



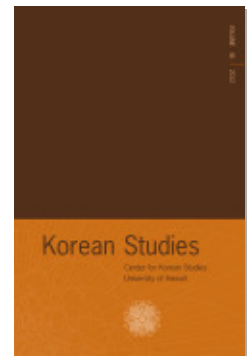
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Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States (review)

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the project quite germane to his study at hand, namely, China's almost pathological fear of instability, which certainly plays into its economics-driven outlook. The Northeast Asia project can be seen as an attempt to offset internal stability (just as much a threat to its economy as the instability of North Korea) by emphasizing the importance of its many minorities (in this case, its Korean minority) to the idea of "one China, many peoples."

On some yet more minor points, at one point Roh Tae Woo should rightly be Roh Moo Hyun (p. 75), and the author at one point has the South Korean economic crisis beginning in 1998 when he likely meant 1997 (p. 52). Snyder at one point divides the Chinese–South Korea relationship into phases, with phase three being from China's entry into the WTO in 2001 up into 2006 (pp. 48–49), yet later he dates this phase as 2001–2004 (p. 58).

But such minor points are far outweighed by the strength of Snyder's study, which comes with a thorough index and two appendices detailing high-level bureaucratic meetings between China and both North and South Korea between 1992 and 2006. Included as well is a comprehensive bibliography.

Snyder certainly knows his subject and has done a thorough job in reading, digesting, and summarizing the primary issues arising out of China's economic rise over the last two decades as they pertain to the Korean peninsula. The author offers a very readable study that, for as long as the international situation allows, makes it a thoroughly relevant book to anyone interested in the interplay of economics and politics in contemporary Northeast Asia.

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Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States, by Jae Ho Chung. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 185 pages, tables, notes, index. \$80.00 cloth, \$27.50 paper.

Imposing clarity upon the cluttered chessboard of contemporary Northeast Asian geopolitics is a daunting proposition, but one at which Jae Ho Chung effortlessly succeeds in his book, *Between Ally and Partner*. Using a balanced blend of Chinese, Korean, and English-language sources, Chung deftly lays out the evolution of South Korea's economic and political ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC). In so doing, Chung creates a text that simultaneously overviews the contemporary history

of Sino-Korean relations, situates South Korea and China in regional context—especially, but not exclusively, with reference to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)—and sets the table for intelligent prognostication.

Chung’s text is written in a sparse prose style that moves nimbly through eight clean, clearly organized chapters. More than half of his footnotes originate with Chinese sources and literature written by Chinese scholars in recent years. One of the best aspects of this text is its consistent and productive engagement with *Shijie Zhishi*, the Beijing periodical affiliated with the PRC Foreign Ministry. The author’s extensive travels to China and meetings with scholars there in (and since) the liberal 1980s, as well as his work in international relations theory, adds nicely to the book’s core narrative, a narrative buttressed with standard citations such as *Chosŏn Ilbo*, *Dong-A Ilbo*, and various South Korean government reports and scholarship. Chung’s book therefore stands as a wonderful complement to work by Chae-Jin Lee and as an essential guidebook to the historical background among these key Northeast Asian powers.

Chung begins with an obligatory look back at Sino-Korean relations in antiquity, noting the impact of the tributary relationship with China. In Chung’s treatment of the historical controversies surrounding Koguryŏ, the author engages with actual Chinese scholarship on the northeast, as opposed to merely citing South Korean characterizations of what that project may mean. Chung, however, is never long detained and quickly chisels down into the early Cold War, where he pauses to reflect upon the politics of memory of the Korean War, the role played by Korean exile groups in history, and the slow development of people-to-people relations in the era of Park Chung-hee. Probably the most interesting assertion here involves a juxtaposition of anti-Japanese with anti-China sentiment in South Korea. Chung writes:

If Japan’s colonial rule over Korea. . . has not been forgotten and perhaps never will, China’s military actions against South Korea during the Korean War (1950–1953) appears to have been almost totally forgiven by the South Koreans. This raises an intriguing question: Is the recency of a negative incident or the duration of that incident more likely to condition one state’s sentiments toward another? . . . Given that the lion’s share of the over 930 foreign invasions that Korea has had to endure throughout its history came from various dynasties and tribal groups of China, to maintain Korea within its ‘sphere of influence,’ Koreans’ positive—even unconditionally favorable—views of China are both interesting and puzzling. (pp. 12–13)

Chung does not tender an answer, but the posing of questions like this one is highly valuable for readers and points to certain rather curious

silences in Northeast Asia's politics of memory. Indeed, perhaps locking horns over Koguryō is a means of avoiding uncomfortable conversations about the Korean War.

