KOREA AND THE ASIAN VALUES DEBATE

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Korea's Oppositional Dynamics

Edward Said's landmark study of "orientalism" sparked a needful debate over the imaginative geography of East and West. Unfortunately his impact on development theory was truncated by his curious inattention to the Pacific Rim as opposed to the Middle East. It was on the Rim that the material foundations of orientalist prejudice were shaken to the core by the "Asian miracle." [1] One key assumption of classic miracalism was that culture rates a very low priority relative to economic and political analysis. Said points out that the cultural factor had long been neglected by both the Right and Left in their respective treatments of modernization and imperialism (Said 1994, 5).

The cure, however, may be as bad as the original malady. The East/West or South/North fixation of postcolonial discourse misses the key point of this cultural reversal: the fact that the colonial thrust of capitalism has "gone native." The cult of "Asian values," for example, has the social-psychological advantage of seeming authentically "Eastern" even as it reproduces the colonial function on native ground. This puts Asian exceptionalism into apparent conflict with neoliberal visions of globalization. The global order that emerged after the Cold War drew elements from both visions.

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[1] Now—in the wake of the Paul Krugman thesis (which likens Asian economic expansion to the input-driven dynamics of Soviet growth in the late 1950s) and the Crash of '97 (which converted countless shocked observers to Krugman's way of thinking)—that "miracle" came to look like another imaginary construct, a product of wishful thinking not only on the Rim but throughout the West. On the Krugman thesis see Paul Krugman, 1994, 63-78.

Its structure owes much to the invisible logic of East Asian capitalism, where liberal democracy is subordinate to the dynamics of statist economism. Early in the 1990s Ernest Gellner speculated that for more developed economies the collective nature of the Confucian-authoritarian mode might be superior to economic systems rooted in Calvinist individualism (Gellner 1993, 3).

By the mid-1990s, in any case, culture had moved from the periphery to the cutting edge of social thought (Fetherstone 1995, 3). It was no accident that this "cultural revolution" was taking place in the glory years of globalization, when traditional cultures were coming to be seen as endangered species. Anti-globalists were charging that globalization streamrolled native cultures by way of Westernization. Sometimes cultural resistance took the innocuous form of consumerist "hybridity" or "glocalization" (simultaneous globalization and localization), the key words of so many conference papers in those triumphal years. Globalists like John Tomlinson (*Globalization and Culture*, 1999) seized upon postmodern hybridity as a shield against the charge that globalization kills culture through homogenization. By this account there could be no cultural imperialism, for there was no "original" culture to displace (Tomlinson 1999, 143-47).

Al Qaeda had a very different opinion, and the events of September 11, 2001 wrote militant resistance back into cultural history. One victim of this radical resistance was the "end of history" notion that Francis Fukuyama propounded and media globalists like Thomas Friedman connected with economic globalization. Such instant-mix democratization went up in smoke on 9/11, and has never regained its post-Cold War stature. In Asia, especially, there has been a steady retreat from the democratic triumphalism of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when grassroots "people power" challenged the right wing ideology of so-called "Asian values." The retreat of people power, combined with the global retreat of democratization in general, has paved the way for a quiet resurgence of "Asian values" and the spread of what I have called, in my book of this title, "development without freedom" (Thornton 2008).

The unfortunate thing about this new Asian exceptionalism is that it works so well economically. It fulfills the warning that Minxin Pei made in 1994 that Asian economic dynamism "poses a serious ideological, intellectual, and policy challenge to those concerned with promoting *both* democracy and market economics in the world, for it suggests that the latter can thrive without the former" (Pei 1994, 92). From the perspective of Samuel Huntington's famous East/West clash, it is no surprise that exceptionalism is emerging as the victor in the war between "exceptionalism" and "Rimism" (the idea that Asian development would democratize Asia in a fairly uniform and essentially Western manner). In the case of exceptionalism, as epitomized by the precepts of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, Asian democracy is reduced to mere procedural formalities that buttress the Asian values of involuntary harmony and consensus. The best known Asian rejoinder to the Singapore model is the "development as freedom" thesis of Amartya Sen (Sen 1999).

