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THE WATERSHED THAT WASN'T: RE-EVALUATING KIM IL SUNG'S "JUCHE SPEECH" OF 1955

By BRIAN MYERS

For decades foreign observers have regarded Kim Il Sung's so-called *juche* speech of 1955 as a watershed in his country's ideological history—the first public occasion on which the dictator spoke of the nationalist concept of *juche*. The speech is also routinely described, though with no textual evidence, as an enunciation of the need for national self-reliance. All too often foreigners, unconsciously emulating the North Koreans' own practice, have projected the party's more recent interpretations of the term *juche* backward in time onto the 1955 speech.

The following article proceeds from the view that the speech must be read closely with a view to the context of *its own time*—a time in which P'yongyang's own dictionaries either defined *juche* as a concept devoid of nationalist connotations or ignored it altogether; a time when it was considered acceptable throughout the socialist bloc to call for the "creative" application of Marxism-Leninism to national conditions; a time in which the *juche* speech appears to have aroused no more attention than was usually given to Kim's public discourse. Through an analysis of the text itself, the article sets out to show that the speech—only the first half of which deals with *juche* at all—is not nationalist in any meaningful sense of the term, nor does it even mention self-reliance. In closing, the article raises the possibility that Kim's criticism of the more ludicrous excesses of sovietophilia was motivated by his fear that they could alienate public opinion in South Korea.

Key words: *juche*, self-reliance, Kim Il Sung, nationalism, domesticism

INTRODUCTION

Imposed on North Korea in 1945, Marxism-Leninism created political and economic structures that are still in place today. But its primacy in the country's official culture—in the arts, propaganda and education—was superficial from the start. By early 1946 Korean nationalism had coalesced with the cult of Kim Il Sung [Kim Ilŏng] to form a worldview incompatible with Marxism-Leninism. Stalin's cult derived from the claim that he understood the all-powerful science of dialectical materialism like no one else; Kim's cult centered on his anti-Japanese exploits and his embodiment of ethnic virtues.¹ Many observers, noting the then customary tributes to the USSR and a general lack of interest in Korean tradition, have tended to assume that nationalism was lying dormant. But nationalism in northeast Asia has traditionally been compatible with the imitation of foreign models and an indifference to indigenous tradition. (This is also true of South Korean nationalism today.)

The war brought out the ethnocentric element in North Korean nationalism. Breaking with international socialist custom, the party's propaganda vilified Americans as a depraved race, lampooning their Caucasian features and "idiotized" physiognomies.² By 1953 propaganda was extolling the special qualities of Koreanness,³ and the regime had begun blocking contacts between East European diplomats and North Korean citizens.⁴ By 1957 performances of foreign music and drama in P'yŏngyang had become rare.⁵ Noting the disparity between the leadership's lofty rhetoric and the reality of official culture, an East German diplomat reported to a superior that "nationalist tendencies are particularly prevalent in films, in the theater and performances, and in lectures."⁶

This nationalism cannot have flourished against Kim Il Sung's wishes. In all likelihood he encouraged it, though it probably did not need much encouragement. At party congresses throughout the 1950s, at which foreign dignitaries were often present, Kim professed allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, but under his rule it was reduced to a *pro forma* shell of an orthodoxy. "Party propaganda," an East German diplomat reported home in 1961, is "not oriented

¹ Myers, *Han Sorya and North Korean Literature*, 135–142.

² *Ibid.*, 122.

³ Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea*, 29.

⁴ Szalontai, "'You Have No Political Line of Your Own': Kim Il Sung and the Soviets, 1953–1964," 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶ Schäfer, "Weathering the Sino-Soviet Conflict: The GDR and North Korea, 1949–1989," 40.

toward studying the works of Marxism-Leninism.”⁷

Although Kim had no intention of showing the nation’s true colors to its allies, he grew unwilling to tolerate even the nominal supremacy of a foreign ideology. The late 1960s thus saw a shift from Marxism-Leninism to a new *pro forma* orthodoxy called Juche Thought (*chuch’e sasang*).⁸ A farrago of Marxist and humanist banalities that is claimed to have been conceived by Kim himself, Juche Thought exists only to be praised. (Tellingly, the entry on Juche Thought in the DPRK’s recently published encyclopedia is only half as long as the entry on the Juche Tower.)⁹ The *de facto* ideology remains the nationalist personality cult that came into being in the 1940s.

I hasten to add that this potted history does not reflect the academic consensus outside North Korea (let alone inside it). Most observers consider the country to have been solidly Marxist-Leninist from 1945 until 1955, when (they assert) Juche Thought first reared its head.¹⁰ But such an assessment means positing the start of North Korean nationalism ten years too late and the introduction of Juche Thought ten years too early. More importantly, it means conflating the *pro forma* ideology with the *de facto* one.

At the heart of the confusion is the so-called *juche* speech made by Kim Il Sung on December 28, 1955. Later published under the title “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work,” it is widely seen outside North Korea as marking the adumbration or introduction of a new ideology of nationalist self-reliance. Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig write that the speech “sets forth the *Juche* idea of national self-reliance and pride.”¹¹ Andrei Lankov describes it as “the first authentic statement to enunciate explicitly the *juche* principle.... North Korean Communism would be redesigned as an essentially national—even nationalistic—ideology.”¹² Bradley Martin claims that in the speech, “Kim gave full voice to his arguments for *juche*,” which (Martin explains) is “often translated simply as national self-reliance but [has] the broader meaning of putting Korea first.”¹³

⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁸ Juche is the most common English spelling of the word in and outside North Korea. I will therefore use it throughout the paper except when transliterating Korean titles, when I will write “*chuch’e*.” North Korean words are transliterated in this paper in accordance with North Korean pronunciation, i.e. *Rodong sinmun* instead of *Nodong sinmun*.

⁹ *Chosŏn taebaek kwa sajŏn*, 19:342–343, 2000.

¹⁰ See for example Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader*, 1025.

¹¹ *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 17.

¹² Lankov, *North Korea in Crisis*, 40–42.

¹³ Martin, 174.

