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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria by Hyun Ok Park

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## KOREA

*Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria.* By HYUN OK PARK. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press. 2005. xix, 314 pp. \$84.95 (cloth); \$23.95 (paper).

doi:10.1017/S0021911809000448

Chronicling the Japanese colonial empire in Manchuria is no easy undertaking, but the task, like Manchuria itself, tends to attract the intrepid. Hyun Ok Park enters this realm with a rather bracing vision, offering a detailed and sophisticated treatment of the topic of Korean peasants in Manchuria in the early twentieth century. This book fairly seethes with new data from Korean-, Chinese-, and Japanese-language sources ranging from census surveys to postcolonial historical fiction. It also maintains an ambitious theoretical arc, situating Korean settlers within the matrix of capitalism rather than the nation-state. The author thus provides a new and Korean-centered vision of Manchuria's unruly colonial past, exposing in the process the weaknesses of nationalist histories of the region.

In such histories, Chinese nationalism, Japanese colonialism, and Korean hopes for equity collide with majestic force in Manchuria. Park, however, is more interested in the overlapping needs of the combatants on Manchuria's economic battlefields. She therefore depicts the ostensibly antagonistic forces of Chinese nationalism and Japanese colonialism as "bedfellows." Both, Park notes, used migrant Korean labor to further their shared dream of "swiftly commercializing Manchuria" (pp. 39–40). Park lays out the complex legal groundwork whereby Chinese administrations tacitly allowed Japan to facilitate migration of Koreans into Manchuria and describes how the Chinese appropriated land from Koreans who refused to be naturalized as Chinese citizens. Facing predatory action from Chinese administrators and landlords, Koreans in Manchuria therefore turned to Japanese development companies for loans. In equating Chinese state actions with Japanese imperatives, Park aims to upend scholarly orthodoxies that have privileged narratives of unified Chinese and Korean resistance movements against the presumably false manifestations of ethnic unity in Japan's nigh-satanic Manchukuo.

In seeking the meaning of that perennially elusive puppet state, Park uses a variant of the "bedfellows" theme to further intertwine Japanese colonialism and Korean nationalism. The book's discussion of Korean citizenship and land rights in Manchuria is thus steeped in the legal and economic documentation of the period, and detailed discussion is granted to describing how these issues were worked out among Japanese administrative units from Changchun to Seoul and on to Tokyo. In this fashion, Park's work not only raises questions about Korean "collaboration" with Japan in the construction of Manchukuo, it also adds to empirical discussions of administrative fragmentation and regional variations within the Japanese empire. It is for these reasons that Park's book will likely enrich discussion in

graduate seminars on colonial Manchuria and wartime collaboration with Japan, while complementing more focused studies of Japanese colonization in Korea.

Theoretical concerns run through the text in parallel and overlapping leitmotifs, creating a densely textured work that is best read in staged encounters. The occasional nine-page spurt of theoretical hurdles makes the text a challenging fit for undergraduate classrooms. (However, if and when An Sugil's classic novel *Pukkando*, which Park ably dissects, is translated into English and paired with *Two Dreams*, this could certainly change.) Park's concern with theory does not prevent her from turning a good phrase; indeed, the text ripples with pithy constructions such as "[Japan's] cascading strategy of empire building" (p. 24). A few factual errors do crop up, including sometimes inaccurate or incomplete Romanization for Korean sources and mistranslations of Chinese titles. Kim Il Song's rule is also misidentified as having ended in 1991, shortening the "great leader's" life by three years. And the rather promising subtitle on the "origins of the North Korean revolution in Manchuria" seems more a product of the present-day publishing marketplace than an integral argument in the book.

This is not, however, to impugn this book's great utility, particularly for North Korea watchers and students of North Korea's complex relations with historical and present-day Manchuria. Park's work provides context for understanding the North Korean national mythos as manifested in artworks such as *Sea of Blood* or *The Fate of a Self-Defense Corpsman*. Here, beyond the major theme of collaboration with and resistance to Japan, boundaries are blurred between Manchuria and Korea, absent any refuge. It is a telling commentary indeed that, in spite of massive infusions of Chinese aid since 1950, Democratic People's Republic of Korea literature still contains as a core theme oppression and hounding of Korean peasants by vicious Chinese landlords. As Park writes, "[T]he plight of Koreans, their suffering at the hands of bandits and Chinese landlords, and the allure of new, fertile land were familiar literary representations of Manchuria" (p. 25). The ongoing northern exodus from North Korea since the 1990s has brought renewed and tragic relevance to these themes. The crisis of the North Korean diaspora now plays out within the iron embrace of the People's Republic of China's ethnopolitics and the unforgiving, sometimes Hobbesian, practice of Chinese capitalism on the northeastern frontiers.

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*The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945.* By THEODORE JUN YOO. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008. xi, 316 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).  
doi:10.1017/S002191180900045X

*The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea* is the first book-length study in English to examine the dynamic formation of Korean modern gender subjectivities within