

**TRADITIONAL ROOTS OF STATE IDEOLOGIES  
OF NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA**

**By**

**Mironova Polina Victorovna**

**THESIS**

Submitted to  
KDI School of Public Policy and Management  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The paper contains the analysis of the elements of political development on the Korean peninsula starting from mid-1940's up to 1990's.

Next to the division of Korea into occupation zones by the Soviet Union and the United States after Japanese surrender in 1945, came the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 1948. The two states followed different political and economic courses, gradually accustoming to opposite world systems: North Korea followed the communist trend, while South Korea turned to capitalist development.

Ideological and political polarization on the peninsula led directly to the Korean War in 1950, which escalated into the conflict of broad international proportions between leaders of the Cold War blocks. One of the most important consequences of the war was the hardening of ideological lines between North and South Korea, with communist DPRK, sponsored by the USSR and China, opposing capitalist ROK backed by the US.

Though political, social and economic institutions of the DPRK and the ROK were largely influenced by opposite paths of Cold War rivals, it would be an overstatement to characterize political development of the two countries as based solely on external ideological trends.

Principles of Korean statehood were developing through the centuries within the framework of political tradition of the Far East. Political culture of ancient and medieval Korea was forming under the influence of Chinese tradition, mainly Confucian ideology. Thus it would not be correct to look upon state ideologies of North and South Korea in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the light of Cold War perceptions only.

The two Korean states, belonging to opposite Cold War blocks, but still sharing historical and cultural past, seemed to have a lot in common with regard to political ideology. The thesis is an attempt to prove that common traditional roots had a certain impact on the process of North and South Korean political development, notwithstanding the fact that the two countries represented antagonistic ideological trends.

While North Korea followed the ideological course, which implied one-party political system, public property, governmental control over economy and mass media along with absence of social freedoms, South Korea demonstrated its adherence to democratic values such as multi-party pluralistic political system with independent media and social freedoms accompanied by free economy and private property.

This paper, however, will focus on the similarities contains the of the DPRK and the ROK state ideologies, which, in my opinion, originated within the political culture of Confucianism. I believe that state ideologies of North

and South Korea shared the following traditional perceptions: strong central power associated with a leader as a paternalistic figure; state system looked upon through the prism of the family where relations between a leader and people were perceived as communication between father and children; superiority of the society over an individual (so called collectivism), and moralizing of politics. Also special attention in both ideological courses was paid to education and self-perfection.

The analysis is built on the works of Russian, American, Korean scholars, newspaper publications belonging to the period of the research (as far as official ideological line is usually presented by the press), speeches or books by political leaders of North and South Korea.

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## INTRODUCTION

The paper contains the analysis of the elements of political development on the Korean peninsula starting from mid-1940's up to 1990's. The period under the research starts with the emergence of the two states following principally different paths. The division process was initiated by the Potsdam Conference decision in July 1945, under which the two zones were formed on the peninsula: the USSR was going to accept Japanese surrender to the north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, while the US troops held responsibility for the southern part.

The establishment in 1948 of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK), rejecting each other's legitimacy and following opposite political and economic courses, brought about ideological polarization on the peninsula. North Korea followed the communist trend, while South Korea turned to capitalist development. Backed by Cold War rivals the two countries got involved into the Korean War (1950-53), which further hardened ideological lines between the DPRK and the ROK.

However, though political, social and economic institutions of North and South Korea were largely influenced by opposite social practices, the two states, still sharing historical and cultural past, seemed to have a lot in common with regard to political ideology. Principles of Korean statehood were developing through the centuries within the Far Eastern political tradition. Political culture of ancient and medieval Korea was forming under the influence of Chinese tradition, mainly Confucian ideology.

Thus it would not be correct to look upon state ideologies of North and South Korea in the 20<sup>th</sup> century just in the light of Cold War perceptions. The more so in their further political development after the 1940's both Korea did not directly followed ideological paths as designed before.

North Koreans developed their own state ideology of «chuche» - expressing itself in the form of independence in politics, self-sustenance in economy, and self-defense in national security - that differed from classic Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The emergence of «self-reliance» proclaimed in 1955 symbolized the dissociation of the DPRK from its communist patrons - the USSR and China (Cumings 1993), and the establishment of the personality cult of Kim Il Sung and later his heir - Kim Jong Il (Ivanov 1999).

On the other hand, South Korean leaders officially pursuing democratic policy under the US guidance in fact promoted the establishment of the authoritarian regime (Mazurov 1996a, Choi 1993), and the ROK for 30 years was under the military rule. Still North and South Korean regimes kept being in a strong opposition to each other.

The hypothesis I am bringing up in this paper is that two antagonistic ideological courses shared common features, which originated within traditional Confucian political culture. Cold War perceptions brought the DPRK and the ROK into ideological opposition, while shared traditional roots engendered similarities between North and South Korean ideological courses.

Generally, huge differences in the two ideologies that guided the countries can be described as following. North Korean communism was based on the adherence to one-party political system with no alternative political lines implied, to public property and total government control over

economic processes and mass media along with the absence of social freedoms. On the other side, South Korea demonstrated its adherence to democratic path based on multi-party and pluralistic political system, independent media and social freedoms, accompanied by capitalistic private property and free economy.

At the same time state ideologies of North and South Korea shared Confucian perceptions of strong central power with a leader as paternalistic figure, family-centered state system, which implied specific relations between the leader and people, collectivism, importance of education and moralizing of politics.

Confucianism first entered Korea in the Three Kingdoms period (around the 4<sup>th</sup> century), but made a greater impact during the Koryo period (10-14<sup>th</sup> cent.), when a «new» Confucianism began spreading in Korea. This Neo-Confucianism became the official ideology of the dynasty established by the Lee household in 1392 and was regarded as the perfect ideology in setting up a good government. Underpinning “government code” taught by Confucianism was the set of principles that defined social relationship.

Foremost principles concerned the perception of the central power and state structure. Central power was considered to be sacred, legitimized by Heaven. The ruler used to be looked upon as the son of God and at the same time “father of the nation”. Thus the state was a network of asymmetrical familial affection and reciprocity reproduced on a larger scale with the ruler performing the role of the father and people acting as his children. According to The Great Learning of Confucianism «in order brightly to govern the state, it is necessary first to regulate the family» (Oh 1999, 13). The essence of

harmonious state governing lied in the benevolence of the ruler whose moral duty was to provide for the prosperity of his people, on one hand, and in people's loyalty and faithfulness, on the other. In case of improper governing, however, people had a right to overthrow the immoral (i.e. irresponsible) ruler.

One of characteristic features of Far Eastern society is the so-called collectivism. Traditionally the society was considered superior over an individual. A person should have justified his existence by occupying a certain place on the societal hierarchical ladder. Individual activities were considered useless unless they served a collective goal. People were supposed to join their efforts with the purpose of bringing the societal life into desirable harmony.

Special attention was paid to education and self-perfection of the person, i.e. "good servant to the state". Lastly, in Confucianism there was no recognized autonomous realm of politics separate from morality. «The Confucian idea of ethocracy (ethical politics) was based on the concept of duty or obligation instead of right of power. The state had a comprehensive responsibility to provide [for], to enrich, and to educate people» (King 1997, 231). And people in response for such care had to demonstrate "filial piety" Thus, political life on the whole was considered a moral duty.

In this paper I will try to demonstrate the influence of the key Confucian legacies (namely - paternalistic state leader, family-centered state system, collectivism, importance of education and morality of politics) upon the ideological courses of North and South Korean leaders and show that those courses shared certain common elements notwithstanding the fact that,

belonging to opposite Cold war blocks, they represented antagonistic ideological trends.

## **MATERIALS USED**

The complete works by the DPRK leader Kim Il Song with his articles, speeches and interviews included, and some works by his son and heir Kim Jong Il along with materials of North Korean press, specifically an official newspaper of the Worker's Party of Korea «Nodong Sinmun», are used in this paper as the sources for analyzing North Korean ideology.