I have also referred to it in print as the “*Juche* (self-reliance) speech,”¹⁴ but I see now that I was wrong. A close reading of the text reveals, as I aim to make clear in this paper, that the speech does *not* re-interpret Marxism-Leninism, nor is it nationalist, nor does it even mention self-reliance. In fact, it neither deviates from the Marxism-Leninism of its day nor does it exceed levels of patriotism that were then considered acceptable throughout the East Bloc. As far as can be seen, the speech generated no significant formal discussion until the 1960s. Only in 1965 did the term *juche* take center stage, bringing the decade-old speech into the spotlight with it. The epochal significance of the *juche* speech was thus a retrospective invention.

PRECURSORS OF THE “JUCHE” SPEECH, 1945–1955

Some scholars appear to assume that because Kim Il Sung paid tribute to the USSR from 1945 on, the patriotic tones of his *juche* speech marked a break with tradition. But as Bruce Cumings has pointed out, appeals to patriotism and calls for Korea’s “complete independence” were part of Kim’s speeches almost from the start.¹⁵ Cumings overstates the case by interpreting such rhetoric primarily in the context of North Korea’s relationship with the Soviet Union. Kim’s calls for independence in these early years tend to come after harangues against Yankee misrule in the South; for him Korean independence clearly means, first and foremost, independence from the USA.¹⁶ But the important thing is that from the 1940s on, Kim saw no conflict between pro-Soviet rhetoric and patriotism, no conflict between praise for the Soviet party and praise for Korea’s own revolutionary struggle. He also touched on some of the points that he would later mention in the *juche* speech. In 1948, for example, he called on propagandists to teach people their history,¹⁷ and during the war he stressed the need to “inherit” Korea’s cultural heritage.¹⁸

An even more striking continuity exists between the *juche* speech of December

¹⁴ Myers, 93.

¹⁵ Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 2:312.

¹⁶ “Chungyo saöp üi kugyuhwan ün chaju tongnip kukka könsöl üi kich’o,” in *Kim Ilsöng chöjak sönjip*, 1:63–68.

¹⁷ “Chosön rodongdang che 2 ch’a taehoe esö han chungang wiwönhoe saöp ch’onghwa pogo,” *Kim Ilsöng chöjak sönjip*. 1:240.

¹⁸ “Uri munhak yesul üi myöt kaji munje e taehayö: chakka yesurin tül kwa üi taehwa, 1951 nyön 6 wöl 30 il,” *Kim Ilsöng chöjak sönjip*. 1:294.

1955 and speeches Kim had given months earlier to a plenum of his party's Central Committee. If ideological ground was indeed broken in 1955, it was in April and not December. On April 1, Kim complained at length about party members "swallowing Marxism-Leninism whole" instead of applying it to Korea's actual conditions.¹⁹ On April 4, Kim made the same complaint again, urging party members to "learn many of our own things in party study.... We should know that these things of our own constitute living Marxism correctly applied to Korean reality."²⁰ This is the central point of the *juče* speech of December.

Far too little known is the fact that Kim's April 4 speech even pre-empted the December speech's use of the word *juče*.

Our party sets forth appropriate political and economic tasks in a given period on the basis of the assessment of all the objective conditions and *chuch'e-chök* capabilities in the country.²¹

Kim talked right on, which shows that he saw no need to explain the word *juče*. It was, and had been for decades, the Korean translation of the term "subject," i.e. subject in the "active" sense of an agent; this is the sense—as in "the people as the subject of history"—that is common in European philosophy and in Marxism in particular. (Chinese and Japanese Marxists had always used the same ideograms—主體—to render "subject" into their own languages.) In 1956 a North Korean translation of a Soviet philosophical dictionary appeared with *juče* given as the equivalent of the Russian *sub'ekt*, which is defined according to standard Marxist usage.²² This is also the definition of *juče* given in a North Korean dictionary published that same year: "the conscious person who acts, the entity in opposition to the exterior world that is the object of consciousness."²³ The 1965 English version of Kim Il Sung's *Selected Works* thus translates the above use of *chuch'e-chök* as "subjective."²⁴ Though to most readers of English the word implies the opposite of "objective," Kim's audience will have understood the Korean word as "pertaining to the persons or entities" carrying out tasks.

The April speeches were no doubt fresh in the minds of the agitprop workers whom Kim addressed on December 28, 1955. After all, it was the responsibility

¹⁹ "Tangwön tül sok esö kyegüp kyoyang saöp ül töuk kanghwa halte taehayö," *Kim Ilšong chöjak sönjip*, 1:511–512.

²⁰ "Sahoejuüi hyöngmyöng üi hyöndan'gye e issösö tang mit' kukka saöp üi myöt kaji munje tül e taehayö," *Kim Ilšong chöjak sönjip*, 1:537–538.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1:535.

²² *Ch'örhak sosajön*, 518.

²³ *Chosönö sosajön*, 420.

²⁴ "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism," *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, 1:291.

of these very people to disseminate Kim's discourse in lectures and official media. Let us now turn to the *juče* speech itself.

“ON ELIMINATING DOGMATISM AND FORMALISM AND ESTABLISHING *JUCHE* IN IDEOLOGICAL WORK: A speech given before officials working in party propaganda and agitation, December 28, 1955”

1. The Title and Subtitle

The title above is taken from the 1965 English edition of Kim Il Sung's *Selected Works*, and is a faithful translation of the title used in the Korean language edition of his selected works published in 1960.²⁵ For convenience's sake we may refer to the speech as “the *juče* speech,” but the original title does *not* imply that establishing *juče* is more important than eliminating dogmatism and formalism. Nor does it imply that *juče* is to be established anywhere but in “ideological work,” i.e. in propaganda and agitation.

In view of the title it should be noted that by December 1955, the campaign against dogmatism, i.e. the rigid application of Marxism-Leninism in disregard of practical circumstances, and formalism, i.e. adherence to the forms and not the principles of Marxism-Leninism, was in full swing in the post-Stalin USSR.²⁶ Criticism of dogmatism no longer possessed the inherently anti-Moscow overtones that it had when the Yugoslav leader Tito engaged in it during the 1940s.²⁷

Despite the speech's subtitle, some scholars now conclude that Kim gave it at a large Central Committee plenum underway at the time.²⁸ But if this were true, the regime would have had no reason to assert otherwise. In the speech itself Kim referred to a keynote speech given the day before by Han Sörya, the chairman of the Writers' Union; Kim also said that the preceding day's session had revealed

²⁵ “Sasang saöp esö kyojojuüi wa hyöngsikchuüi rül t'oech'i hago chuch'e rül hwangnip halte taehayö, *Kim Il'söng sönjip* (1960), 4:325–354.