It should not be overlooked, however, that Korea produced its own equivalent of Senism in the thought and practice of Korean oppositionalism. In defiance of Korea's reputation for hermetic statism (SJ Kim 1994, 182), the rudiments of an Asian "other"—distinct, especially, from the Japanese consensual model (Han 1988, 252)—were supplied in a classic study by Han Sang-Jin on the oppositional dynamics of Korean political culture (Han 1988, 263). Later Han updated his work to incorporate the Kim/Lee debate over the meaning and range of Asian values (Han 1995a, 6). Following the drift of "postmodern" development theory towards diversity (Haggard 1990) and away from any master narrative (Chan 1994, 36), Han declared the whole issue of Korean political development an "open question. Elsewhere, however, he held out the hope that Korea was at last in a position to shift from what he termed "rush-to" modernization toward a more socially and ecologically "reflexive" development (Han 1995b, 63).

Toward a Korean Model

Likewise, Kim Dae Jung posited Korea as a case of pan-Asian democracy, the very antithesis of Lee's pan-Asian authoritarianism.

This model moved beyond exceptionalism by reconciling the deep roots of Korean and East Asian political culture with liberal values (DJ Kim 1994, 191). One of the most vital political debates of our times was taking shape between the irreconcilable poles of Asian exceptionalism and its enemies. Kim disputed the notion that "Western" democracy was a system so alien to Asian cultures that it could not work (DJ Kim 1994, 191). The supreme irony is that Korea's battle for democracy had to be waged on two fronts simultaneously: against an autocratic regime, surely, but also against that regime's Cold War overlord. America, the presumed archetype of global democracy, turned out to be its second enemy.

In his speeches of the time, Kim became the "other" Korea's most commanding voice, but his dissent did not arise ex nihilo. He was as much a product of Korean political culture as were Park, Chun, and Roh. Larry Wade, accordingly, long opposed theories of a monolithic political culture in Korea (Wade 1980, 44-45). Nothing explains Korea's postcolonial brutality so well as the threat posed by Korea's rising opposition (Zeigler 1988, 122). By the criteria advanced by Seymour Lipset—that a basic prerequisite of democratization is a system open to cross-pressures (Oh 1994, 49-50)—Korea of the 1980s was primed and ready for democracy.

Kim Young Sam's "New Korea" program was able to achieve at least partial success because Korea's state-society relationship had already been substantially transformed.

While the "Korean model" that I adopt is oppositional in Lipset's sense, the Japanese model offers little more than a spurious, showpiece opposition, with little genuine cross pressure. Worse still, the Singaporean model measures its success by a lack of opposition. Korea of the late 1980s was a kind of anti-Singapore, and was far removed from other Asian countries as well. As Sang Joon Kim observed, the Korean transition from authoritarianism does not fit neatly into any of the familiar patterns set by the Philippines or Taiwan (SK Kim 1994, 183). Dong-Hyun Kim added that Korea is a ponderously complex society whose economic successes are best understood "in relation to its own

internal dynamics" (DH Kim 1994, 179). That is all the more true where the political side of development is concerned.

The salient question is whether the Korean model is so unique that it holds little modeling value for other developing countries. That, I would argue, is not the case. In his landmark *Foreign Affairs* article of December, 1994, Kim Dae Jung credited Korea's own reform, yet traced the roots of this dynamism to pan-Asian values. Many elements of the Korean model are un-exceptional enough to be applied elsewhere, especially in Asia. As Kim rendered it, Korea's oppositional model turns the myth of "Asian values" on its head, replacing authoritarian agonistics with an activistic, translocal dialogics. In large part that difference stems from the unusual scope of Korea's political discourse, making the line between political and non-political culture hard to draw.