For analyzing South Korean ideological course speeches and works by the ROK political leaders including Park Chung Hee, Roh Tae Woo, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Dae Jung along with South Korean press will be examined here.

The works on the analyzed topic by Russian, American and Korean scholars are extremely important. Facts, quotes and individual evaluations contained there are scientifically meaningful and useful for students interested in different opinions on wide range of aspects of the topic. In the paper I will often refer to the works by the following scholars of Korean studies: An Thae Won, Bruce Cumings, Chon Gee Son, Choi Jang Jip, M.Han, A.Irgebaev, Kim Ho Jin, A.Kobozev, Hagen Koo, V.Mazurov, D.Minaev, M.Park, U.Vanin, G.Yaskina, A.Zebin etc.

## LIMITATIONS

First limitation regards the concepts, which will be analyzed in the paper. While definition of ideology, that I use here (namely – “the system of ideas aimed at the achievement of political goals”) is quite specific, the very concept of political culture, the elements of which are analyzed in the paper, could be considered a limitation due to its wide meaning. Political culture can be characterized as the complex of historically conditioned and socially legalized stereotypes of political behavior and perception of power (Tarasov 1997). This is a very ticklish material requiring the analysis of the elements of mentality, which is the case when generalization, inaccurate understanding and partiality of the author are difficult to avoid.

I will try to show the impact of traditional perceptions of political phenomena on the people’s behavior as subjects of political power. Namely, try to find Confucian components in the behavioral code of the Korean leaders as far as traditional stereotypes influence political consciousness. Mentality, however, is not an easy subject for the research.

It is quite problematic to find out what intentions of political leaders defined their ideological choice. Even if traditional Confucian perceptions influence their political behavior it will not be always directly pointed out in public speeches or written works by the Korean leaders. That is why comparing Confucian principles with the DPRK and the ROK ideologies sometimes I will have to draw analogies between them, which are not supported by documents.

I will address different scholars' views of the matter in order to avoid partiality and formulate an opinion matching the reality as better as possible.

Secondly, a certain difficulty occurs when defining the ROK official ideology. The DPRK's «chuche» was an official state ideology with precise postulates, while ideological line of South Korean leaders was rather vague.

Having officially proclaimed the adherence to democratic principles of societal development, South Korean leaders for at least 30 years (from early 1960s up to late 1980's) promoted the strengthening of authoritarian rule in the ROK. Politicians justified the repressive regime by the necessity to oppose North Korean communism.

In such a situation the nationalistic ideology met the interests of the ruling elite most of all. Prizing national originality furthered the cohesion of the people against «external threat», on the one side, and decreased the possibility of the internal disorder along with criticism of the government from below, on the other.

Thus, talking about state ideology of the ROK leaders during military rule I will first of all mean nationalism (though officially the country was democratic). While analyzing the rules of non-military leaders the ideological line will be defined as the adherence to democratic mode of development.

### **DIVISION OF KOREA AND THE KOREAN WAR (1950-53)**

By the time of liberation in 1945 in the country there were no mature local political forces, namely political parties or social organizations. Korean

communists and nationalists having returned from emigration were struggling against each other for the political leadership in liberation of Korea from the Japanese colonialism. The vacuum in political and social life was filled by the military contingent of the USSR and the US. Each of them using the absence of a consolidated local political power easily supported their own models of social development to the north and to the south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

On October 16, 1945 pro-American Korean politician Lee Syng Man was brought to Korea with the assistance of the US military administration and later became the first president of the ROK. On the same day the US Department of State announced that the US military administration in Korea had started to enlist Koreans according to their abilities as counselors on the internal matters (Han 1997).

This event did not seem very notable at the time, it did, however, stimulate the appearance of the American press materials about the liberating role of the US, whose troops came to Korea exclusively with the purpose to assist the nation, which is «not ready» for independence, in practical establishment in Korea of the best version of democracy, i.e. American (Han 1997).

On the other side, as the response to the Head of the Temporary People's Committee Kim Il Song's request<sup>1</sup> a considerable amount of Soviet citizens of Korean origin arrived in the northern part of Korea together with the Soviet army; many of them later occupied high positions on the power pyramid of the DPRK.

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<sup>1</sup> «...Korean nation under the yoke of Japanese imperialism was not able to prepare even the minimal amount of necessary staff for the construction of the new democratic and free Korea. I ask the Soviet Government to...permit the departure of the Soviet Koreans to North Korea» (Han 1997, 39).

Along with the Cold War tensions there grew the confrontation between the North and the South of Korea, which led to the establishment in 1948 of the DPRK (Sept 9) and the ROK (Aug 15). According to some scholars' opinion the lack of political organization of Koreans is one of the characteristic features of traditional political culture. Disability and reluctance of the leaders and political elite to rise above the interests of a person, a clan, a group, a local community etc. for the sake of national goals creates the division of political powers into fractions and everlasting struggle among them (Vanin 1997).

The tensed confrontation of the two states led to the armed conflict in June 1950. On June 25, 1950 North Korean troops crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Having occupied Seoul they continued to sweep south and soon captured all but a small slice of the peninsula on the South-East.

The United States rapidly swung into action. On June 27 the UN Security Council under the US guidance passed a resolution calling for member nations to contribute forces for the UN «police action» to repel the aggression<sup>2</sup>.

After the US military intervention under the UN auspices, with 16 other nations contributing to the UN forces, the course of the war changed dramatically. After the successful amphibious assault of the UN and the ROK forces on the port Inch'on near Seoul in September the North Korean troops were pushed far to the north from the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel by October.

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<sup>2</sup> The Soviet delegate was absent from this emergency session of the Security Council, boycotting the UN in protest against its refusal to seat the People's Republic of China in the world body.

However, the course of the war abruptly reversed again in November, when, with the US forces rapidly advancing toward the Chinese border, the Chinese sent their armed «volunteer» forces into battle in Korea. Pushed by a massive counteroffensive of Chinese army the UN forces soon beat a hasty retreat southward far below the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Although in a couple of month the UN forces succeeded in recapturing their positions, a stalemate between the two sides subsequently developed around the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel by 1951. Such situation was dragged on for two more years without a major new offensive by either side. On July 27, 1953 an armistice agreement was finally signed between the parts. It was never followed by a peace treaty, and formally the DPRK and the ROK are still in a condition of military confrontation.

The Korean War was initiated in an effort to reunify the country by force of arms. Rejecting each others legitimacy the DPRK and the ROK governments considered themselves as the only one having the right to rule Korea.

Soon, however, the local crush escalated into the conflict of broad international proportions between leaders of the Cold war blocks<sup>3</sup>. The participation of the US and China in the war turned the Korean peninsula into a zone of strategic interests of world powers. One of the most important

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<sup>3</sup> The scholars tend to consider that the DPRK initiated the war with the silent approval of the USSR and Chinese leaders. Neither Joseph Stalin nor Mao Zedong did not expect the US intervention into the local conflict as far as the US Secretary of State Dean Acheson in his official statement on January 12, 1950 plainly announced that Korea was not included among those listed on being of vital strategic importance to the US (Yahuda 1997, 45). However, the attack of north Korean troops was perceived by Truman's administration as the beginning of communist aggression: this perception pushed the US to intervene because the aggression on the part of the DPRK seemed to threaten North-East Asian countries, in particular, the American partner - Japan (Stueck 1995). In its turn the US troops came so close to the Chinese border that the PRC got involved in the military actions in order to push Americans as far as possible from their territory.

consequences of the war was the hardening of political and ideological polarization between the DPRK and the ROK for long years after.