²⁶ See especially the entries on *kyojojuüi* (dogmatism) and *ch'angjojök marüküsijüm* (creative Marxism) in *Ch'örbak sosajön*, a translation of a Soviet dictionary published in P'yöngyang in 1956.

²⁷ This is in contrast to the assertion of Quinones and Tragert that “*Juche* emerged for the first time to counter Soviet and Chinese communism's dogmatism and formalism.” (*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding North Korea*, 167.)

²⁸ Szalontai, 40; Lankov, 90.

errors “on the literary front.”²⁹ There is therefore good reason to take the subtitle literally and to assume (as the North Koreans assert even today)³⁰ that the speech was held at a conference of agitprop workers.

2. The Body

Although the speech runs to twenty-five pages in the 1960 edition of Kim’s selected works, only the first half deals with the topics covered in the title. In the course of the speech Kim makes clear that he regards the second half—which deals with preparations for reunification—to be thematically separate from the first. (Since the latter half makes no mention of *juče*, I will not discuss it in depth.) But in contrast to their custom with other speeches, editors of Kim’s works have always printed the December 1955 speech without breaks or sub-headings. I believe that this is to disguise the awkward fact that *juče* earns no mention in the second half of its own speech, and to keep the reader from noticing how short the actual *juče* half is. It probably did not last more than half an hour; a Korean speaker can read the thirteen pages aloud at a measured pace in about twenty minutes. We shall see below that these thirteen pages are repetitive, and consist to a large extent of rather trivial illustrations of the errors Kim is criticizing.

Kim starts by saying, “Today I would like to express a few opinions to you comrades on the shortcomings of our party’s ideological work and on how to eliminate them in the future.”³¹ Kim reminds his audience that Han Sörya had noted literary problems the preceding day, and then moves into the subject at hand. I would like to take this crucial part directly from the official English translation of 1965:

I regret to point out that our propaganda work is suffering in many respects from dogmatism and formalism. The failure to delve deeply into all matters and the lack of *Juče*—this is the main shortcoming in ideological work. It may not be proper to say *Juče* is lacking, but, in fact, it has not yet been firmly established.³²

Note what the translators have done to that conventional Marxist term! Their brilliant decision not to render it into English, but instead to transliterate, italicize and capitalize it, creates an effect on the foreign reader quite unlike that which it

²⁹ “Sasang saöp esö,” 4:325, 329, 334.

³⁰ *Chosön taebaekkeva sajön*, 12: 627.

³¹ “Sasang saöp esö,” 560.

³² “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism,” *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, 1:315.

will have had on Kim's audience at the time. It makes the word jump out from its context as something un-Marxist and uniquely, untranslatably Korean. The absence of an article (as in "a *juche*" or "the *juche*") cows the foreign reader further, making him wonder whether *juche* refers to an entity or a state of mind. Cumings, for example, has written that *juche*

is less an idea than a state of mind. The term literally means being subjective where things Korean are concerned; putting Korea first in everything.... The term is really untranslatable; for a foreigner its meaning is ever-receding into a pool of everything that makes Koreans Korean, and therefore ultimately inaccessible to the non-Korean.³³

The notion that some ideas or states of mind are accessible only to certain ethnic groups does not merit discussion—but this is precisely the sort of reverent bafflement that P'yŏngyang's obfuscatory writing on *juche* has been aiming for since the latter half of the 1960s. There is no reason, however, not to translate the word *juche* in the December 1955 speech just as the dictionary published by the party itself defined the term in 1956, namely, as "a/the subject." Definitions published in later decades need not concern us here.

Let us return to Kim and that crucial excerpt from the 1955 speech, but I will henceforth offer my own translation.

The most important error of ideological work is the failure to delve deeply into all matters and the absence of *a subject*. It's probably misleading to say that *a subject* is absent, but in fact, *the subject* has not been clearly established. This is a serious matter... In our party's ideological work, what is *the subject*?

³³ Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 2:313. Making no mention of the word's standard usage in Marxist contexts, Cumings notes that the second ideogram of *juche* is the same as the *tai* in an imperialist Japanese concept called *kokutai*; the implication is that the shared character imbued the word *juche* from the start with a nationalist ring. I can find no evidence to support the notion that *juche* had any such connotations for Kim Il Sung or his audience in 1955. Granted, Korean thinkers like Sin Ch'aeho and Paek Nam'un had sometimes used the word *juche* during the colonial era in nationalist or rightist texts, but they did so without altering the meaning of "subject" as an acting entity. To suggest that this usage alone charged the word with nationalist connotations is akin to saying that Nazi use of the word "the state" changed it to a fascist concept. In any case, it is unreasonable to believe that Kim would have used the word in 1955 had it indeed been so redolent of forces hostile to communism. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the obvious and logical explanation must be chosen: Kim used the word *juche* in 1955 according to the common Marxist usage that was defined in his own party's publications *even after the speech*.

What are we doing? We are engaged in our Korean revolution, not some other country's revolution.³⁴

Foreigners often interpret those last sentences as if they constituted a bold declaration of nationalism.³⁵ True, were Kim addressing Soviet diplomats, the above might be construable in nationalist terms. But the same could be said of an innocuous remark like, "P'yöngyang is in Korea, not Russia." Kim is here addressing his own party propagandists on the *bloc-wide* bugbears of a) dogmatism, i.e. of applying Marxism-Leninism without due consideration of actual conditions, and b) formalism, i.e. of aping forms instead of substance. Seen in this context, the sentence is much less provocative. Kim goes on:

Precisely this, the Korean revolution, is *the subject* of our ideological work. Therefore, all ideological work without exception must be subjugated to the interests of the Korean revolution.³⁶

The first sentence makes clear that Kim does not understand *juche* to mean "self-reliance" or "putting Korea first"; translating the word in such a way results in gibberish. The second sentence should not be misinterpreted either. Kim is not, as we shall see, warning party members against serving another country's interests. His criticism is directed at an absurd sovietophilia and national self-denigration that do not serve Soviet interests in the least. Kim is simply urging his audience to refrain from work that does not suit domestic conditions.