In my undergraduate years—the years of Korea's democratic revolution—visitors to Korea were often struck by the political sophistication of taxi drivers, by the political climate of ordinary coffee houses, and by bookstores that catered to a large number of politically literate readers. While this political consciousness reflected a surprising diffusion of higher education, the roots of political awareness ran deep in Korean culture. Survey data from the lean years of the early 1970s reveal that the conversations of workers living scarcely above a subsistence level were as likely to revolve around politics as issues of daily livelihood (Wade 1980, 23). Long before its full democratic impact would be felt, the germ of Korea's democratic transformation was already planted in this extended social discourse. The revolution began when that discourse could no longer be suppressed by those in power.

While it is hard to assign a precise point of origin to this event, as good a date as any might be Roh Tae Woo's presidential inauguration on February 25, 1988. This may seem ironic, since Roh himself was a militarist whose best political asset was his predecessor's inability to smile for cameras or otherwise avoid the appearance of an aspiring military dictator. While Roh was cut from the same militarist mold, he was much better at not looking

the part. And for a military man he was remarkably adept at bending with the political wind. Early on his inauguration day, for example, the former general seized a photo opportunity with cleaning ladies at his party headquarters. His was to be the "Great Era for Ordinary People," and the new atmosphere was epitomized by nothing so much as the president's photogenic smile. That winning smile signaled a departure not only from the stern visages and administrative styles of Roh's predecessors, Park and Chun, but also from an era dominated by the Japanese model of development.

Ian Buruma relates Roh's new populist image to the substantive shift toward a more critical political culture. It was only with the inauguration of President Kim Young Sam, however, that this culture found the wherewithal to storm the palace, or rather the Blue House. The line between old and new was drawn decisively with the censure, dismissal, or arrest of more than a thousand high level officials in government and business (McKillop and Lee 1993, 13). Populist values pulsed through an expanded political discourse that made the Blue House seem less remote and foreboding.

How did this happen? Well into the 1980s it had seemed unlikely to most foreign observers that Korea's Old Guard was about to topple. Writing during the administration of Chun Doo Hwan, Lucian Pye had dismissed public dissent against Chun as so much theatre. Pye had misread both sides of the conflict, the state and the society, by taking them to be static and non-dialogic. The dance of contention that Pye read as stylized "theatre" was indeed performative, but it also constituted, from both sides, a highly developed dialogue of relatively nonviolent intent—as compared, say, to the far less "theatrical" patterns of dissent and control in the Philippines or many Latin American countries.

As a rhetorical exchange, moreover, this performance was seldom monological. Both sides had their choreography and their lines to recite, but between the lines they imparted messages that were easily comprehensible to Koreans, if not to outsiders. Behind

the stage effects, the gains and losses were real. Pye was wrong, furthermore, in his conclusion that it made little difference who might replace President Chun, since one Korean leader was basically like another (Pye 1985, 227). Pye could hardly have imagined that in the next decade both Kims, icons of Korean opposition, would occupy the Blue House.

The Other Korean Road

These remarkable reversals did not issue from a cultural backwater. There was cultural dynamism in the "other" Korea throughout the course of the country's modernization, though most of this went unnoticed by name brand scholars like Morris Janowitz and Samuel Huntington (see Cumings 1997, 350-54), who associated Korea's developmental potency with Blue House authoritarianism. In fact, Park Chung Hee's militaristic style had been more in keeping with Japanese values than Korean ones. Norman Jacobs cogently argued that Parkian modernization had in fact been an obstacle to development (Jacobs 1985, 17). Unfortunately Jacobs operated out of a positivist tradition which was prone to focus on overt authority at the expense of more amorphous cultural resistance (see Murphy 1988, 98). As had Gregory Henderson (*Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*, 1968), Jacobs laid stress on the centralizing "vortex" of power. The image one got was of a two-tiered society: the "vortexers" and the "vortexed." The very real oppositional force mounting on the political periphery was not taken very seriously. In subsequent years the Right applied this "vortex" approach with unmitigated venom, as in a co-authored study by Bun Woong Kim and David S. Bell extolling the virtues of Korea's "elitist heritage" (Kim and Bell 1991, 24). This study concluded that the opposition movement could not have developed domestically, since Koreans were too mired in their respect for authority (Kim and Bell 1991, 22).

