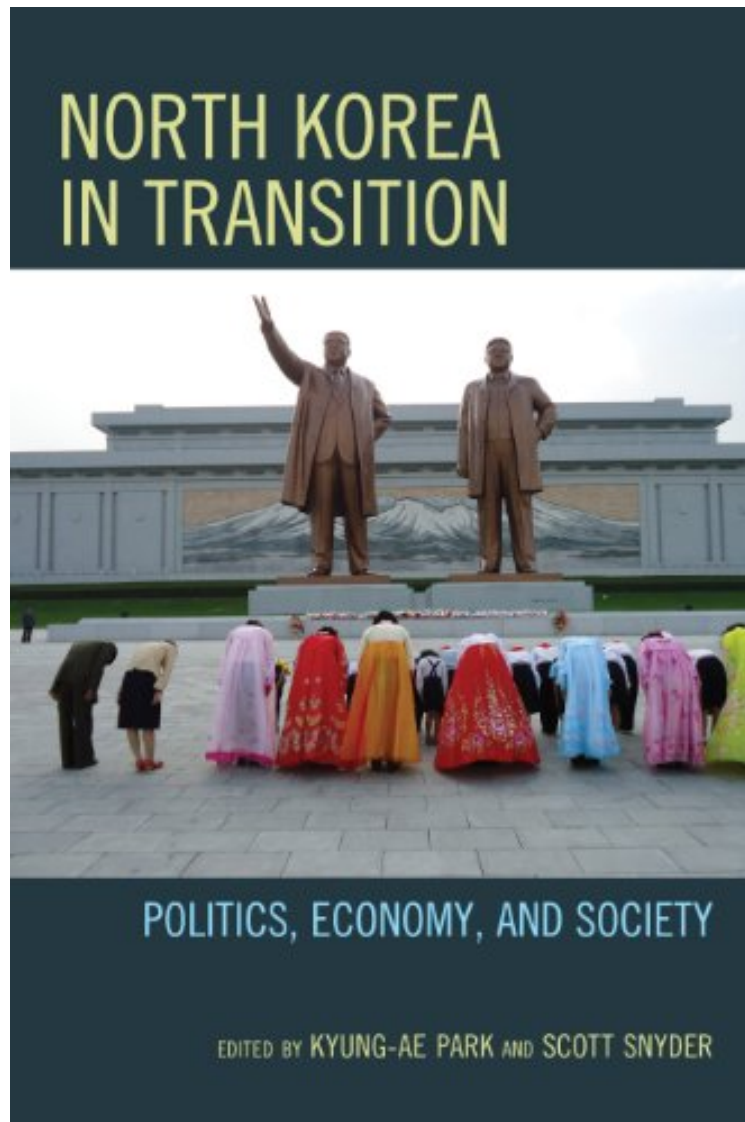


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North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society

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From Rowman Littlefield Publishers : North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for everyone
By John Martin
North Korea in Transition is a series of articles by noted scholars on the current situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It contains the latest up-to-date information about the country and its prospects for the future. It covers four basic topics: politics, the economy, society and foreign policy. The authors represent different organizations including universities and institutes/research centers. For the most part they are not government officials. The best articles in my

view are by Professor Bruce Cumings who is chair of the history department at the University of Chicago and points out that American foreign policy towards the DPRK is based on the conservative perspective that the country is evil and will collapse any day now. This policy remains the same no matter if the administration is Democratic or Republican. Furthermore this policy has clearly failed. The article by Professor Andrei Lankov of Kookmin University in Seoul, South Korea on the emerging merchant/entrepreneurial class in the DPRK is also interesting. The country has clearly moved away from the pure socialist economic model of the Communist era toward a mixed economy and there is no turning back. Also the country is opening up to the outside world, gradually but surely as the Internet and other outside influences make their presence known. Another important topic that the book covers is the changing relationships between the DPRK and various other countries, especially the former Soviet Union/Russia, China, South Korea and the United States. The collapse of the USSR which had been the DPRK's primary supporter led to a crisis in the country. Now the DPRK is largely, but not exclusively, dependent on China but that relationship has its difficulties as well. What is especially clear in this book is the rationale behind this often misunderstood country. The history, development and changes that have occurred since the Kims began their rule are delineated and the logic behind them is obvious. While it is difficult to predict where the country will go under the leadership of Kim Jong Un it is clear that the transition so far has been relatively smooth. The articles are all well written and suitable for a lay audience. Anyone who is concerned about world affairs will benefit from reading this book