In the sense that the Korean revolution is an entity acting on ideological work, it is certainly *a subject* in the Marxist sense of an agent. But at this point Kim seems to remember having just said there was no *subject* in ideological work. Does this mean there was no revolution? Hurrying to explain himself, he says:

Of course, to say there is no *subject* in our ideological work does not mean that we haven't had a revolution, or that some passer-by did the work of revolution for us. But I mean that the absence of *a subject* in ideological work leads to dogmatic and formalistic errors, doing much harm to our revolutionary cause.³⁷

Our guerilla fighter appears out of his depth in these abstractions. What has he said so far? First he claimed there is no *subject* in ideological work. Then he

³⁴ "Sasang saöp esö," 560–561.

³⁵ Yang, "North Korean Education," 130.

³⁶ "Sasang saöp esö," 561.

³⁷ Ibid.

corrected himself, saying it would be misleading to talk thus.³⁸ Then he identified *the subject* as the Korean revolution. Then he again claimed that there is no *subject*, only to ask, for the second time, not to be taken literally. Finally he claimed that the absence of *a subject* is leading to errors! This incoherence should not induce us to read more into the term *subject* than he intends. What Kim is struggling to say is that *the subject*—the Korean revolution, as distinct from other revolutions—has not established itself clearly in ideological work. From this point on, the speech becomes easier to understand.

To make a revolution in Korea we must know Korean history, we must know Korean geography, and we must know the customs of the Korean masses. Only then can we educate our masses in a way most suited to them, and instill in them an ardent love for their native soil and their fatherland.... This is not the first time we have had to raise this question. As far back as the autumn of 1945... we emphasized that the history of our nation's struggle should be studied and its fine traditions inherited.³⁹

Kim then gives examples of the problem of “extolling only foreign things, while slighting our own”: the negation of the achievements of colonial Korea's proletarian fiction, the failure to commemorate events in the anti-Japanese struggle, the tendency of schools to neglect Korean history; the presence in classrooms of portraits not of Koreans but of Russian writers, and the new fashion for putting tables of contents in the back of booklets, Soviet-style.⁴⁰ “The result of this forgetting of *the subject*,” Kim said, “is that much harm has been done to party work.”⁴¹ For him, then, these errors arose because cadres forgot that they were working in the context of a revolution that must act on the *Korean* masses. Nowhere does Kim imply that the USSR has anything to do with these errors, nor does he imply that they reflect an improper subservience to Moscow.

Reminding his listeners of the role played by guerilla veterans in the Korean War, Kim again demands that party members be educated more deeply in the party's own history and in “our own, Korean things.”⁴² “Certainly,” he goes on to say, “the form of our state power should correspond to our specific national conditions.” This may sound as if Kim is going to move from propaganda to

³⁸ The English version tries to smooth out the contradiction between the two sentences by mistranslating the unequivocal “chuch'e ka ömnün kös i” as a vague “lack of *Juche*.” “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism,” *Selected Works*, 1:315.

³⁹ “Sasang saöp esö,” 561.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 562–565.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 565.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 566.

more fundamental issues of the government as a whole, but that turns out not to be the case.

Some comrades working in the propaganda department of the party tried to mechanically copy from the Soviet Union in all their work. The reason is that they had no intention to study our realities and lacked the true Marxist-Leninist spirit of educating people in our own merits and in the traditions of our revolution. Many comrades swallow Marxism-Leninism undigested, instead of assimilating and mastering it.⁴³

The excerpt above effectively summarizes the *juche* half of the speech. Kim continues:

True, we should do our best to learn from the progressive achievements of other countries. But we should not forget to develop fine things of our own while absorbing the advanced culture of foreign countries. Otherwise our people will lose faith in their own ability and become effete people who only try to copy from others.⁴⁴

There follows a dig at the Soviet-Korean and Yenan factions for squabbling about whether to do things “Soviet-style” or “Chinese-style.” This is nonsense, Kim says. One should learn both Soviet and Chinese methods, “and, on this basis, work out a method of political work suitable to our actual conditions”:

There can be no principle that everything can only be done absolutely “Soviet style”... Isn’t it time that we created our style? The point is that we should not mechanically copy Soviet forms and methods, but should learn Soviet experience in struggle and the Marxist-Leninist truth. So, while ceaselessly learning from the Soviet Union, we must put stress not on the forms but on the essence of Soviet experience.⁴⁵

The words “our style” reflect the Korean original (*uri sik*) better than the English words “our own way,” which, though popular with translators,⁴⁶ carry inappropriately strong connotations of a separate path or road. Kim makes clear what he means by citing the North Korean party organ’s word-for-word imitation of *Pravda* headlines, a thoroughly trivial example that might have elicited a chuckle

⁴³ Ibid., 568.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 568–9.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 569–570.

⁴⁶ See for example Paige and Lee, “The Post-War Politics of Communist Korea,” 24.

even from a Soviet observer.⁴⁷

In the following passage, however, it seems at least implied that the DPRK may at times need to deviate from the Soviet line:

Comrade Pak Yŏngbin [head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department], upon returning from the Soviet Union, said that since the Soviet Union was following the line of easing international tension we, too, had to drop our slogan against US imperialism.... [But] it is utterly foolish to think that the struggle of our people against the US imperialists conflicts with the efforts of the Soviet people to ease international tension. Our people's condemnation and struggle against the aggressive policy of the US imperialists towards Korea are not contradictory but conducive to the struggle of the world's people for lessening international tension and for defending peace. At the same time, the struggle of the peace-loving people the world over, including the Soviet people, to ease tension creates more favorable conditions for our people's anti-imperialist struggle.⁴⁸

And yet, Kim does not speak of ignoring Soviet requests or advice, but rather of ignoring a discredited cadre's interpretation of Soviet developments. Significantly, Pak's error is attributed not to misplaced loyalty but to stupidity. Kim seems confident, and rightly so, that what he is saying implies no lack of solidarity with the USSR. Note also that Kim is discussing the use of anti-American rhetoric in the propaganda sector, not hinting at differences in diplomatic policy. After his description of all these errors Kim begins to go back over the same ground:

[W]e should firmly adhere to Marxist-Leninist principles, applying them in a creative manner to the specific conditions of our country and national traits. Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma, it... can display its indestructible vitality only when it is applied creatively to the specific conditions of each country...⁴⁹

I repeat: this talk of applying Marxism-Leninism "creatively" was common throughout the Soviet bloc at the time.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ "Sasang saõp esõ," 570.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 567.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 570.