A more tempered expression of this same assumption was found in a study of popular protest by Aie-Rie Lee. Lee attributed postwar oppositionalism almost entirely to the culture shift that resulted from higher education that was government sponsored and

largely Westernized. Again, the possibility that resistance could have originated in the political margins of Korea itself was flatly dismissed. Like Kim and Bell, Lee reduced Korea's past to one "long tradition of subservience to authority . . ." (Lee 1993, 63). This neglected the plausible hypothesis that the severity of Korean authority was partly motivated by the existence of real resistance outside the "vortex."

Henderson himself did not deny the existence of the Other Korea, but viewed its resistance as a losing cause. He framed his entire thesis around his lament over the eclipse of localized political and economic initiative, such that "even what passed for local power was central power extended" (Henderson 1968, 30). He traced the early modern phase of this "vortexization" to the Taewongun period, when high social mobility contributed to social atomization. In his view this made individuals all the more vulnerable to central control. James Palais countered that the lives of ordinary Koreans of the Taewongun era were still very much circumscribed by "traditional ties to family, lineage, and village . . ." (Palais 1975, 3). However, he roughly equated tradition and local initiative with the continued hegemony of the yangban class, which he did not consider to have been under serious threat from either the royalty or the peasantry during the late Yi period.

Though Palais did grant that the threat of peasant insurrection induced limited reforms, he dismissed the widespread suspicion among yangban intellectuals that the Taewongun intended to court the masses and usurp yangban privileges (Palais 1975, 280). For Palais popular unrest was a sideshow which lacked the infrastructure for systemic change. However, it should be stressed that his position—that grassroots resistance lacked the means to seriously challenge the yangban ruling class—in no way supports Aie-Rie Lee's depiction of ordinary Koreans as naturally subvervient. Rather, the image that Palais projected was of a social powder keg waiting for the right conditions to explode.

In the absence of those conditions, Henderson and Palais could agree that the political challenge from Korea's social margins was

negligible. The fact remains that the politically charged populism of recent decades did not drop out of thin air. It was shaped and intensified by several decades of brutal Japanese occupation. A social base for ludic insurrection was laid in the last years of Japan's rule, when the pace of Korea's forced industrialization was twice or three times that of Japan's Taiwan colony (Cumings 1981, 27). An incipient working class was torn from the land yet given no secure place in the emerging order. Japanese oppression germinated a counter-authoritarian spirit that never fully developed in Taiwan. This was the germ of the "other" Korea that I came to know as a student in Busan.

Hard Truths For Samuelson Et Al.

Like Jacobs' *Korean Road*, Kim Dae Jung's *Mass-Participatory Economy* (1985) distinguishes modernization and development, but defines development more in terms of the needs of the Korean people. Koreans have not been as quiescent as the postwar Japanese when it comes to the machinations of the nation's industrial giants. The name "chaebol" carries roughly the same negative connotations that Japan's "zaibatsu" had in prewar days (Eckert 1990, 142); but while the Japanese absorbed corporatism into their new cultural identity, postwar Koreans balked at such accommodation, at least in the 1980s. Socio-economic modernization therefore took very different directions in Japan and Korea. The irony is that a convergence began to take place in the 1990s, as some Japanese began to question their blanket corporatism and most Koreans relaxed their oppositionalism. Now the former opposition became the government, marking the end of an era.