South Korean scholar Choi Jang Jip considers that no other event in the Korean history influenced the state's development more than the Korean War, putting an impact on state structure and ideology. According to his words, both communism and capitalism were external, brought from the outside ideologies, they were abstract and out of touch from Korean reality, although the Korean leaders turned to one or another during colonial rule. «However, the war has drawn the ideological conflict to the level of everyday life, individual experience and social relations», and as a result ideology has become a basis for the consolidation of the two states (Choi 1993, 22).

Some scholars consider that the logic of Cold War continued to be determinant in a process of decision-making by political leaders of the DPRK and the ROK (McWilliams and Piotrovsky 1997). Along with that the political development of the two states was influenced by other factors. According to M. Han, the prevailing role of traditional mentality in Korean society continued to be one of the main factors in forming the political system of North and South Korea. In Korea Confucian cultural traditions

...were acting in favor of both - communist idea and the establishment of a dictatorship under the illusive slogans of the Western style democracy. Those traditions perceived a main person's predestination as to become a screw of the state machine, functionary, a servant to the state (Han 1997, 40).

It is worth noting that Confucianism is a fruitful base for the construction of an authoritarian state, which was in fact established in the DPRK and the ROK notwithstanding their official names and types. «Confucianism with its paternalism and hierarchy (of functions, authorities,

individual statuses) supported strong centralized power, firm methods of governing, omnipotence of bureaucracy» (Mazurov 1996, 43).

Strong central power was considered a guarantee of stability and prosperity. Opposition activities provoked a negative attitude on the side of Confucian traditions' adherents. In this connection, as far as authoritarian rule seems quite logical or even natural for Confucian countries, it is possible to conclude that traditional political culture promoted the establishment of a communist dictatorship of Kim Il Song and «democratic» dictatorship of the most of South Korean leaders. While state ideology was supposed to work for the strengthening of such a rule.

## **DPRK POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND «CHUCHE» IDEOLOGY**

The period after the Korean War in the DPRK was a period of internal political consolidation, concentration of political power within the Worker's Party of Korea and the emergence of Kim Il Song's personality cult and «chuche» ideology.

### **EMERGENCE OF «CHUCHE»**

In the second half of 1940s the Soviet military administration had a determinant influence on the DPRK's life. When carrying out their policy Soviet authorities did not consider it possible to rely on local nationalistic

groups because the latter perceived the Russians the same «colonizers» as the Japanese.

Loyal to the USSR and popular in public protege was needed. Anti-Japanese guerrilla movement activist Kim Il Song, who had participated as well in battles on the Soviet territory and was an officer of the Soviet army, seemed to be the best candidate to the post of «the leader of progressive forces of Korea».

In 1945 Kim Il Song was appointed the Chairman of the North Korean Organizational Bureau of the Communist Party of Korea, and in 1946 became a head of the Temporary People's Committee of North Korea (which was a kind of temporary government), and thus - a formal leader of the country.

In 1946 the Communist Party carried out a land reform, which liquidated land-owners and colonial administration. «By 1948 strong communist state obtained stable social basis, relied on ideological hegemony and developed state institutions which was copied from the USSR» (Choi 1993, 16). By the beginning of 1950's Kim Il Song got accustomed to the new role of the leader and «gradually turned into an experienced and very ambitious politician» (Lankov 1995, 27).

At the initial stage of state formation the DPRK administration kept adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Joseph Stalin's personality cult.

Stalinism as the specific form of totalitarian mentality was considered by Korean communists as one of the leading factors of unification of anti-imperialistic, first of all anti-American forces. «Korean people turn their eyes to Chief Marshal Stalin as the Sun, - was written in the Worker's Party of Korea official newspaper «Nodon Sinmun» on May 22, 1952 - savior of mankind, liberator of Korean nation, our father. We glorify him with great gladness and song, and pronounce his name as the symbol of happiness and peace» (Cumings 1993, 218).

After the Korean War, however, the image of international communist movement leader considerably shaded, the more so Nikita Khrushchev afterwards put the significant share of blame on Stalin for failures in Korea (Cumings 1993). «After the death of Stalin there blew the wind of change when Kim Il Song felt the threat to his dictatorship and raised the flag of struggle against the USSR and other socialist countries» (Ivanov 1999, 106). In the middle of 1950's he took the course of isolation from the socialist countries in order to prevent the brotherhood states from intervention into his policies.

The very term «chuche» appeared in December 1955 when Kim Il Song made a report «On liquidation of formalism and dogmatism in ideological work and on establishment of «chuche». The exact translation of the term “chuche” means “by own powers”, which could be interpreted as “self-reliance”. The ideology of “self-reliance” emphasized the necessity to «raise national pride» by «promoting sovereignty», «economic self-sustenance», and «independent defense» (Ivanov 1999, 106-107).

Juridical duty of all structures of the DPRK political system to follow sole ideological principles of «chuche», which is stipulated in the Constitution, witnessed an extremely important integration role of ideology in the life of the country.

In preamble of the new Constitution of 1998 the following definition is given: «Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a socialist motherland of chuche that is the embodiment in practice of the ideas and guidance of the great leader comrade Kim Il Song» (Kobozev 1999, 73).

## EVOLUTION OF «CHUCHE»

In the book «Understanding North Korea» (1998), published by the ROK Institute of Unification, the evolution of «chuche» ideology through the decades is given as following. In 1950's «Nodon Sinmun» emphasized that adoption of «chuche» did not mean the rejection of international study of Marxism-Leninism and progressive experience of the USSR and China, but was an example of application of communist ideas to the DPRK's reality.

In 1960's «chuche» (which is now called «the Party's ideology» and «Kim Il Song's ideology» as well) was presented as an alternative to the ideology of South Korean politicians who were dependent on foreign powers. In 1970's «chuche» ideology turned into the instrument of idolization of Kim Il Song, and all his life starting with childhood was presented as an example for a «chuche style» communist to follow.

In 1980's North Korean ideology is used for strengthening the power of «great leader's» heir Kim Jong Il. It was stated that Kim Il Song and Kim Jong Il made «a chuche revolution» with Kim Il Song as creator of the ideology and Kim Jong Il as its further elaborator. It was also said that following «chuche» principles one will step on a direct road to the accomplishment of the socialist construction.

In 1990's after the crush of the international socialist community DPRK, which was economically weak and suddenly left by ex-partners, had to keep its face at least in the political sphere. North Korean authorities put into circulation a new term of «our socialism», talking about superiority of

«chuche» and trying in this way to distinguish DPRK from other socialist «loser countries». There were, however, no innovations introduced in the substance of ideology.

This chronology made by South Korean scholars agrees with the Russian scholars' works and is confirmed by the citations from the North Korean materials. A.Zebin describes the final departure of North Korean ideological course from the ideas of Marxism-Leninism as following.

In the Constitution of 1972 it was noted that the DPRK «in its activities is guided by «chuche» ideas of the Workers' Party of Korea which are the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the conditions of our country». Soon, however, DPRK started to call «chuche» ideas «a summit of human thinking» and talk about «historical limitation of Marxism-Leninism» as giving no answers to practical questions. And judging by North Korea publications the absence of the theory, which would solve the problem of the leader's successor, was called nearly the main omission of this study (Zebin 1997, 52).

In 1986 Kim Jong Il in his public speech in front of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea emphasized that «chuche» ideas were «the only guideline in all activities of our Party. Except “chuche” idea there can be no place for other ideologies, in fact there is no need in them» (Zebin 1999, 53). The DPRK Constitution of 1992 edition does not contain any reference about the connection of «chuche» with Marxism-Leninism. New Constitution put an end to the 40-year long evolution of «chuche» from Marxism-Leninism to the «socialism of our (Korean) model».

## PERSONALITY CULT OF KIM IL SONG

The cult of North Korean leader's individual power was maintained by repressive measures on one side, and by means of ideological propaganda - on the other.