⁵⁰ Note the entries on "dogmatism" (*kyõjojũn*) and "creative Marxism" (*ch'angjojõk marũkũsjũm*) in a Soviet political dictionary (1955) translated into Korean. *Ch'õrhak sosajõn*, P'yõngyang, 1956.

In the rest of the *juche* half of the speech, Kim asks that his remarks be understood in the context of socialist internationalism. A little earlier in the speech he had remarked:

Hearing us emphasize the necessity of clearly establishing *the subject*, some might take it simply and get the wrong idea that we don't need to learn from foreign countries. But that would be quite wrong. We must learn from all the socialist countries, above all, from the Soviet Union.⁵¹

He goes on to say:

To love Korea is just as good as to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, and to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp means loving Korea. These constitute a complete whole, for the great cause of the working class has no frontiers... It would be wrong to advocate patriotism alone and neglect internationalist solidarity. For the victory of the Korean revolution... we should strengthen our bond with the Soviet people, our liberator and benefactor... This is our sacred internationalist duty.... A true patriot is an internationalist and vice versa.⁵²

Kim then quotes the Soviet Army commander he had quoted at greater length in April 1955 (and once in the 1940s too): "Koreans must make themselves the creators of their own happiness."⁵³ Kim warns that if the party fails to heed this advice, "we will lose the masses."⁵⁴ With that, the *juche* half of the speech is over. What follows is a brief complaint about the overuse of hyperbole in propaganda work, and then a longer discussion of preparations for reunification. The speech makes no more mention of dogmatism, formalism or *juche*.

THE JUCHE SPEECH IS NOT NATIONALIST

Nationalism (as opposed to patriotism) is commonly understood to mean either the doctrine that one's nation is superior to any other or the doctrine that a nation should act independently. By these definitions the December 1955 speech is plainly *not* nationalist. True, it is patriotic in the sense that Kim manifests pride in

⁵¹ "Sasang saõp esõ," 569.

⁵² Ibid., 571.

⁵³ Ibid., 572.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

his country's traditions. But he also eulogizes the USSR as Korea's "liberator and benefactor" and equates loving it with loving Korea; any South Korean politician today who talked like that about another country would be castigated for flunkeyism. As we have seen, Kim even invokes the Marxist slogan—the antithesis of nationalism—that the cause of the working class "has no frontiers." As for Kim's criticism of the propaganda sector for ignoring Korea's "own" things: even to a foreigner it seems completely rational, the common-sense critique of a sovietophilia that threatens to erode support for the party.

But in interpreting the *juche* speech as nationalist, foreigners seem to be applying not so much their own standards, but what they assume to have been the standards of Moscow at that time. They believe, in other words, that countries in the East Bloc were expected to suppress all patriotism and pride in their own cultures. This assumption is incorrect. In the 1920s Lenin had called on his party to preserve what was valuable in pre-revolutionary cultural traditions, and Stalin's ideologues had emphasized the need for popular spirit (*narodnost*) when applying Marxism-Leninism to a given cultural sphere. Parties were expected to exploit national traditions to make propaganda effective.⁵⁵ Even more leeway was given from 1953 to 1957; according to Donald S. Zagoria, the Soviets acknowledged "that all bloc countries must find a way to socialism in accordance with their own peculiar and historical circumstances.... [T]he peculiar domestic problems of each country were taken into consideration."⁵⁶ Zagoria writes that the primary Soviet need was not for imitation but for "the maintenance of Russia's dominating position in the world"—a position that Kim's speech never calls into question. In short, Kim was hardly swimming against the Soviet current in encouraging his party propagandists to learn more about their "own" things. This was not nationalism but what scholars refer to in the Polish context as domesticism.⁵⁷

Besides, Moscow *wanted* vassal states to play up their own revolutionary traditions. This was better than leaving the impression that communism had been imposed on unwilling countries, and this was why Kim Il Sung, and not a Soviet-Korean, had been installed in the first place. Szalontai points out that even after Stalin's death, "the new Soviet leaders preferred Kim to the Soviet-Koreans, since continued favoring of 'Muscovites' might breed nationalist resentment."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ The need to inherit tradition and the need for popular spirit both played an important role in the Stalinist aesthetic of socialist realism. See Hans Günther, *Die Verstaatlichung der Literatur*, 18–54.

⁵⁶ Donald S. Zagoria, "Some Comparisons Between the Russian and Chinese Models," in *Communist Strategies in Asia*, 11–12.

⁵⁷ See Brzezinski's *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, New York, 1967.

⁵⁸ Szalontai, 90.

Rather than try to stamp out nationalism in its allies, the USSR sought to control and exploit it. We know that from 1951 on, Moscow *encouraged* the regime in East Berlin to use nationalist propaganda.

Moscow spurred the Germans on to “national,” to “patriotic action” of their own. Nothing seemed more reliable to Stalin than German national consciousness... This assumption led to a political program. It was premised on the notion of a factually unbroken continuation of the national identity that had developed up to 1945, and implied a sense of values in which “*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*” had priority. There are several indications that from the second half of 1951 the Soviet Union exerted pressure to intensify the “national” struggle. Shortly after expressing skepticism on this matter, Politburo members Hermann Matern and Fred Oelssner diagnosed on the part of many comrades a “lack of national consciousness” and of “a sense of responsibility to the nation.”⁵⁹

The reason for this strategy was a) to insulate East Germany from the American influences seeping in from West Germany, and b) to appeal more effectively to the West German masses. Similar considerations may well have disposed the Soviets to want patriotic (though not xenophobic) tones sounded in North Korea too.

THE JUCHE SPEECH DOES NOT SIGNAL THE ADVENT OF A NEW IDEOLOGY

According to the working definition contained in the American book *Ideologies and Modern Politics* (1971), an ideology is comprehensive in scope, a “system of ideas” or a “belief system that explains and justifies a preferred order for society, either existing or supposed, and offers a strategy ... for its attainment.”⁶⁰ One can argue with that definition, but most would agree that comprehensiveness of scope is a vital criterion in distinguishing an ideology from a plank or program.