Many confused the legitimate claims of populism on a fair share of the nation's GNP with the narcissism and mindless consumerism that President Kim Young Sam condemned. At that time Korea's average per-capita income was around U.S. $6,000. The typical Korean hardly needed a lecture from the president on why one should not shop at a department store where a set of golf clubs could cost U.S. $6,000 and a pair of underwear $600 (see

Emerson and Martin 1991, 12). Populism posed a danger only to Korea's power elite, not to its efficiency or solvency. Indeed, populist values might have offered the best foundation for securing sustainable economic growth.

In cheering the IMF on, Western commentators arrogantly assumed that "croney capitalism" is natural to Asia in general and Korea in particular. Their constant calls for transparency presupposed that this demand had never been heard from inside Korea itself. But the prime targets of populist criticism had always been the corruption and shady operations that the IMF would identify as the major threat to Korea's continued prosperity. Notwithstanding its orientalist rhetoric, the IMF quickly bailed out the very cronies who were responsible for the Crash, leaving the working classes to fend for themselves.

Too often economists fail to realize that injury to the working classes will kill the goose that laid the economic miracle. Most studies parallel Henderson, Jacobs, and Samuelson in foregrounding the developmental contribution of Korea's power elite. Such studies tend to denigrate tradition, treating it as little more than an obstacle to modernization. By contrast, postwar Japanese scholarship has not only recognized the importance of Japanese tradition for modernization, but has welded it into a virtual ideology of Japanese uniqueness. Meanwhile a small school of revisionists—originally out of the Japanese studies department of the University of Chicago (Woodiwiss 1991, 111)—challenged Japan's vaunted exceptionalism, or *nihonjinron*, by questioning the ideological wedding of modern technologism with traditional Japanese values such as *bushido*. It likewise cast suspicion on outside observers such as Ezra Vogel, who was fatuous enough to take the self-representation of *nihonjinron* at face value.

While Vogel converted Japanism into a blueprint for America's reconstruction, Jacobs castigated Korean patrimonialism on much the same basis. This judgment falls short on both sides. First, Japanese development was not the sterling democratic model it claimed to be, and second, patrimonialism was not the last word

on Korean political culture. Unfortunately most correctives still leave Korea on a Japanese developmental track where success is defined as getting closer to the lead goose. Ex-Thatcherite John Gray (*False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, 1998) came to a similar conclusion. Whereas Takeshi Umehara contended that future development "will need to be drawn primarily from the experience of non-Western cultures, and especially Japanese civilization" (Umehara 1992, 10), Gray's pluralism prevented him from privileging any one culture or civilization. That is certainly a big improvement over his former Thatcherism, but it leads to an anti-dialogic retreatism not unlike Huntington's. The "other" is thereby saved from globalist usurpation only by being taken out of circulation. Once again the sui generis voice of the "other" is muted.

In Korea and most Asian NICs the cultural "other" has been effectively consigned to a reservation. Through lavish funding for the preservation of traditional dance, music, crafts, etc., "culture" has been reduced to the status of a museum artifact. This makes it politically impotent, which is the whole point. The same was accomplished by specious modernization projects like Park's Saemaul Movement, which undertook to upgrade rural communities while razing their aesthetic traditions and treating their residents with cultural contempt. The timing of the movement suggested its real motive. Park was driven in this direction after the sordid 1971 election returns showed that support for his regime was rapidly declining in the rural sector (Jacobs 1985, 108). This was understandable, given his contemptuous attitude toward non-industrial Korea. Burmeister showed (in *Research, Realpolitik, and Development in Korea: The State and the Green Revolution*, 1988) how pervasive this attitude was. The rural sector, and by extension the Other Korea, had been consistently treated as a hindrance rather than contributor to Korea's development.