Kim Il Song showed himself as «a virtuoso of secret intrigue aimed at liquidation of not convenient or presenting threat to his individual power politicians» (Ivanov 1999, 105).

North Korean political elite was initially not homogeneous, it included 4 groups different in the way of their emergence and in their membership. They were the following: 1) «Soviet» group which included Soviet Koreans sent to work in the DPRK state, Party or military organs by the Soviet authorities; 2) «internal» group which included ex-members of anti-Japanese secret movement on the Korean territory before liberation; 3) «Yan-nang» group of Korean communists who had returned from emigration to China; 4) «guerrilla» group which included Kim Il Song himself and other members of guerrilla movement in Manchuria in the 1930's (Lankov 1995).

Kim Il Song skillfully using the contradictions between his real and imagined opponents liquidated all the groups one by one<sup>4</sup>. Having chosen one group as his supporter he hit the other, and then made short work of his former partners.

The favorite weapon of Kim Il Song were the campaigns of «cultural revolution» and «struggle against bourgeois ideology» when Party members, statesmen and cultural workers were accused of ideological degeneration...In order not to become a victim of such a campaign one had to show initiative and accuse others of factionalism (Ivanov 1999, 102-103).

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<sup>4</sup> As a result of Kim Il Song's repressive policy the «Soviet» group was dealt with in 1953-56, «Yan-nang» group - in 1956-58, «internal» - in 1953-70, and «guerrilla» - in 1963-80.

As a result of such purges possible opponents and rivals in struggle for power were eliminated. The main characteristic of new cadres selection to Party and state organs was a degree of loyalty to Kim Il Song and later to his heir Kim Jong Il.

Repression was practiced not only within the elite. The policy of terror was carried out all over the country on all levels. The book by Russian scholar A.Lankov «North Korea» (1995) contains a lot of interesting information about the repressive control over the people of the DPRK.

All population is divided into three categories depending on their descent: «main», «hesitating», and «hostile». For example «hostile» category, which is considered as presenting the biggest threat to North Korean leaders' political power, includes the families of deserters to the South, former land-owners, old intelligentsia, families of the convicts, repressed or missing etc. There are three types of imprisonment places: concentration camps for exile without a trial and investigation of «unreliable elements», regular camps and prisons, and camps where people are deported for non-political misdemeanors by administrative order.

Besides the organs of national security, the institute of mutual guarantee carried out a firm control over the masses. The population was divided into groups depending on the place of residence headed by a bureaucrat who was responsible for everything that happened with his subordinates. Without his approval, for example, it was impossible to receive guests or depart to other city to meet relatives. In case if one member of the

group committed serious political misdemeanor, all the rest could be punished for that (Lankov 1995).

Repressive means of consolidating the populations under the guidance of the leaders were used along with ideological propaganda.

Government organs obtained absolute monopoly over mass media. The policy of firm information isolation was carried out. All radio-sets were tuned up on the wave of official Pyongyang radio channel; security organs made inspections in order to suppress a free tune. The circulation of any foreign newspapers and magazines was prohibited as well as communication of common Koreans with foreigners.

Authorities controlled all the information presented to the public. It contained not many true facts about the outside world and was aimed at ideological training in the spirit of «chuche». The main slogans of North Korean propaganda were glorifying Kim Il Song's and Kim Jong Il's merits and affirming the necessity to obey their rule without reserve. Along with that Koreans were constantly persuaded that the DPRK was «a country of immaculate socialism», nearly the most successful country in the world.

«In no other country the ideological training is so intensive as in the DPRK» (Lankov 1995, 230). In subway, at work and at home the radio-sets broadcasting marching music and brief informational propaganda news-blocks were always turned on. Oral agitation was widely used, the cars with loud speakers drove around the city or broadcasted stationary on huge construction grounds. In transport conductors perform «salon agitation». At the enterprises or in the organizations numerous meetings were held for reading newspapers, studying Kim Il Song's and Kim Jong Il's biographies,

commenting slogans and «ideological struggle», learning songs etc. (Lankov 1995).

Thus North Koreans actually do not have free time because their leisure time after work and during weekends is devoted to ideological education.

Not only mass-media but also Korean arts, literature, and educational process work for propaganda. In his works Kim Il Song paid special attention to the work of «educationists», giving priority to ideological development of the society.

Their [creative workers'] main goal is to actively contribute to the equipment of people with communist ideology (Kim Il Song 1962, vol.15, 37). The most productive method of liquidating obsequiousness and dogmatism, and of «chuche» establishment is further development of the country in all aspects of politics, economics and culture (Kim Il Song 1965, vol.19, 213). Ideological revolution [the most important of the three revolutions i.e. ideological, technical and cultural] is the work for educating people which is aimed at turning workers into revolutionaries of communist style...it is political work for increasing revolutionary enthusiasm and creative initiative of workers (Kim Il Song 1979, vol.33, 454).

Goals of creative workers included glorifying of the leaders as well. Children in primary school are taught of the correct usage of phrases containing the names of the leader and his son. Any article, book and university lecture must start with the citation from the works of Kim Il Song. Kim Il Song's portraits hang in practically all premises and lodgings. Around 35 thousand of Kim Il Song's monuments are constructed over the country (Lankov 1995).

North Korean historians «rewrite» Kim Il Song's biography so that it could present a proper example of a heroic past of the «great leader».

In the process of establishment in North Korea of a «communist» monarchy Kim Il Song put all efforts to theoretically substantiate the

legitimacy of his regime. In traditional perception the bearers of the legitimacy are ancestors, genealogy. The dictator started to remake his genealogy enlisting numerous biographers. They presented his close and far ancestors as great patriots and revolutionaries (Ivanov 1999, 103).

## CONFUCIAN ELEMENTS OF «CHUCHE»

The interaction of tradition and political power was obvious in the DPRK. The elite was choosing those Confucian perceptions, which were in its interest, first of all, in the interest of strengthening elite's rule over the society.

In the first place, central power in the DPRK is extremely strong, and the leader is regarded as the father of the nation. «Kim Il Song's cult as ideological doctrine and Korean socialism as political regime have completely inherited one of key elements of social ideal of Confucianism, i.e. the state as one big family headed by the leader» (Zebin 1997, 60). «In the communist society with its principle: One for all and all for one - all people forming one big and unite family will help each other sharing sorrow and joy» (Kim Il Song 1962, vol 15, 74).

Confucianism traditionally perceived the state as the family reproduced on a larger scale, the leader was associated with paternal figure while the people were looked upon as his children. In the DPRK the leader, i.e. Kim Il Song, is a «charismatic source of legitimacy and ideology, a personified paternal figure, leader of the Korean family as well as «head and heart» of politics» (Cumings 1993, 218). Nowadays though Kim Il Song has died the whole country is kept under his political, ideological, philosophical,

psychological and spiritual influence<sup>5</sup>. While his son and heir General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and the Chairman of the Defense Committee of the DPRK Kim Jong Il serves as a direct guide and mouthpiece of this influence.

The society is built by hierarchical principle. The base of the pyramid consists of the masses. Above the masses stands the class (collective), above the collective is the party, and the «almighty» leader is on the very top. The Party (WPK) is the «mechanism of unification of the nation, establishing «indissoluble connection» between the leader and subordinates, and is frequently called «the mother-party» (Cumings 1993, 218).

In order to smoothly carry out elite's policy the population needed to be united and had to realize each person's belonging to the collective body. In Confucianism an individual is subordinate to the society as well as a person is subordinate to the collective in the DPRK. "In order to become a communist one has to value people's interests, collective interests much more than his personal interests, has to care not only about himself but about his comrades, about people" (Kim Il Song 1962, vol. 15, 74).

The cohesion of collective and the party was guaranteed by unite ideology. «Chuche ideas are the guiding ideas of our party, ideological basis of its unity and cohesion» (Kim Il Song 1975, vol. 29, 383).