But the December 1955 speech does not even adumbrate or signal the advent of a new ideology. Nowhere in it does Kim suggest changing, omitting or supplementing any part of Marxism-Leninism. Rather, he emphasizes that one

⁵⁹ Michael Lemke, “Nationalismus und Patriotismus in der frühen DDR,” *Politik und Zeitgeschehen*, B50, 2000.

⁶⁰ Christenson, *Ideologies and Modern Politics*, 6.

should grasp the essence of its principles and apply them with a view to actual conditions—Korean conditions—instead of learning it as a *dogma* and simply aping Soviet *forms*. This does not even constitute the introduction of an original program; for one thing, it was a faithful application of the Soviet notion of “creative Marxism,” for another, Kim had (as we have seen) already made this point in April 1955. Besides, Kim makes clear in the December speech—not least by choosing such a restricted forum—that the problem at issue is mainly one for the propaganda sector, and thus not of immediate import for other activities.

THE AFTERMATH: 1955–1965

Lankov notes that the speech was not published right away.⁶¹ Indeed, I can find no record of a published version existing before 1960. This is not to say that the Kim speech went unnoticed; this would have been unthinkable in such a fervent personality cult, and besides, the issue at hand was a topical one throughout the communist bloc. The need to eliminate formalism and dogmatism was thus sporadically mentioned in newspaper and journal articles in subsequent years. The word *juche* was sometimes used in this context, sometimes not, but always in the same sense as in the speech. In January 1956, for example, the party’s daily organ reported on a municipal party meeting devoted to “eliminating formalist and dogmatist shortcomings,” and in July 1956 an editorial in the journal *Ryōksa kwahak* [Historical science] urged historians to value the “factor of the subject (*juche*)” in Korean history: in other words, to view the Korean revolution as the outcome of national developments that had been encouraged by the Russian Revolution—and not as the direct product of the Russian Revolution.⁶² (Again, this was the kind of regime-legitimizing patriotism the Soviets themselves tried to encourage.) But there was no consistent attention or media campaign of the kind that invariably followed Kim’s programmatic speeches; still less was there any sign of the word *juche* itself being re-defined as a new slogan, let alone as the name for a new ideology. As I have said, the concise dictionary published in December 1956 gives the standard materialist definition of “subject.”⁶³ In 1959 the first book-length history of North Korean literature appeared, but although it consistently exaggerates the effect of Kim’s discourse on cultural work, it makes

⁶¹ Lankov, 41.

⁶² The *Rodong sinmun* article is discussed in Lankov, 41. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for quoting to me the relevant sections from the *Ryōksa kwahak* article of July 1956.

⁶³ *Chosŏnŏ sosajŏn*, P’yōngyang, 1956.

no mention of the *juče* speech.⁶⁴ Even more significant—indeed, perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence that the *juče* speech was not the epochal event it was later cracked up to be: a dictionary of political terms published in 1959 does not mention *juče*.⁶⁵

In February 1960, at a Central Committee meeting, Kim at last mentioned the term again, but only in passing, saying that “great advances” had been made “in eradicating dogmatism and formalism and establishing *the subject (juče)*.” Party members, he claimed, had begun proceeding “in conformity with... the specific conditions of our country.”⁶⁶ At a party congress in September 1961 he spoke of *juče* again, but even more briefly: The party, he said, had continued its struggle to overcome dogmatism and had “thereby established *the subject (juče)* more strongly in all fields of work.”⁶⁷ This is one lone mention in a speech running to 140 pages.⁶⁸ At a Central Committee conference in March 1962, Kim talked of the need for self-reliance as a bulwark against “the Western way of life” and “revisionism.”⁶⁹ Near the end he said:

In order to instill the spirit of self-reliance in the party members and the working people, there must be an unrelenting, resolute struggle to oppose lackeyism and dogmatism and to establish the subject (*juče*).⁷⁰

Establishing the subject or *juče* is now seen as a pre-requisite for instilling the spirit of self-reliance, but Kim still shows no sign of wanting to change the meaning of the term itself. And this is, again, just one mention in a very long speech.

Eight months later, in November 1962, a new North Korean dictionary appeared with the following definition of *juče*:

Juče (主體) 1) the main part of an entity 2) the ideological viewpoint and work attitude of keeping one’s own conviction, one appropriate to the task or actual situation, in the perception and evaluation of a thing or phenomenon and in all activities. *In our party’s ideological work, what is the*

⁶⁴ *Chosŏn munhak t’ongsa*, vol. 2, P’yŏngyang, 1959.

⁶⁵ *Taejung chŏngchi yongŏ sajŏn*, P’yŏngyang, 1959.

⁶⁶ “Kangsŏgun tangsaŏpchido esŏ ŏdŏn kyohun e taehayŏ,” *Kim Ilsŏng chŏjak sŏnjip*, 2:509.

⁶⁷ “Chosŏn rodongdang che 4 ch’a taehoe esŏ han chungang wiwŏnhoe saŏp ch’onghwa pogo,” *Kim Ilsŏng chŏjak sŏnjip*, 3:154.

⁶⁸ In Kim’s *Selected Works* it runs over 140 pages in length.

⁶⁹ “Tang chojik saŏp kwa sasangsaŏp ŏl kaesŏn kanghwa halte taehayŏ,” *Kim Ilsŏng chŏjak sŏnjip*, 3:321–330.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:330.

_____? *What are we doing? We are not engaged in the revolution of another country but in our own revolution. Precisely the Korean revolution is the _____ of our party's ideological work.* (Kim Il Sung)⁷¹

The verbosity of this definition does not reflect a growth in the term's importance so much as the growth of the Kim cult; the editors of this dictionary use sentences from his speeches to illustrate the meanings of numerous words. But the definition of *juče* has changed perceptibly since 1956. No longer the standard materialist *subject*, it is now defined in terms of how *the subject* should *behave*. Alas, this definition is at odds with the quotations used to illustrate it, “the Korean revolution” being neither a work attitude nor a viewpoint. We can see here the term being cut from its semantic moorings and floating off. In recognition of this I will not translate the word in sources published after November 1962, but instead transliterate it as *juče*—though I emphasize that it was still a few years before it was understood in the sense we know today.

