

# South Korea after Kwangju

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# Review

- ◆ Was Park Chung Hee a dictator?
- ◆ Why did most South Koreans (with exception of some Christian leaders, workers, and radical students) accept his dictatorship quietly?
- ◆ Why was he assassinated by the head of his own secret police?
- ◆ Why did Chun Doo-hwan send troops to attack Kwangju?

# The international impact of Kwangju

- Because the United States government took the side of stability over democracy, there was a rise in anti-Americanism in Korea after 1980.
- Japanese progressives played an important role in letting the world know what happened in Kwangju, and Japanese labour unions protested plans to execute Kim Dae Jung.
- US government also worked to keep Kim alive, and later may also have put pressure on the South Korean government in 1987 to keep the military in its barracks.
- Canada and West Germany helped Kwangju refugees.

# Politics after Kwangju

- Chun Doo-hwan's Black Republic 1980-87
- Radicalization of students (growing anti-Americanism and interest in Marxism), and further militarization of society
- Growth of minjung literature and minjung theology (Minjung = suffering masses)
- Corruption at unprecedented levels
- Attempts were made to kill Chun Doo-hwan, in Burma and in Canada.

# Roh Tae-woo

- A former comrade-in-arms of Chun
- 1987--Won by a plurality against Kim Daejung, Kim Youngsam and Kim Jong Pil. (Armstrong, p. 41)
- Post-Cold War foreign policy --reached out to Eastern Europe and China
- Lighter hand domestically--more arrests but less torture.
- Merged his Democratic Justice Party with Kim Youngsam's and Kim Jong Pil's parties in order to gain a majority in Parliament. Forms Democratic Liberal Party

# Kim Youngsam

- 1992--Wins presidency as candidate of Roh's party. 1st civilian president since 1961.
- Turns around and arrests Roh and Chun.
- Also harassed Chŏng Juyŏng (head of Hyungdai) for running against him
- The economy collapsed on his watch (1997) (Koreans call it the IMF crisis)  
Was it his fault?
- (see Hwang, p. 272-73)

# Kim Daejung

📌 1997-First peaceful transfer of power

📌 How did he win?

A) split in the opposition

B) help from Kim Jong Pil

🏆 What was his policy toward North Korea?

Sunshine Policy—ease tensions and prepare for eventual unification by raising living standards in the north.

🏆 What did he do domestically?

Worked hard to overcome the economic crisis

🏆 Why did he become so unpopular, despite his Nobel Prize?

He failed to perform miracles.

# Roh Moohyun

- 2002-South Korea divided by age and region.
- Why did Roh form his own political party?
- Why was an attempt made to impeach President Roh, and why did it fail? (Armstrong, p. 43)
- Peaceful resolution of dispute shows maturing of Korean democracy. Also shows popular contempt for traditional politics.
- Why happened to Kim Daejung's old party? Why are Korean political parties still so closely identified with particular political leaders?
- Why have the democratically elected leaders ended up so unpopular at the end of their terms?

# Lee Myung-bak

- True democracy--another peaceful transfer of power.
- Won 48.7% of the vote. His primary opponent won only 26.1%. His party also won the April, 2008, parliamentary election.
- Campaigned on a promise to get the economy growing fast again. He didn't do as well as he had promised.
- Promoted a hard-line policy toward North Korea. No concrete results from that policy, either. Instead, there was more tension, including the bombardment of Yŏnpy'ŏng-do off the North Korean coast.

# Park Geun-hye

- Daughter of Park Chung Hee. Elected in 2012 with 51.6% of the vote. Supported by those over 50. The opposition won in its usual places, Seoul and the Southwest. (See Armstrong, p. 44) Had help in her campaign from the National Intelligence Service. Appointed former assistant to Park to high posts in her administration.
- She changed the name of her political party. Why do South Korean politicians do that?
- Has been less confrontational with North Korea than Lee Myung-bak was.
- But has been harder on opposition politicians. Had an opposition parliamentarian arrested for allegedly plotting a pro-North Korean rebellion.

# The New South Korea

- One of the world's richest countries, with South Korean products being sold around the world. (South Korea has almost caught up with Japan in per capita income.)
- A major cultural force, with South Korean music and dramas becoming popular globally.
- A model of the transition from poverty to prosperity, and from dictatorship to democracy.

# The rise in religious affiliation

- 1916 530,000 out of 15-17 million 3%
- 1940 1 million out of 23.5 million 4%
- 1965 3.5 million out of 28.2 mil. 12%
- 1985 17.2 million out of 41 mil. 42%
- Achieving a majority religious population
- 1995 22.5 million out of 44.5 mil. 50.7%
- 2004 Gallup Poll 53.5%
- 2005 25 million out of 47 million 53.1%

# Religious Change

- In 1960, there were only 623,000 Protestants and 451,808 Catholics in Korea. Buddhism claimed to have 6.8 million followers. There were over 25 million people in South Korea at that time.
- In 2005, over half the population of 48 million were religious. 22.8% of South Koreans were Buddhist (10.7 million), 18.3% were Protestant, 10.9% were Catholic, 0.2% called themselves Confucians, 0.3% called themselves Won Buddhists, and 0.5% had another religious affiliation.

# A change that is not a change

- South Koreans appear more religious today only because they now tend to call themselves members in religious organizations. Before they went to temples, hired shamans, and participated in Confucian rituals, but didn't call themselves religious.
- Religion today means something different in South Korea than it did 100 years ago. Now it means an organization that is confessional (based on shared beliefs) and congregational (meets as a group regularly for rituals).
- The “non-religious” in South Korea are not usually atheists. They engage in religious activity but don't see themselves as members of a religious community.