Candle Light Protests

That same mentality persists today, and may even be more intense in post-Crash Korea. A striking example is the process by

which the government circumvented local and global resistance to the destruction of the Saemangeum, an ecologically incomparable estuary at the mouth of the Mankyung and Dongkin rivers. This so-called "reclamation," the worst tidal flat destruction in the world (Green Korea Report 2003), began here in 1991, but was interrupted by the court action of environmentalists. The government's plan was to construct the world's longest sea wall to convert this priceless estuary—nearly a hundred thousand acres of wetlands that supplied habitat for 400,000 migratory birds—into profitable landfill. This was one of the most critical feeding and staging areas along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, stretching from Mongolia to New Zealand. The original goal was to turn the marsh into rice paddies, but this idea fell through when it was pointed out that Korea already had a considerable rice surplus. The plan then morphed into a combined industrial and tourism scheme, which would include a 540 hole golf course, the world's largest (Card 2006).

Public resistance was swift and forceful, and was matched by an international call-to-arms under the rubric "SOS," for Save Our Saemangeum. Spearheaded by KFEM (the Korean Federation of Environmental Movements) and Greenpeace, environmental protests were joined by Buddhist monks, Catholic priests, fishermen, celebrities, and countless others. Worldwide support was galvanized, but to no avail. In this battle between grassroots democratic action and pork barrel profits, there was never much doubt as to which side would prevail. The project got its final approval from the Korean Supreme Court in March 2006 (Card 2006).

As they say, history is written by the victors, and Korea's corporate establishment immediately set about re-writing the history of this debacle. The government went so far as to claim that it was building an eco-friendly "green paradise" at Saemangeum. An equally mendacious spin was given by an article on the subject in *Korea Forum*, published by the Korea Foundation, which declared that the whole affair had "demonstrated the democratic

maturity of our society" (Park 2006, 44). What it actually demonstrated was how little the end results of Korean political processes had changed since Park's day when it came to the fetish of economic growth.

Even the Roh Moo Hyun administration, which was reputed to be on the moderate left, rapidly fell in line. Undeterred by environmental concerns, Roh laid plans for a high speed railroad to slice through the Geumjung and Chonsung mountains, and a highway project to cut through the heart of Mt. Bukhan National Park (Card 2006). To promote tourism, his administration relaxed regulations on golf and ski resorts. As of 2003 there were already 38 golf courses in the southern Gyeonggi province, yet the government planned to build 18 more. But the hallmark of Roh's war on the environment was his plan for a Seoul-Inchon canal (Sudworth 2008). This project had begun in 1995 but faced mounting protests. Even government planners concluded that the canal's economic value would be minimal while its environmental costs would be massive. Roh nonetheless refused to order its cancellation (Card 2006).

By way of rebound, public discontent with Roh's rule heavily impacted the December, 1007 presidential election, yet made no dent on the national obsession with canal building. Roh's successor, Lee Myung Bak, had long dreamed of a Seoul-Busan canal, and now included it as a campaign pledge. For cosmetic purposes he staged investigations of public opinion, along with environmental impact studies, but this was mere window dressing for a plan that was effectively set in stone. It was no secret that the two losers in the project would be the ecosystem and the taxpayer, while the big winner would be the country's construction cartel.

On June 10, 2008, on the 21st anniversary of the pro-democracy movement, an unprecedented rainbow coalition of candlelight protests erupted. Its prime focus was the president's lifting of a ban on U.S. beef imports that had been in place since 2003, in response to an alleged outbreak of mad cow disease. By lifting the ban with no public debate, Lee harked back to the

governance style of Park, Chun, and Roh. The resulting public outcry pointed, some thought, toward a renaissance of civil resistance. Already Lee had been forced to back away from his plans to privatize electricity, gas, water, and health care, and now he had to abandon the Grand Canal project as well. These opposition victories seemed to raise hope that the democratic tide might be turning (Eperjesi 2008). Once again grassroots opposition seemed to be on the march, putting neoliberal globalization on the defensive.