Significantly, the first lengthy discussion of *juče* after 1955 came not in a speech by Kim Il Sung, but in a party organ editorial published on December 19, 1962. Written to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Fifth All Party Congress (December 15–18, 1952), the editorial claimed that one of the basic ideas (*ķibon sasang ũi hana*) put forth at that congress had been the need to “eliminate formalism and dogmatism and establish *juče*.”⁷² The editorial goes on to say, “The idea (*sasang*) of *juče* is a fundamental principle that our party adheres to firmly in its activities.” This idea is defined yet again as the need to reject dogmatism and formalism and apply Marxism-Leninism according to Korean conditions—the better to serve world communism. Mention is then made of Kim’s “historic speech” of December 1955, and how it had constituted “a powerful guide” in the struggle against dogmatism. The speech is not quoted, however, nor is it made clear what (if anything) it had added to a party line that was allegedly already in place. The most interesting part of the editorial is this:

In the construction of socialism, the line of relying firmly on the principle of self-reliance (*ķa'ryōķ kaengsaeng*) and fortifying the foundation of an independent national economy is the wisest possible course that reflects our party's idea of *juče*. . . . To implement the party's *juče* idea (*ķhuch'e sasang*) more thoroughly in real life we must arm ourselves strongly with party

⁷¹ *Chosōnmal sajōn*, 1962, p. 2948.

⁷² “1952 nyōn tang chungang wiwōnhoe ķe 5 ķh'a ķhōnwōnhoe ũi ryōksajōķ ũiũi,” *Rodong sinmun*, December 19, 1962. The Korean word *sasang* can also mean “ideology,” but since the congress would hardly have advocated various basic ideologies, the sense of “idea” is clearly meant here.

policies that creatively apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism to our country's reality.⁷³

Juche is still recognizable as the antipode to dogmatism and formalism. All the same, we can see the notion of self-reliance being brought into direct contact with it. The most significant aspect of the article is its almost incantatory repetition of the word *juche*, and the importance ascribed to establishing it in all activities and not just propaganda work. This is something new. North Koreans reading the newspaper article in 1962 must have realized they would be hearing a lot about *juche* in the years to come.

The editorial also indicates that inside the party, the term *juche* may have had more autarkical connotations than are evident from Kim's own speeches. The same impression is given by the report of an East German diplomat who in March 1961 quoted a high-ranking cadre as having declared at a party gathering, "We as Korean comrades have always fought the battle against dogmatism, we have always pursued our own standpoint against that of others."⁷⁴ Since establishing *juche* was commonly equated with fighting dogmatism, this may indicate that the party had re-defined "establishing *juche*" well before Kim got around to doing so. The Workers' Party also launched a campaign against international marriages, calling them "a crime against the Korean race." (The East German ambassador called the rhetoric "Goebbelsian.")⁷⁵ It is impossible to trace such racism back to the 1955 *juche* speech or any of Kim's speeches. This is not to say that Kim did not know and approve of what was going on; he could well have instructed his "brain trust" ("a political Gestapo," a Soviet diplomat called it)⁷⁶ to whip up the xenophobia in the first place. But he was too savvy to allow such tones into his official discourse.

It was on a trip to Indonesia in April 1965, a decade after his first mention of *juche* in April 1955, that Kim finally said:

By the establishment of *juche* we mean holding to the principle of solving for oneself all the problems of the revolution and construction in conformity with the actual conditions in one's country, and mainly by one's own efforts.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Schäfer, 40.

⁷⁵ Szalontai, 98.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ "Chosŏn minjujuŭi inmin konghwaguk esŏ ūi sahoejuŭi kŏnsŏl kwa Namchosŏn hyŏngmyŏng e taehayŏ," *Kim Il-sŏng chŏjak sŏnjip*, 4:219.

This conforms to the use of the term *juče* in the newspaper article of 1962: “establishing *juče*” is considered vital for all aspects of revolution, and the element of self-reliance is *sine qua non*. (This still does not justify translating *juče* as “self-reliance”.) Kim goes on:

While resolutely protecting the purity of Marxism-Leninism against revisionism, our party has made every effort to establish *juče* in opposition to dogmatism and flunkeyism. *Juče* in ideology, independence in politics, self-reliance in economy and self-protection in national defence—this is the stand our party consistently adheres to....⁷⁸[During the war] we came to realize gradually that the revisionist trend infiltrates through the medium of dogmatism.⁷⁹

By making critical mention of both Soviet-style “revisionism” (as the Chinese reviled it) and Chinese-style “dogmatism” (as the Soviets reviled it), Kim is making clear his new equidistance from Beijing and Moscow. He goes on to call 1955 a “turning point” when the party—not he himself, mind—set a “definite policy” of “establishing *juče*” in reaction to the spread of “revisionism.” (In fact Kim had not mentioned revisionism in 1955.)⁸⁰ He goes on to describe the fruits of this policy:

As a result of the establishment of *juče*, great strides have been made in science and technology, qualitative changes have taken place in education and the upbringing of cadres, and a new socialist nationalist culture...has come to bloom in our country...⁸¹

This is still tame stuff, far from the level of ethnocentricity already rampant in the country’s official culture. But Kim had plainly realized what a good slogan he had in *juče*. His party could fill the word with connotations that Kim could then elicit simply by invoking the word, enabling him to assume full leadership of the nationalist frenzy while leaving the dirty work to others. At the same time, the word’s provenance would soothe Kim’s allies. (The Chinese could be expected, for a while at least, to equate *juče* with *ǰhuti*, their own translation of *subject*, which is written with identical ideograms.) And to a postmodern West increasingly inclined to mistake vagueness for profundity, *juče* could pose as a uniquely

⁷⁸ “Chosŏn minjujuŭi inmin konghwaguk esŏ ŭi sahoejuŭi kŏnsŏl,” 220.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

Korean contribution to left-wing thought, an anti-hegemonic concept with universal applicability.

