

KOREA REBORN: A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Korea has had a turbulent and challenging history since 1945. The brutal dismemberment of the country quickly diminished the joy of being freed from Japan's colonial rule. However, these difficulties did not go in vain. Despite a cloudy and hopeless future, determination and hope emerged from suffering. This book results from random observations and notes taken by the author, Park Chang Hee, an Army General and politician who led South Korea from 1961 to 1979. It traces the journey of the Korean nation from trials and tribulations to regeneration and modernization through five chapters, included as introductory section titled "On the Threshold of a New History" and the conclusion titled "Korea's Path to Regeneration."

The author argues that the national awareness in 1960s and its resulting accomplishments eventually form the basis of Yushin (in Korean means revitalizing, reforming, restoring, or renovating) Reforms, which caused great spiritual and intuitional changes in 1970s. These reforms brought about significant spiritual and intuitive changes. The most valuable outcome of the struggle during this period was the discovery of the nation's hidden potential. According to the author, this potential paved the way for the country to achieve three crucial goals (1) to ensure the survival and security of the nation, (2) to achieve a prosperous society through strenuous modernization efforts and (3) to establish a democratic society that respects the nation's historical reality, culture, and traditions.

Chapter one of this book is titled "In Search of Our Identity", in which the author explains that a nation's potential is not determined by its material resources or the size of its territory but rather by the collective wisdom and spirit of its people. Only those countries that preserve and develop this spirit have a chance at success. This chapter discusses three key elements for the development and regeneration of the Korean nation like (1) The Spirit of Jaju, (2) Harmony as a Way of Life and (3) The Power of Creativity.

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Among the legacies passed down by their ancestors, the spirit of Jaju is considered the most valuable. Jaju means that we, Koreans, should be the masters of our own land as we have shaped our history over the past five thousand years. When the nation is united in the spirit of Jaju, it becomes a potent force to overcome national crisis. Koreans hold human relationships based on harmony and moderation in high regard. This unique way of life and thought is called the Spirit of Harmony or “Hwa”. It involves prioritizing cooperation and harmony in social relationships over conflict and struggle.

The power of creativity is fundamental to Korea’s political, economic, social, religious and scientific accomplishments. When the spirit of Juju is strong, Korean creativity reaches its peak. The author explains that in early US history, Puritans believed in success as a temporal blessing from God, which motivated them to work harder and move the west ahead. The author thinks it is important to absorb the rationalism and pragmatism of western philosophy, but everything from the west is not good and useful. Unthinkingly copying western culture is undesirable. Instead, Korea’s culture and traditions should choose the strengths and merits of both Eastern and Western contrasts.

In the **second chapter**, the author argues that democracy is the most successful political system in balancing individual liberty with social order. Still, it must align with a country’s culture and traditions. Korea’s experimentation with democracy was full of errors, wastefulness and inefficiency that hindered modernization efforts. Political stability is crucial, and leaders have a responsibility to maintain it.

Author quotes some examples of western democracies which flexibly manipulated their institutions and basic rights of citizens to solve national problems, e.g. during American civil war, President Lincoln assumed vast emergency powers, suspended civil rights, and even apprehended (without warrants) tens of thousands of people suspected of anti-state activities. Similarly, President Roosevelt seized emergency powers during the 1930 to lead the US from its great recession and turn it victorious from its war against totalitarianism. Even in France, which is one of the countries where democracy originated, the serious national crisis of the 1950s led President Charles de Gaulle to prolong his term in office to better manage the national administration and preserve political stability. To prevent wastefulness and inefficiency, which are apt to be caused by political conflict and struggle, it is considered natural to unite to save democracy itself.

Korea continued to pursue its goals of modernization and national security in the 1960s and became aware of the importance of political stability. But it was not until 1972 Yushin Reforms that it discovered a relevant democratic system suited to its own historical conditions and reality. The reforms not only helped to overcome the crisis through the unity of the Korean people, but it also even promoted the efficient modernization of the country. From the post war’s largest economic crisis of worldwide recession in 1970s, the Republic of Korea emerged with a surprising average

growth rate of 11 percent per year. While the rest of the world's economies were in the doldrums during 1974-75, Korea's economy grew by a high level of 8 percent per year.

The **third chapter** discusses the Samuel Movement, which aims to increase farm income and improved living standard in rural areas without relying on external assistance. It transformed farming communities into a foundation for national progress. Through the movement, all villagers participated in project execution and resolving differences through dialogue. The movement shared similar goal with the Yushin reforms, aiming for a more prosperous nation through diligence, self-help and cooperation. The Korean people achieved both goals by translating their spirits into action.

The **fourth chapter** of this book delves into Korea's path to becoming an industrialized nation. It details the methods employed to gather the necessary resources for economic development while simultaneously striving for stability, growth, welfare and a compassionate society. Korea has completed three five-year development plans, with many economic milestones achieved by the start of 1977. Merchandise exports surpassed \$10 billion for the first time, and Korea climbed to 28th place among trading nations. Despite the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent recession, Korea's economy grew remarkably, outpacing Japan, West Germany and Taiwan. This success is partly due to a well-educated and trained workforce, which has been a priority since Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945. The government has made significant investments in education, not only in high schools and colleges but also during military training, to produce skilled human resources for a highly modernized society. Korea's traditional values of harmony and cooperation should be firmly established and brightly manifested for a better future.

The **fifth chapter** discusses Korea's role in the global community. After experiencing the Cold War, the world is undergoing significant changes, presenting challenges and difficulties for Korea. These changes offer both risks and opportunities. Those who understand the risks and adapt to new circumstances can expect to have more choices. The author suggests that Korea should not seek a big power guarantee for unification to avoid a subservient policy. Instead, they should consider dialogue and a non-aggression agreement. The policy should prioritize peace first and unification second. Winning without fighting is the real victory. In the world of big powers, it is not easy to distinguish friends and enemies. Yesterday's friend can become today's enemy, and today's enemy can become tomorrow's friend. Despite being founded to solve disputes among nations, there is considerable skepticism about the UN's effectiveness. The weakening role of the UN contributes to big-power politics, where loyalty, legalism and compassion are weaknesses in the face of big-power interests. It is crucial to remember that all conflicts should be resolved peacefully through dialogue, and nations should strive for prosperity and peace.

The book concludes that Koreans successfully revitalized their nation by enhancing its power to overcome internal and external challenges. In short,

development involves a series of problem-solving steps. Koreans aimed to establish a society where the human spirit leads rather than materialism. By breaking free from poverty and stagnation and overcoming conflicts and alienation, Korea is now working towards building a cooperative and compassionate society. It has been made possible through the Yushin Reforms and Samual Movement, which have enabled Korea to combat poverty effectively. Rather than political compromise, the country's political democracy is a purposeful and innovative effort. The path to prosperity that Koreans have chosen leads to peace, and the nation is pursuing the goal of peaceful unification through liberty and prosperity. After all, what good is unification if it is based on the ruins of war? In short, the path to Korea's national regeneration is one that all Koreans must embark on together as they create a new history and play their roles.