Mounting public discontent with Lee's whole style of governance had forced him to back away from the Seoul-Busan project, more on economic than environmental grounds. As of June 2008 it was put on hold. But hardly more than a month later the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs announced a plan to reactivate the Seoul-Incheon canal project, which years of protest and environmental struggle had halted ("Government" 2008). Since this was to be a branch of the Seoul-Busan system anyway, proceeding with it was just an indirect way of continuing the bigger project. Thus the Parkian war on nature continues unabated.

The candlelight vigils of 2008 were a two-edged sword. Thousands of Korean Netizens—Internet citizens—had been able to voice their discontent in cyberspace, and during the protests computer webcams allowed live videos to be broadcast. It helped that Korea ranks first among the OECD nations in terms of household access to the Internet (Touret 2008). At a June conference in Seoul, Kim Dae Jung himself praised this rekindled spirit of resistance (DJ Kim 2008). Unfortunately all this populist hype also had the effect of "dumbing down" the oppositional agenda, and meanwhile the Korean Left remains locked in its anti-American and pro-North Korean fixations ("Korean Ideology" 2008).

The prototype for the recent candlelight vigils took place in Seoul in November 2002, when two Korean schoolgirls were killed by a U.S. tank during military emergency exercises. Anti-American protests exploded after a U.S. court martial acquitted the American

defendants ("Korean Ideology" 2008). What this accomplished was to put blinders on the investigation of the principle reasons for the tragedy. Korean responsibility for zoning to avoid civilian casualties in military exercises was virtually ignored. If the accused drivers had happened to be Korean soldiers, the accident would probably have been back-paged. But even with all the publicity, no zoning reforms or other preventive measures came out of this. Much as anti-IMFism had been used to smokescreen Korean corporate responsibility for the Korean Crash of 1997, anti-Americanism now camouflaged Korean responsibility for safe military exercises.

Once again, the candlelight beef protests of 2008 were driven more by anti-Americanism than by scientific data. According to the World Organization for Animal Health, America's beef production is very risk-controlled, whereas Korea's is not. Clearly the safety factor of beef was not the real issue. The issue was America's *prima facie* guilt. If a foreign corporation like Halliburton had gotten a contract for the Saemangeum landfill project, there would have been endless candlelight protests to save this priceless habitat. One almost wishes that had been the case, for Saemangeum might then have been saved, albeit for the wrong reason. The sad fact is that the public's xenophobic reflex is required to galvanize such mass protests.

The candlelight protests were full of sound and fury, signifying very little. By targeting foreign beef, the movement had the effect of letting Korea's own special interests off the hook. The paradox is that Parkism—the rule of the generals and of Singapore-style "Asian values"—was the only effective constraint on Korea's corporate cronyism. The 1987 constitution unleashed this mega-corporatism in the name of democratic reform, producing a shotgun wedding of democracy and developmentalism (see Hahm and Kim 2005, 33-34). If Korean opposition movements cannot move beyond the strawman of anti-foreignism, they will never rise to the level of postmaterial reform (see Thornton 2004). With rare

exceptions, the opposition remains locked in the mental orbit of 20th century politics. [2]

The question is whether the Korean public will ever be ready to declare independence from Parkian development by embracing democracy as a postmaterial end-in-itself. If not, the Korean opposition will continue to serve the power elite and special interests by diverting the focus of protest to foreign targets. Reform-minded Koreans during my college years thought that by ridding themselves of the generals they were consolidating democratic reform. When will they come to realize that authoritarian "Asian values" can easily change to civilian clothes?

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[2] One of those exceptions was the call for solidarity by the Korean Federation of Trade Unions (KCTU) in response to the government's crackdown on the candlelight resistance of 2008. On July 2, the KCTU decided to mount a general strike. What made this action especially significant was that it targeted not only the issue of American beef, but a host of vital domestic issues, including the privatization of public services and the Korea Grand Canal. In effect the KCTU was challenging the democratic credentials of the developmental state. See "South Korean Unions Call for Solidarity," 2008.

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