In approaching the topic of relations prior to 1988, Chung notes that "traditional China-Korea dyadic relations were reformulated as two parallel relationships—namely, ROK-ROC and DPRK-PRC relations." Although Chung clearly notes the Cold War alignments, he curiously fails to even mention the presence of Chinese troops in North Korea until 1958, a presence that one has to otherwise assume was harmful to the development of a pro-China outlook in Seoul. And, though it heightened Chinese apprehension at the time, South Korea's activist military aid of South Vietnam is similarly absent from the text. However, Chung does call attention to several other interesting Cold War developments, including the 1961 defection of two Chinese military pilots to South Korea (p. 30). Structurally—and diplomatic structure is where this author is most comfortable—the series of Sino-U.S.-Japanese rapprochements of 1972 brought South Korea into a more flexible mode of interaction with China. In 1973, Seoul finally starting using "People's Republic of China" as a legitimate means of referring to the mainland government and opened postal contacts to Yanbian in 1974, the latter action presumably undertaken with the active assistance of someone in the Cultural Revolution-eviscerated Chinese Foreign Ministry.

The personalities who made the policy changes are, in other words, largely irrelevant to this book. How, for instance, did Zhou Enlai's thinking evolve about South Korea? Why did the leading members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) take so long to come around to rapprochement with South Korea? Did his experiences in Manchuria and exposure to Japanese ideas about communism appear to impact Park Chung-hee and his stance toward the CCP? Presumably, institutions are more important than people, and such long psychobiographical detours would yield only speculation. Yet, given the relatively long tenure of leaders who were making decisions on both sides in the 1970s, it seems that some discussion of personalities might be in order. The role of personal experience might be useful in teasing out one larger question in Sino-South Korean relations: why does pragmatism win out over historical strife? At the very least, Chung is able to describe how very favorable remarks by Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, the two reformist Chinese leaders, aided in pushing for more contacts with South Korea in the 1980s (p. 32).

In chapter 6, Chung embarks on probably the most fascinating section of his book, which, at long last, delves into the role of personalities

and provinces. Noting that conservative People's Liberation Army officers were a significant interest group hampering the move toward rapprochement, Chung speculates that the inclusion of two of these men (Yue Feng and Liu Yazhou) in a working group about South Korea was a shrewd move (p. 64). Once Beijing began to decouple politics from economics (*zhengjing fenlie de yuanze*), the northern peninsular province of Shandong was secretly designated in 1987 as the key province for commercial ties with the Republic of Korea. A bit enflamed by the competition, China's other peninsular province, Liaoning, leaped into the fray and managed to set up a liaison office in Seoul in 1987 while Shandong was still negotiating (p. 32). Never has the principle of "Do first, then report" been better illustrated! Chung's demonstration of certain provinces holding the cards and then bargaining with the central government brings about a unique understanding of China's liberalist fever in 1987. However, amidst all of this provincial action, it is interesting to see what a marginal role was played by Yanbian: the CCP truly preferred to let the Han-dominated areas lead first and likely did not wish to unduly alarm North Korea by dealing too swiftly with South Korea directly adjacent to the DPRK's northern border areas. Predictably, the DPRK made protests anyway to China for its actions of opening Qingdao to South Korean business. Of course, North Korea went on to chill South Korea's rapprochement efforts via the 1984 attempt to wipe out the ROK cabinet in Rangoon. Chung's book is a fabulous guide to trade flows, but it fails to convey a sense of China's reaction to the critical events in Rangoon. This is unfortunate, as the question of China's role toward North Korean military adventurism—does China act as a curb or an enabler?—is one that certainly concerns South Korean policy makers.

Chung's book ends by sprinting through a dozen or so opinion polls conducted in South Korea, all the while ignoring the very serious anti-South Korean *aufschwung* in Chinese media outlets like *Huanqiu Shibao/Global Times*. But then again, such momentary disputes are ample enough in themselves for an entire book. What seems particularly urgently needed at present is more scholarship that can help scholars to understand the various fragmentations and unifying points of popular anti-Korean nationalism in China as it is variously expressed.

In conclusion, this taut and worthwhile text rewards reading and re-reading, promises further work from a most productive and efficient scholar, and should by all rights be on the ready reference shelf of most Koreanists.

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