Juche Thought was touted as a slogan by the party newspaper on September 30, 1965,⁸² but it was not inflated into book-length forms until the 1970s. As I have said, it is a hodgepodge of Marxist and humanist truisms. (Observers who persist in conflating it with nationalism should note that the entry for Juche Thought in the official encyclopedia of 2000 does not even mention Korea.)⁸³ The North Koreans are proud that their Leader created this world-renowned ideology, but its content plays little role in their lives. It is amusing to read of foreigners journeying to P'yŏngyang to learn more about the sublimely internationalist Juche idea, only to be browbeaten by party members raised on the country's true ideology of ethnocentric nationalism.⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

If the 1955 speech really was as important as so many outside scholars claim, why did the official media evince so little interest in it for so long? Why did Kim himself say so little about *juche* until a decade later? There can be no logical explanation. It is sometimes claimed that the *juche* ideology was “gradually” developed from 1955 on. For all we know, it may indeed have featured prominently in rank-and-file party propaganda, but there is no evidence to prove this. In the official media, at least, it was not a common term until 1965—when suddenly it was everywhere, a concept touted as central to Kim Il Sung's thought and all aspects of North Korean politics.

Ironically, the first to make extravagant claims for the 1955 speech were not the North Koreans themselves. An American book entitled *North Korea Today* (1963) contains an article on the country's education by Key P. Yang and Chang-Boh Chee, who write, “In 1955 Kim Il-song delivered his now famous speech positing his thesis of *Juche* (national individuality).”⁸⁵ In the same book, Glenn D. Paige and Dong Jun Lee translate *juche* as “independence.”⁸⁶ As we have seen, no North Korean source and none of Kim's speeches up to that point had posited

⁸² “Tang changgŏn 20 chu'nyŏn ūl majūmyŏ: Chosŏn hyŏngmyŏng kwa uri tang ūi chuch'e sasang.” *Rodong sinmun*, September 30, 1965.

⁸³ *Chosŏn taebaekkeva sajŏn*, 19:342-343, 2000.

⁸⁴ Essential reading in this context is Alfred Pfabigan's *Schlaftlos in Pjŏngjang*, Vienna, 1986.

⁸⁵ “North Korean Educational System: 1945 to Present,” 129–130.

⁸⁶ “The Post-War Politics of Communist Korea,” 24.

juche as a thesis, nor used it in the sense of “national individuality” or “independence.” Nor had any North Korean to my knowledge transliterated the word with a capital J in an English text. (That would come later, in the official *Selected Works* of 1965.) The North Koreans have always been avid readers of their own press overseas. In exaggerating the originality, significance and nationalist tenor of the term *juche*, the outside world may well have helped propel it to prominence inside North Korea in 1965. And when Juche Thought appeared in the 1970s as a lavishly-bound pseudo-ideology, its main claim to fame was that foreigners took *juche* seriously as a new and original idea—as indeed they did!

In closing, let us review the facts about the *juche* speech of December 28, 1955:

- 1) The speech did not introduce (nor mark the first North Korean revival of) the term *juche*. This was the standard translation for “a/the subject” in the materialist or Marxist sense of an agent, and Kim had already used it in April 1955, albeit in an adjectival form.
- 2) The *juche* speech did not introduce patriotism to North Korea’s official discourse; this had featured in Kim’s rhetoric as far back as the 1940’s.
- 3) The speech did not expound nationalism or self-reliance. On the contrary, it stressed internationalism and the need to learn from and love the “great” Soviet Union. The speech was *less* nationalistic than much of the propaganda produced during the Korean War.
- 4) The speech neither introduced nor adumbrated any new theory. It called for the “creative” application of Marxism-Leninism to Korean conditions, and was thus in line with a bloc-wide campaign for “creative Marxism”—and with Moscow’s tolerance of domesticism.
- 5) The speech did not criticize the USSR, nor did it imply that any foreign power was meddling in the DPRK’s affairs. It castigated Soviet-Koreans not for answering to Moscow, but for failing to grasp the true essence of the Soviet experience.
- 6) From 1956 to 1961 Kim Il Sung referred to *juche* a) very rarely b) in passing and c) in the standard Marxist sense in which he had used the word in 1955.
- 7) It is possible that even before the mid-1960s the word *juche* was bandied about in the unpublicized discourse of the *de facto* ideology of ethnocentric nationalism. But a distinction must be drawn between such use of *juche*—which may have predated the 1955 speech anyway—and use of the term in the official discourse, i.e. in Kim’s speeches and in the soon-to-come

pro forma ideology of Juche Thought. The latter is hardly more compatible with the *de facto* ideology than Marxism-Leninism had been.

Why did Kim give the speech? Victory dances over the reputations of disgraced cadres (in this case the Soviet-Koreans) were something of a tradition in North Korea. Kim may also have wanted to put an end to infighting in the propaganda sector by expressing public support for Han Sorya, Yi Kiyŏng, and other writers who had been loyal to him since the 1940s.⁸⁷ But perhaps the following excerpt, which I have so far refrained from quoting, reflects a more important reason for the speech.

The Kwangju Student Incident ... was a mass struggle in which tens of thousands of Korean youths and students rose against Japanese imperialism.... We should have given wide publicity to this incident and educated the youth and students in the valorous fighting spirit displayed by their forerunners. Our propaganda workers have failed to do so. But Syngman Rhee has been propagandizing this movement in his favor. This made it look like Communists disregard national traditions. What a dangerous thing this is! In this way we cannot win over the South Korean youth.⁸⁸

This point also ties in with the speech's second half, in which Kim calls on his audience to conduct "effective political work directed towards the South."⁸⁹ Kim says further in that latter half, "When a situation is created for free political activities in North and South Korea, whoever wins more people will win the day."⁹⁰ Szalontai has pointed out that Kim's keen sensitivity to South Korean opinion influenced domestic policy in the North.⁹¹ This could explain why Kim wanted to go on official record as opposing the sillier excesses of sovietophilia.

But to discuss Kim's motivations is to engage in speculation. Suffice to say, in closing, that the *juche* speech on December 28, 1955 was no more than what Kim introduced it as, namely "a few opinions" on shortcomings in the propaganda sector; that it did not espouse nationalism—let alone self-reliance—but a pro-Soviet "domesticism" of the kind tolerated, sometimes even encouraged by Moscow; and that the shift from the *pro forma* ideology of Marxism-Leninism to the *pro forma* ideology of Juche Thought did not begin until much later. And the *de*

⁸⁷ Myers, *Han Sorya and North Korean Literature*, 93.

⁸⁸ "Sasang saöp esö," 562.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 573.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 578.

⁹¹ Szalontai, 88.

facto ideology of ethnocentric nationalism? That had never had much to do with Kim's speeches in any case.

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