Then the counteraction between members of North Korean society resembles Confucian «blood relations» within a family-centered state. The leader has to care about his subordinates, which in their turn have to be his loyal servants. According to Confucian principles there is no better virtue for

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<sup>5</sup> The DPRK Constitution (1998) states that «The DPRK and Korean people under the guidance of the Workers' Party of Korea deeply honor the great leader comrade Kim Il Song

the subordinate than to serve the Emperor, implicitly obey him and be absolutely devoted to him. Those postulates are consolidated in traditional Korean texts.

«A sovereign cares about the country as his own house and loves people as his kids» (Korean Legends 1980, 131). High-positioned scholar at the Korean throne in the 12<sup>th</sup> century wrote in his «Samguk Sagi» book on Korean history: «For a subordinate there is nothing more important than loyalty, and for a son - nothing more important than filial piety» (Kim Bu Sik 1959, 159).

Deep honoring of the leader, turning his will into the status of law, announcing «boundless loyalty to the leader» as being «the highest moral duty» of every member of society are characteristic features of political regime in the DPRK.

In its turn the leader's activities were presented as the work for the sake of his people. In his reminiscences «With the century» (1993) Kim Il Song wrote the following as an epigraph: «The sacred slogan for a revolutionary in his struggle should be the truth that says: believe in people and rely on their power - and you win 100 times, but if you are refused by people - you won't escape defeat for 100 times». This has something in common with Confucian right of the people to refuse serving immoral or inefficient ruler.

North Korean elite also adopted Confucian postulate on the leader's moral duty to provide for his people, which was realized in the government's control over country's economy. In the DPRK economic life was regulated in

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as the eternal president of the republic» (Kobozev 1999, 73).

administrative order. «Confucianism managed to adopt many of Legists' principles in the sphere of politics and management. Legists have worked out and accomplished a traditional system of state control over economic activities and limitation of private capital» (Zebin 1997, 64).

In the DPRK according to Kim Il Song's order «to regulate work and life of the population» the state controls and coordinates the activities of all economic objects, purchases and distributes all products of economic activities, fixes all prices (Kim Il Song 1960, vol.10, 438).

Confucius and his adherents argued that «the final and highest goal of the governing are the people's interests» (Vassiliev 1979, 104). In the DPRK such care of people's interests was logically embodied in abolition of private property, in conversion of formally cooperative property into national (i.e. state) property, in establishment of rationed provision system of the population with food and manufactured products, and state distribution of lodging.

An important element of traditional social model of Confucianism was a belief in self-perfection of a human being. North Korean elite was as well convinced that by «giving priority to political work» it is possible to educate all societal members as «chuche style communists-revolutionaries».

Scholars also note some other evidence of traditional cultural influence upon political life of the DPRK.

The transfer of power from Kim Il Song to his elder son has become a striking example of the impact of traditional Far-Eastern political culture upon political processes in contemporary Korea. During several millenniums before the 15<sup>th</sup> century all Korean kings, and first of all the founders of new dynasties, were military leaders. And just like hundreds of years ago at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Commander-in-Chief of military forces of one of Korean states after the mourning period following the death of his father - who was the founder of the new regime - officially takes his place (Zebin 1997, 65).

It should be added that Kim Il Song had really an impressive military past, struggling among guerrillas, while his heir did not perform any military services for the country. However the image of a hero and a leader would not be complete without military merits, that is why Kim Jong Il was appointed to military posts in administrative order. In 1991 the Central Committee of the WPK made him a Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Korean people's army, and in 1993 during the session of Supreme People's Assembly he was appointed the Chairman of the Defense Committee of the DPRK.

Lastly, the key role played by traditions and ancestors' authority in legitimization of the regime in Confucianism, was gradually performed in the DPRK by Marxism-Leninism, then its mixed with «chuche» version, and later the idea of the unique North Korean nation.

By the beginning of 1990's the «historical narrow-mindedness» of Marxism-Leninism was finally revealed in the DPRK, and the ruling elite realized the need of older, and what is meaningful, Korean predecessors for legitimization of their power. As examples may serve the construction of a grand tomb on the place of Koguryo founder Tonmyon-wang's grave situated at the suburb of Pyongyang, which Kim Il Song visited 7 times in 1993. Another example is the discovery of remains of Koreans' forefather Tangun near Pyongyang, which supposedly proves that this city is the real eternal capital of the Korean nation (Zebin 1997, 67).

## **ROK POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The final division of Korea along with postwar devastation made the ruling elite think about consolidation of political power with the stress put on ideology serving to leaders' benefit. Military administration was looking forward to political coalition on the base of 3 ideological principles: the emergence of anti-Communist state, capitalization of economy, and

democracy based on parliamentary system. «Though occupation forces announced adherence to democratic principles, in fact they helped Lee Syng Man to establish dictatorship» (Choi 1993, 15).

## FIRST AND SECOND REPUBLICS

Looking upon the period of First Republic one can be driven to a conclusion that the supreme national concern of South Korea had been the resistance of communism and not the promotion of democracy. Legacy of Japanese colonialism, the division of the country, the Korean War had created hostile environment, which was not the best soil to plant the seeds of democratic development. Such environment provided Lee Syng Man with ideological basis (anti-communism) to build his legitimacy.

The necessity to oppose possible communist aggression justified the expansion of police staff, increase of military forces and hyper-militarization of society<sup>6</sup>. National Security Law adopted in 1958 gave the state the full right for coercion<sup>7</sup>. Priority was given to resistance of communism but not to the promotion of democracy.

Lee Syng Man developed his own Liberal Party as an instrument of influencing ROK legislative organ National Assembly. The Liberal Party, established in 1951, was composed «of a motley assortment of opportunists held together by a desire to power and loyalty to Lee» (Eckert 1990, 350).

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<sup>6</sup> ROK army before the war consisted of 150 thousand people, and after war - already of 600 thousand (Choi 1993, 22).

<sup>7</sup> The Law was not only against any group of individuals or organizations which sought to overthrow the state in violation of the national constitution, but it was also against anyone who secured and/or divulged national secrets, or took action for the purpose of «benefiting the

With the help of obedient to the regime police staff, which had arrested a lot of opposition activists and journalists, the Party won the majority in National Assembly during ROK parliamentary elections in 1954. New parliament in its turn adopted among others the amendment to the 1948 Constitution which allowed Lee Syng Man to participate in the presidential elections for the third time in 1956 (before that the elections were held twice in 1948 and 1952).

According to historians Lee Syng Man's regime used all forms of repression, freedom of speech infringement, public resentment and people's uprising suppression in order to establish dictatorship (Choi 1993). Kim Yon Jon called Lee Syng Man's rule «a bureaucratic system under the strong influence of such social values as authoritarianism and Confucianism» (1996, 87). «Supremely self-confident and a genius of political manipulation...he seemed to have shared with all Korean kings a conception of sovereignty as something more properly invested in a head of state than in a popular electorate or its representatives» (Eckert 1990, 348).

Thus, with democratic appearances formally observed, the ROK regime looked more like traditional authoritarian rule of Confucian sovereign. However in such situation the public resentment turned into considerable protest and in spring 1960 Lee Syng Man's rule was overthrown by the students' uprising.

The Second Republic held power only for a year. The first really democratic government headed by Chang Myon as the premier was not able

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enemy». The penalties for violators of the law, which could be applied to eliminate opposition, would be death or life imprisonment.

to rule the country due to its weak political leadership and absence of unity within the elite.

Chang Myon was striving for the concept of giving real power to the parliament, for release of political culture from such traditional elements as factionalism, favoritism, suppress of opposition, corporate ties etc. However acute economic crisis which hit South Korea requested strong leadership to stabilize the situation (Mazurov 1996b).

As a result in 1961 the military coup brought to power General Park Chung Hee who ruled the country up till 1979.

