rather than a considered view of the Korean situation itself.

This volume is directly and effectively addressed to this gap in perception and information. Eight of the eleven contributors are Koreans, each of whom exhibits sensitivity both to Korean society and to the broader issues which Korea's postwar experience reflects. Of the three American authors, two (including the editor) have lived in Korea for extended periods, and the third conducted much of his research there. Their combined efforts have produced a highly readable and long overdue survey of institutional, political, and economic developments in the Republic of Korea since its establishment in 1948. Several of the contributors focus more broadly on various cultural and historical legacies which continue to affect recent politics. The inattention to the North, while regrettable from the perspective of comprehensiveness, is understandable. Korea's division at the end of World War II created antagonistic and highly distinct political regimes, and such differences are not easily bridged, either politically or intellectually.

Although the book is divided typically into five separate sections, two unifying themes recur throughout the various essays. First is the issue of historical continuities and discontinuities. By asserting in his title that Korean politics are "in transition," Professor Wright explicitly recognizes the importance of this question. None of the contributors are presumptuous enough to attempt an answer to the obvious corollary—transition to what? It is more appropriate that they have focused on basic factors contributing to this evolution. While this process can be

viewed as a battle of "tradition versus modernity," a more satisfactory description is that of a competition between indigenous and external values and cultural norms.

Although most of the authors stress the resiliency of the Korean past, it is also clear that enormous changes have been wrought. Indeed, the volume as a whole conveys the mixed results of this process. Particular dimensions of present politics—e.g., the lack of high institutionalized forms of political competition, the seeming passivity of the citizenry, and the apparent acceptance of centralized, highly authoritarian political rule—seem largely reminiscent of the politics of the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) and of the Japanese occupation (1910-1945). However, specific dimensions of post-1945 politics reveal behavior for which no ready historical analogues exist. Student participation in domestic politics, analyzed in a discerning essay by Byung-hun Oh, constitutes one such example. While many remain influenced by their Confucian heritage, educational opportunity is no longer narrowly restricted to a privileged socio-economic elite. Moreover, the issues of paramount concern to students, e.g., nationalism and democratization, are hardly interpretable within a traditional context.

Similar conclusions pertain with even greater force for the Korean military, the dominant political actor for more than a decade. As John Lovell makes abundantly clear in his essay on the military in postwar politics, the creation of the South Korean Armed Forces is entirely attributable to American initiative. Equally important, the progressive emergence of military leaders and institutions as decisive factors in the political equation is wholly divorced from historical precedents. The determination and single-mindedness with which Park Chung-hee and his colleagues have sought to restructure the nation's polity, society, and economy—all self-

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consciously emulative of other military modernizers of the past century—further reveals an enormous gap with Korean traditions.

Judgments about the wisdom of compelling such far-reaching changes are not easily offered. Clearly, the present governing elite feels that Korea has no alternative if it is to develop the wherewithal to develop and prosper. In aggregate terms, the results of Korea's modernization effort of the past 15 years (discussed by Princeton Lyman and Jungsae Kim) are apparent and, compared to most other developing states, singularly impressive. Yet the social and cultural costs of this effort are often more subtly conveyed. Pyongchoon Hahm's depiction of the traditional Korean value structure—in particular, its suspicion of those who aggressively sought power and wealth—is particularly revealing. One need not accept the entirety of earlier norms to recognize the pervasiveness of the changes which have been instituted, often with little attention to the resulting consequences.

The second key theme concerns the broader impact of the external world upon Korea. As Youngnok Koo amply demonstrates in his discussion of foreign affairs, Korea has been the perennial object of great power competition, usually compelling indigenous elites to assume a largely passive role in relation

to the major powers. Thus, Soviet and American interventions in postwar Korea are only the latest in a long history of such involvements.

The influence of external powers has been proportional to their ability to mold developments within Korea—a more enduring consideration than simply affecting the style of Korea's overall diplomatic relations. The United States is merely the most recent state seeking to effect key transformations in the Korean polity. Yet our ability to direct this transformation must be deemed increasingly suspect. Whatever Korea's past dependencies upon American military, economic, and political power, they too are now in transition, with the ultimate results far from certain. What remains unavoidable is to recognize American responsibility for what has transpired, even as our capacity to make further changes is progressively reduced.

Regrettably, no one was given the task of systematically addressing this consideration. Careful historical reconstruction was a far more realistic and manageable task, and at this level the authors have succeeded admirably. For those interested in a well-documented and noticeably dispassionate analysis of Korea in the past three decades, the Wright volume is an excellent choice.

JONATHAN D. POLLACK  
Harvard University