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# Review of "The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology" by M. Deuchler

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of the" UNC (p. 78). In fact, this proposal placed the southern third of North Korea in South Korea, thus infuriating the Communists and raising doubts about the UNC's desire for an agreement.

Nevertheless, this study has strengths. Bailey's research in primary sources at government repositories in the United States and Britain, as well as in private manuscript collections, is impressive. Relying heavily on U.N. documents, his coverage of events at the United Nations is thorough and detailed, especially developments at the Security Council in the summer of 1950 and at the General Assembly during late 1952. He makes excellent use of quotations and the appendixes contain twenty U.N. documents. His account boasts the best treatment to date of the "elaborate and cumbersome system for verifying compliance with the Armistice" (p. 173). It also discusses the postwar history of the agencies responsible for supervising POW repatriation and the cease-fire, while surveying postwar internal political developments on the peninsula, including negotiations since 1990 between Seoul and P'yöngyang for reunification. "War is always a catastrophe" (p. 208), the author concludes after tracing the last half-century of Korea's history. This final judgment typifies the analytical shallowness of Bailey's study.

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*The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology.* By MARTINA DEUHLER. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University. Harvard University Press, 1993. 439 pp. \$35.00.

It is almost a commonplace in East Asian studies that Korea is/was the "most Confucian" of East Asian societies. The Chosön dynasty (1392–1910) was the only dynasty founded under explicitly Neo-Confucian auspices, and it came to especially pride itself on its adherence to Confucian norms of propriety and ritual. With the classical *Chou-li*, *Li-chi*, *I-li*, and Chu Hsi's *Chia-li* in hand, the scholar-officials of the new dynasty set out to renovate their society: after more than 250 years of unremitting effort, the Buddhist society of the preceding Koryö dynasty had become perhaps the most orthodox Confucian society in East Asia. Deuchler is surely correct in describing this, after the failure of Wang An-shih's reforms in eleventh-century China, as "the most ambitious and creative reform experiment in the East Asian World" (p. 27). Her book delineates the nature of the social transformation, traces the process of its realization, and lays open the means and motives through which it was brought about.

The first and longest chapter is a reconstruction of Koryö dynasty society (918–1392). Between the end of Koryö and Chosön society several centuries later, Deuchler is able to show us major change. Both are essentially aristocratic societies in which social pedigree is critical for participation in the higher levels of government. What changes dramatically is the whole familial and lineage calculus that supports the pedigree. In the process, what it means to be a wife, a son, a daughter, a brother, an heir, or a relative is transformed. The equal status of plural wives is replaced with strict ranking giving full lineage and ritual status only to the single primary wife and her issue. From having been the center of gravity in an era when uxorilocal marriage was common, the maternal side of family relationships is reduced to the

point where women become economically and socially appendages of their husband's family. The fundamental structures of the descent groups in which property and status are passed on are altered from the more horizontal inclusiveness of brothers and sisters to a rigidly vertical and lineal father-son transmission culminating in primogeniture.

The linchpin of the transformation process, as Deuchler describes it, is ancestor worship and mourning. A mourning chart is at the same time a prescriptive model of family relationships, and reflection on ritual qualifications to sacrifice to the ancestors is a powerful lever toward primogeniture. Of course, such norms have power only insofar as they are taken seriously; it is evident that Korea took them seriously to a degree not to be found in other East Asian societies. Why? Early Korean Neo-Confucians were motivated by ideological conviction, but the staying power of the ritual and social transformation they set in motion suggests a deep fit with the inherent dynamics of the social system. Deuchler convincingly locates this fit in a synergy between the aristocratic structure of Korean society and Neo-Confucian ideology. In a situation of increasing demand and competition for access to political and economic power, Neo-Confucian ritual prescriptions furnished a critical means for closely defining and limiting the descent group and hence maintaining control of access.

This book is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of Chosŏn society and the power and implications of Confucian ritual. It offers insight into some of the most puzzling and disturbing features of Chosŏn society, such as the exclusion of secondary sons from officeholding, the problematic position of secondary wives, and the harsh restrictions against widows remarrying—all areas in which Korea appears more extreme than China. Deuchler's historical research is exemplary, solidly based on primary sources and thoroughly versed in the secondary literature as well. But what gives it credence is her use of an analytic method that draws heavily on the insights of social anthropology to weave the bits and pieces of information about various facets of social practice—inheritance, succession, marriage practices, who lives with whom, mutations in mourning rites, etc.—into a coherent picture: the pieces not only fit together, they also reinforce and explain each other.

Deuchler makes it very clear that Korea, in becoming Confucianized, was not becoming Sinicized. Her conclusion introduces points of important contrast with China and suggests a number of inviting lines for further research. She has shown so well the consequences of Neo-Confucianism for Chosŏn society that her study raises compelling new questions about the very different consequences in China and Japan. There should be no lack of scholars who will wish to build upon the foundation Deuchler's work has given us.

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*Two Koreas in Development: A Comparative Study of Principles and Strategies of Capitalist and Communist Third World Development.* By BYOUNG-LO PHILO KIM. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1992. xix, 240 pp.

This book systematically compares various aspects of the development processes of the two Koreas in the post-Liberation (1945) period. The author first discusses