#### PARK CHUNG HEE'S RULE AND NATIONALISTIC IDEOLOGY

Park Chung Hee's name is associated with several socially meaningful phenomena: consolidation of military men in power, restructuring of state governing mechanism, transition of traditional society to industrial phase of development, increase of productivity in economic sphere. In politics he tended to make strict authoritarian decisions, showed neglect to democratic norms, and carried his ideas to realization.

During first couple of years of Park's rule the restructuring of state institutions was carried out. His main goal was to win people's support by promoting economic development. However economic growth was looked upon not as a final goal, but as a mean of legitimization of political regime. General Park came to power through a military coup and justified this violent

act by the necessity to handle South Korean economic crisis (Koo 1987). That is why economic growth was made number one priority.

One of the goals attributed by General Park to economic development was the achievement of self-sufficiency of the country. The need for self-sufficiency, which was largely associated with the economic independence from the US, was one of the primary reasons of the ROK's shift from import-substitution towards an export-promotion strategy in the 1960s. Later the economic shift towards the promotion of heavy and chemical industries in the 1970s was also aimed at strengthening the country's self-sufficiency along with national security.

During Park's rule the ROK reached enormous growth rate (GNP in 1962 was \$2 billion and by 1979 it equaled \$100 billion) through mechanism of state control over economy<sup>8</sup>.

This leader obsessed by the idea of intensive economic development gave importance to large-scale state sector as a generator of various forms of ownership. Along with that...the reverse side of economic success is a concentration of power in hands of presidential structures and maximum usage of power for repressive goals along with strict regulation of all spheres of social life, anti-workers legislation, suppression of trade-unions, fixing wages at low level etc. Patron-client system of relations between the state and business elite maintained his rule. Prominent businessmen who financially supported Park's regime were given special state privileges (Nahm 1996, 197).

Repressive means of governing, in their turn, were justified by the necessity to resist «communist aggression» both external and internal.

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<sup>8</sup> Economy was developed by an export model. Priority fields (textile, shoes, toys, wigs, some types of electronics) were defined, which ROK was able to develop independently and occupy a certain place in the world market. Foreign capital kept being actively attracted. The state supported the rapid growth of huge corporations (chaebols), which specialized in priority spheres, by dumping policy (expenses of the companies that supplied competitive goods to the world market by understated prices were compensated by government's means, some of

«National cohesion» was determined as an important factor for achieving economic prosperity and keeping peace at the face of communist threat.

Such policy requested population unity under the rule of dictator regime. In this situation the most appropriate ideology for consolidation of national efforts was nationalism, which contributed to the nurtured feeling of blood community and exclusiveness of Korean nation.

According to the Russian scholar Michail Park (1987) the discussion over «national originality» (meaning exclusiveness) and principle of «national subjectivism» was closely connected with strengthening of nationalistic tendencies within South Korean political elite after the crush of neocolonial Lee Syng Man's regime. «In the situation of acute political and economic crisis Seoul's top leaders clearly understood the necessity to find out in ideological sphere an effective mean against «communist threat» and social discontent in South Korea which had not had disappeared» (Park 1987, 24).

Park Chung Hee's regime strengthening through the time was gradually forming an official ideology on the basis of the principle of «national subjectivism». The spirit of «national originality» was supposed to substantiate the dictatorship rule. According to Seoul leaders «democratic norms have to conform to national political and cultural traditions» (Park 1987, 24). These traditions along with undeveloped democratic institutions (i.e. political parties and social movements) and national security interests presented a serious obstacle to establishing truly democratic regime in the ROK. According to Park Chung Hee in country's current situation number one priority was to defend «life and freedom of 30 million people from the

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chaebols' debts were written off). More so chaebols got an access to the US aid on preferential basis, lowered taxes, government subsidies etc.

threatening aggression of the North, that's why not a thought would be given to the guarantee of rights and freedoms of private citizens» (Park 1987, 24).

The existence of dictatorship regimes was considered natural phenomena for developing countries, which first of all need «the insurance of political and economic independence» that is guaranteed by «national cohesion and consent» (Park 1987, 24).

Nevertheless South Korean elite did everything possible to make authoritarian regime look like a democratic rule. Supposedly military men came to power by violence only to put politically unstable and economically weak country in order. When state of emergency declared after the coup was over the return to civilian rule was announced, which was necessary for keeping American support and extension of military and humanitarian aid supply from the US to the ROK. All democratic formalities were observed. Park Chung Hee and his team quit military service and took part in general election to executive and legislative organs.

In his speech during presidential marathon on September 23, 1963 Park Chung Hee announced that consciousness of independence and self-support can be brought up, and «true democracy...has to be based on healthy nationalism» (Park 1987, 25). Later the regime of Park Chung Hee, who won presidential election with impressive advantage, was officially named «national democracy» aimed at achieving national self-support, which is the ground of national originality.

In the sphere of political and ideological mobilization of population in order to incline people in favor of the regime the special stress was put on education of teenagers. The aspiration to win young people's sympathy and

ideologically draw them to the regime was motivated by an important role played by youth in overthrowing Lee Syng Man's rule in 1960. Making comments on National Education Institutions Regulations declared in 1968 Park Chung Hee put an emphasis on the promotion of «national consciousness», on «restoration of the tradition of people's mutual assistance and collectivism in the matter of construction of new national state and nation's revival», and on «harmonization of relations between state and individual» (Park 1987, 26).

In his address to the Conference of national education activists in March 1972 Park Chung Hee called for paying more attention to education of original national merits (filial piety, respect to teachers) in order to get filled with the spirit of national exclusiveness. «Appealing to...traditional «national values» such as Confucian principle of filial piety (which was interpreted as loyalty to the leaders) Park Chung Hee was trying to substantiate and justify further strengthening of military bureaucratic regime wearing a mask of «Korean style democracy» (Park 1987, 27).

«Korean style democracy» was established in October 1972 when a new Constitution of authoritarian type was declared under the name of «Yusin». Park Chung Hee foreseeing the expiration of his second (and the last under previous Constitution) presidential term called National Assembly session early in the morning without informing NA opposition members (Lorenzini 2000). As a result new legislative measures were approved by majority, they were aimed at further strengthening of Park Chung Hee's

regime<sup>9</sup>. Such measures were explained by «goals of national revival» and the necessity to fight «communist threat».

Notwithstanding the approval in 1970s of the conception of «peaceful independent unification» that assumed non-violent contacts and dialog with DPRK, South Korean forces at the moment consisted of 600 thousand people with 2,5 million in the reserve. In the speeches of Seoul leaders there repeatedly sounded threats to «crush the enemy to the north of demilitarized zone» (Park 1987, 28). And in order to build up economic base for strengthening the country Park Chung Hee's government supported and subsidized active development of heavy and chemical industry.

Ideology was also meant to work for the regime.

Origins of «Korean style democracy» its apologists trace to mythical founder of Korean statehood Tangun...Its primary concepts exclude any non-respect to political power and affirm «mutual respect, esteem, trust and love between the leader and masses, ensure harmonious relations between the ruler and people» (Park 1987, 29).

Social developments included «new country-side» movement, which was primarily destined for countrymen and then involved citizens and military forces. Within the frameworks of this campaign lodging construction was carried out and programs promoting various forms of agricultural cooperation were planned, which facilitated social maneuvers of the government. Ideological element played considerable role in the concept of the movement.

According to Park Chung Hee the «new country-side» movement was a «wonder-working mean against laziness and complacency, luxury and over-indulgence, rooted in the part of Korean nation». The effect of the movement was expected by Seoul leaders as to become «a change in the mode of thinking, in political orientation of the citizens,

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<sup>9</sup> According to 1972 Constitution the President was to be elected not by general vote but by the decision of established National Conference on Independent Unification of Korea. This Conference had the right to appoint one third of the National Assembly by the President's recommendation. This had considerably weakened the role of political parties because the Conference deputies had to be non-party.

especially intelligentsia that have to refuse systematic resistance of power» (Park 1987, 30).