Following the death of Kim Jong Il, North Korea has entered a period of profound transformation laden with uncertainty. This authoritative book brings together the world's leading North Korea experts to analyze both the challenges and prospects the country is facing. Drawing on the contributors' expertise across a range of disciplines, the book examines North Korea's political, economic, social, and foreign policy concerns. Considering the implications for Pyongyang's transition, it focuses especially on the transformation of ideology, the Workers' Party of Korea, the military, effects of the Arab Spring, the emerging merchant class, cultural infiltration from the South, Western aid, and global economic integration. The contributors also assess the impact of North Korea's new policies on China, South Korea, the United States, and the rest of the world. Comprehensive and deeply knowledgeable, their analysis is especially crucial given the power consolidation efforts of the new leadership underway in Pyongyang and the implications for both domestic and international politics. Contributions by: Nicholas Anderson, Charles Armstrong, Bradley Babson, Victor Cha, Bruce Cumings, Nicholas Eberstadt, Ken Gause, David Kang, Andrei Lankov, Woo Young Lee, Liu Ming, Haksoo Paik, Kyung-Ae Park, Terence Roehrig, Jungmin Seo, and Scott Snyder.

Readers . . . will find rich food for thought on the dynamics between political stability and socioeconomic changes in the country. (Global Asia) This useful book is a state-of-the-art treatment of North Korea for non-academics and is likely to be read widely in think-tank and policy circles. Its authors include some of the finest analysts of North Korea in English. Laymen will find the book appealing, because the essays, while well-informed, do not overwhelm with jargon. . . . The book also ranges widely, covering issues like ideology, economic (mal)adaptation, the monarchy, and foreign relations. All these traits make it a solid introduction to the North Korea tangle. . . . The essays are rich, and scholars will also find new ideas and themes that merit sustained social scientific analysis. (Pacific Affairs) [T]hese authors encourage readers to see and be prepared to deal with the regime in Pyongyang as it is and as it is becoming instead of dismissing it as a crazy, ruthless, helpless and isolated government. The uncomfortable reality, as either explicitly or implicitly acknowledged by these authors, is that the North Korean regime is unlikely to voluntarily make any dramatic changes in the foreseeable future or 'wither away' without having any grave internal and external repercussions. Their converging and underlying message, therefore, is that one needs to take North Korea seriously so as to better understand both the challenges and opportunities facing the country. . . . Released in the critical new era, defined by Pyongyang's third generation of hereditary power succession laden with greater uncertainty amidst the inevitable shifts in North Korea's politics, economy, foreign relations, and even society and culture, [this volume] presents cogent and authoritative analyses, through which any sensible reader could develop a valuable guideline to understanding North Korea's past and present more comprehensively as well as to better preparing for the unknown future. (Journal of Contemporary Asia) This book meets a pressing need for wide-ranging, timely coverage of North Korea. It offers diverse, sometimes clashing views, especially over the future of the regime. Many chapters cover areas neglected elsewhere, deepening the debate. Others offer strong opinions, trying to steer the debate. Sensibly, the concluding chapter by the two editors draws the arguments together, leaving the reader with a clear sense of the options that lie ahead. (Gilbert Rozman, Princeton University) An important work on the future of North Korea by an outstanding array of practitioners and academic experts. As the Pyongyang regime attempts to consolidate rule under the newest 'Dear Leader,' it will continue to defy simplistic analysis. This book is a great advance to understanding the enigma that is North Korea. (Stephen Bosworth, Tufts University) About the Author Kyung-Ae Park holds the Korea Foundation Chair at the Institute of Asian Research of the University of British Columbia. Scott Snyder is Senior Fellow for Korea Studies and Director of the Program on U.S.-Korea Policy at the

Council on Foreign Relations.