Under government control ideological brain-washing of masses was performed by scholars, journalists, cultural workers. In all organizations and enterprises not less than 3 hours a week were devoted to special ideological studies. For example, instruction courses on «inculcation of Korean style democracy», and «on promotion of national consent in state defense» were conducted (Park 1987, 30). Propaganda was carried on in «adult schools», «citizens universities», schools for aging people», «housewives courses» etc.

In the textbook for members of Democratic Republican Party (1968) it was emphasized that «within the frameworks of national democracy» people are supposed not only «to learn the substance of European and American democracy, but also to embody original historical, cultural and national peculiarities of Korea» (Park 1987, 25).

Park Chung Hee's rule remained in history as Third and Fourth Republics (they shifted in 1972). In October 1979 the chief of his own security service traitorously assassinated Park Chung Hee during the dinner. This event led to serious internal political shifts, they were however mainly personal, and the country continued to follow the way defined by General Park, the more so, as the Koreans started to feel the first results of economic break-through.

State ideology that was maintained in the ROK during General Park's rule obviously contained the elements of Confucian political culture. This authoritative leader, firmly controlling state affairs and putting special emphasis on economic prosperity, very clearly reminds of traditional strong

central leadership, carrying out its duty to provide for the people's well being. Government's attention to the education "in the spirit of national merits" also seemed to have been rooted within the traditional culture.

## ROK AFTER PARK CHUNG HEE

After the assassination of Park Chung Hee there was a short period of disturbance that was marked by military coup in 1979 and uprising in Kwangju in May 1980. General Chun Doo Hwan, who belonged to the same military circles, which worked their way up during Park Chung Hee's rule in 1960's, emerged as a political leader.

During his rule (1980-87) Chun Doo Hwan generally followed Park Chung Hee's political and economic lines. Social model the basis of which was developed in 1961 continued to exist without any serious changes up to 1987. «In these 25 years South Korea governed by authoritarian, but uniquely effective in economic and social senses regime made a gigantic breakthrough. From backward agrarian country...it turned into one of the leading industrial states of Asia» (Lankov 2000, 33).

In the ROK in the middle of 1980's there was no urgent necessity to maintain strict authoritarian rule. Political stability, which is necessary for normal functioning and rapid economic development of the country, was no longer under a direct threat. Social contrasts were softened, living standards of the low-class considerably increased, and the danger of uprising was no longer likely to occur. «By 1985-86 it became clear that it is now possible to ensure such stability by more democratic means» (Lankov 2000, 34).

Such tendencies resulted in the events of 1987. They were caused by Chun Doo Hwan's intention to make a military man General Roh Tae Woo his successor on the coming presidential election. Chun Doo Hwan's decision was perceived as an attempt to prolong the existence of authoritarian system, and was followed by a wave of mass demonstrations. Military had to make concessions.

Further government activities signified the breaking-off with authoritarianism and the establishment of an open political system. The project of the main law containing the idea of renovation of state power was adopted by National Assembly on October 12, 1987 and approved by national referendum on October 27. The new Constitution stipulated the appointing of a democratic form of governing, principle of division of power branches, multi-party political system, observation of rights and freedoms of an individual. Article 5, where it was written that the objective of armed forces activities is national security and defense of the country, stipulated «distancing» of military men from state governing mechanism. Armed forces also had to keep political neutrality.

After Chun Doo Hwan's resignation at the end of 1987 the first wholly democratic elections in Korean history were held. Their results came as a surprise: Roh Tae Woo, whose candidacy had just recently given rise to the storm of protest, was elected President. Thus military men formally stayed in power in Korea up till 1992, however the substance of Roh Tae Woo's rule principally differed from preceding regimes and by no means could be called either military dictatorship or authoritarian regime.

During Roh Tae Woo's rule the course on democratization (still limited and shaky) led to partial political and ideological stabilization. As a result came the limitation of state autonomy and strengthening of big business positions.

Declaration of June 7, 1988 defined North Korea as a part of «national community», which supposed the revision of anticommunist position. Capitalists occupied the place of military elite in determining social order as well as capitalism, effectiveness and development turned out to be a good substitute for anti-communism as state ideology.

Political and economic changes after 1987 made it possible for Korean bourgeoisie to strengthen their hegemony as never before. The opening of political system, for example, afforded the investment of private Korean capital in electoral process with reliability and independence, which was not an ordinary thing before. Thus further democratization strengthened the political positions of bourgeoisie.

Roh Tae Woo's successor on the president post Kim Young Sam though belonged to the same Democratic Liberal Party was not a military man, and during authoritarian rules of Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan actively participated in opposition activities. Having taken the seat Kim Young Sam declared that his government was the first truly civilian one in the Korean history. During Kim Young Sam's rule the complete distancing of army from politics and state governing became a reality.

Roh Tae Woo's course on transition from political violence and coercion to the practice of social consensus and compromise became a leading principle of internal politics during Kim Young Sam's rule. The epoch

of absolute monopoly of executive structures was over, the authority and role of Parliament increased. Opposition has got «unknown before and practically equal with ruling circles possibilities for participation in political life of the country» (Tolstokulakov 1999, 327).

First step on realization of the course proclaimed by Kim Young Sam became a «cadre revolution». As a result key positions in state governing were occupied by new people not connected with previous regimes, bureaucracy and party leaders. The main instrument of repression against political opponents during previous regimes the Agency of National Security Planning was reformed along with police apparatus and other special services.

Grand reforms aimed at fighting corruption and abuse of bureaucrats, dismissal of «Blue House» and «Closed House» as a symbol of secret Cabinet policy, President's declaring that he did not make profit on politics, and following publication of income and property brought a success to new administration contra positioning it to previous military regime. (While Park Chung Hee was known as absolutely disinterested in personal benefits, his successors Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo could not be characterized the same way).

Prominent political figures accused of bribery were arrested and resigned during Kim Young Sam's rule, practically all general officers that supported and formed previous military political regime were moved from political arena.

In 1997 first time in Korean history the ruling party lost presidential elections and opposition leader for decades Kim Dae Jung who repeatedly

suffered from repression during the whole military rule (up to custody and death penalty verdict) was elected President of the Republic of Korea.

## CONFUCIAN ELEMENTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC RULE

Notwithstanding the clear course on democratization of the society by Western example during Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung's rules, values and ideals of political development glorified by them had an impact of traditional Eastern culture.

First of all it refers to the tendency of political leaders to moralize politics, to build spiritual basis under political goals. Confucian tradition was not exactly a code of the rules of governing and social organizing, but an ethical code of behavioral norms within the society. Carrying out activities according to moral duty was number one priority as far as it was considered a required condition for harmonization of society. For example, the ruler and the subordinates were connected not only by administrative relations, but by moral counteraction with «paternal love» on one side and «filial piety» on the other.

Kim Young Sam embodied the transition of Republic of Korea from authoritarian rule to a truly democratic one. In his works Kim Young Sam cherished ideals of freedom and equality, emphasized the necessity of legal functioning of democratic institutions (honest elections, multi-party system etc.) However his political concept also seemed to be influenced by Confucian legacies.

In Kim Young Sam's public speeches during presidential marathon in 1992 Confucian and democratic principles are synthesized. In the speech on the discussion meeting on economic reforms matters «My concept of new economy» he talks about necessity to democratize through restructuring of consciousness, calls for making it collectivist. (Here Western democracy is strangely bind to traditional Eastern collectivism).

Without restructuring of consciousness no structural reforms will be effective...Businessmen and workers should feel partners. All the nation should come to understanding of collectivist postulate: The whole exists. Only then I exist» (Kim Tok Ju 1993, 207).

Giving high priority to democratic mode of governing Kim Young Sam also notes moral characteristics of the leader and his role as a guide of people's will.

In order to transform consciousness for the interests of construction of new economy the strong leadership is needed because it will be necessary to educate masses...The origin of the lead will be the people themselves. The leader should come to power legally and be highly moral. The leader who has come to power through honest and just elections is looked upon by the people as obtaining legitimized power (Kim Tok Ju 1993, 207).

On the ceremony of taking the post of Democratic Liberal Party Chairman Kim Young Sam declared: «Morality of the leader is the substance of a healthy society, healthy state. I see highest value in moral politics...Clean politics starts with the...example of the leaders» (Kim Tok Ju 1993, 165).

In his interview on nomination his candidacy on presidential elections Kim Young Sam said: "President is a center of the country. If this center is not stable politics, society and the country leave the state of equilibrium" (Kim Tok Ju 1993, 191). The emphasis put on morality of the leader, which guarantees harmonious development of the country, is characteristic of Confucian

tradition. Goals of democratic president is likely to concentrate more on proper functioning of the executive branch head than on bringing the country into “equilibrium”.

It is worth noting that in speeches by his predecessor Roh Tae Woo who made first steps to democratization well-being of the society was characterized as the state of “harmony”. Talking about “march” of the country to the “full democracy” Roh Tae Woo emphasized the necessity to build “harmonious world order” and to carry out “economic policy of harmony”. (Roh Tae Woo 1990). Thus the goal of political development was considered as bringing the state and the world to equilibrium, which was quite characteristic of Confucian ideology.

President of the ROK Kim Dae Jung wrote about “democracy of Confucianism”. Confucianism, which was Korean state ideology for centuries during Lee dynasty, used to give high priority to the activities “for the sake of people”. “Democracy of Confucianism was expressed in the principles that “the will of people is the will of Heaven” and “those who obey the will of Heaven prosper, while those who oppose it perish” (Kim Dae Jung 1998, 83). Giving advice to those who want to follow his example in politics Kim Dae Jung argues that “politicians have to serve the people as if they are God, and to fear people’s anger” (1998, 115).

## CONCLUSION

“In agrarian Eastern countries, particularly in the Far Eastern ones, customs and traditions have always had prior importance in governing processes” (Tyapkina 1978, 209). Doubtless belonging of Korea to Confucian cultural region makes the research on the influence of Confucian traditions and values on formulation and development of Korean political system clearly necessary.

Notwithstanding opposite ideologies of North and South Korean leaders, where on one side the course on construction of a Communist society was taken, and the path on promotion democracy and capitalism was followed on the other, there exist common elements for both courses. The commonality is conditioned by the influence of Confucian political tradition.

First of all it refers to the perception of a central power. Traditionally the leader was looked upon as obtaining sacral power given by Heaven. He was perceived as a father of people and had an unlimited authority. Established and advertised by North Korean mass-media, scholars and cultural workers images of “great leader, great Sun of the manhood, great thinker and theoretician, genius of revolution” Kim Il Song and “great military leader” Kim Jong Il looked much like the image of Confucian leader.

“In South Korea artificial formulation of a natural myth “about a great Korean” had not taken such exaggerated and unreal forms as in the North. However in the South as well we can find indications that this myth could not help transforming into artificial fragments” (Minaev 1999, 88).

Conscious aspiration of South Korean society to review historical meaning of the first President Lee Syng Man and attach heroic features and special talents to his appearance are rather interesting for a researcher. In some Korean publications Lee Syng Man is given the role of almost a “father of the nation” (Minaev 1999). The first leader of the country independent from Japanese colonial rule symbolized the beginning of a new existence, a “wind of change”, and was called by many Koreans “messiah” (Eckert .1990).

The attitude to Park Chung Hee was dual. Though opposition leaders called him “a dictator and tyrant” he won necessary public support during two presidential elections. And during his almost 20-years rule no uprisings strong enough to overthrow the regime broke out. Lastly Far Eastern political tradition supposed the existence of a strong central power, and soft leader would sooner provoke people’s resentment than a strict ruler who resolutely governs the country. Many Koreans these days still say that the monarchy traditionally existed in Korea, and Park Chung Hee’s charismatic personality was associated with paternal figure of a “father” (from personal talks with ROK citizens).

Secondly, it is characteristic for both countries to perceive state system through the prism of the family. The whole society is united under the leadership of the head of the family - father and ruler. North Korean leaders constantly stick to the traditional postulate of a «big family» headed by «Revolution leader». «The concept of «Kim Il Song’s nation» used nowadays should be looked upon not only as the attempt to distinct North Koreans from South ones, but also as the analogy of the concept of «God’s children» (Asmolov, Matsegora 1999, 277).

In South Korea notwithstanding rapid economic development and modernization Confucianism as a moral teaching and a way of life has by no means been discarded, and a certain place in social existence is devoted to traditional cult of ancestral worship. «It is reasonable to conclude that family principle is deeply rooted in contemporary society, and social structure is based on the ideal of patriarchal family» (Helgesen 1998, 730).

Confucian family-centered state structure had an impact on the relations between the leaders and population. Both in North and South Korea these relations represent moral counteraction between the rulers, who are perceived as morally responsible for people's prosperity, and loyal children. This can be demonstrated by economic policies of the both countries' leaders.

During the whole existence of the DPRK and during 30 years military rule in the ROK the elite fully carried out an administrative control over economy. North Korea's bid for self-sustenance in economy and General Park's promotion of self-sufficiency in the economic sphere even sound almost identical. Officially it was explained among the rest by the necessity to fulfill the rulers' moral duty in providing for their subordinates. As a response according to Confucian spirit of «filial piety» people requested to be obedient to the will of the top leaders.

Third, furtherance of community interests and the superiority of society over an individual, which are characteristic of the Confucian society, were reflected in ideological courses of North and South Korea. In the DPRK a common representative of the masses must understand that «the life of social collective is more important than the life of one taken person», and individual

existence is «inconceivable» out of touch with the life of the society (Kim Jong Il 1987, 78).

In the Republic of Korea nationalistic ideology called for the cohesion of population in the interest of both economic development of the country and resistance of Communist threat, thus binding people with the duty to act in the interests of the society. Talking about the experience of democratic development of the South Korea G.Yaskina argues: «Though democracy adherents in the West consider that it must be first of all associated with rights and freedoms of private citizens, in the East they think that stability is the thing worth sacrificing rights and freedoms of private citizens and carry out corresponding policy» (1998, 52).

Thus collectivism, which is characteristic of traditional Far East culture, helped North and South Korean leaders to successfully use ideology as a political instrument.

Forth, Confucian attention to education and self-perfection was characteristic of the political courses of the DPRK and the ROK leaders. Kim Il Song in his works emphasized the role of teachers in educating «chuche style» Communists. While Kim Dae Jung argued that «high education level of Korean people (and Confucianism paid much attention to education) laid a ground for democracy» (1998, 85).

Lastly, North and South Korean leaders tended to moralize politics. Ethical perception of politics defined the goal of state development as «harmonization» of the society, which largely explains the importance attributed by the DPRK and the ROK leaders to ideological influence on the people.

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It certainly is most unfortunate, as current President of the Republic of Korea Roh Moo Hyun pointed out in his Inaugural Speech on February 25, 2003, that the Korean peninsula remains the last legacy of the Cold War of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The existence of the divided country is tragic especially taking into account the two states' shared cultural traditions. If, as I believe, one could find similarities even between most antagonistic elements characterizing DPRK and ROK, namely – communistic and democratic ideologies, which initially brought North and South Korea apart, it is possible to find common grounds in many development spheres of the two states, originating from the shared traditional culture. And those common grounds could become the meaningful power promoting the movement of North and South Korea towards each other.

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