The Advantages and Disadvantages of Juche Philosophy

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Part 13 of the series “Individualism between Moral and Virtues, Government and Religion”

In Part 12, I introduced the key principles of Juche Idea with a brief history of Korea. As promised in the article, I want to do a critical analysis of the key principles that I pointed out. At first, Juche is a man-centered philosophy in which human-beings are the basis. Human-beings are social-beings with independence, creativity and consciousness and therefore everybody can shape and reshape his own destiny – that’s Juche. One could assume that Juche emphasizes on individualism, however, although Juche is the state doctrine of the DPRK, it was never really applied in practise, and thus it is difficult to judge this (since Juche was always re-interpreted) \(^1\). We can argue, how much individualism does Juche suggest. In its theory, it must suggest total individualism, since human-beings are independent and can shape their own destiny. In practise, the idea of independence was soon transformed into political independence, making it a societal rather than an individual matter – called Chachu (자주) \(^2\). However, the word itself just means ‘independence’ or ‘sovereignty’ and the latter one is used since 1965. Instead of individual independence, the national independence or the protection of the state independence might be meant. Since the state is an abstract term and not a natural subject, we cannot speak of a man-centered philosophy anymore. The other two key principles (national self-defense and autarchy) undermine the fact that practical politics abolished the man-centered view – and even abolished the whole philosophy, if it was ever implemented. If we compare this basic construct of Juche with my philosophy – the New Constructivist Communism, we can say that the loss of individualism in Juche is very problematic, since individualism is the basis of human-beings to gain Complete Freedom \(^3\). The later-added three key principles deny access to Complete Freedom, which is very sadly, since the basic idea that every human-being should fulfill his or her individual needs and gain the ability to shape the destiny on their own is a very brilliant idea of Juche which inspired my philosophical journey, but the lack of practical implementation of this idea disappointed me. Anyways, I believe that the ground foundation of Juche could be very good. I also agree that human-beings are creative and have consciousness and that the interaction among these should be stressed. Independence (and I mean individual independence, of course) should be gained, creativity should be supported and the consciousness should be shaped.
However, while the Juche Idea Course sheds a positive light on creativity, the mentioning of creativity in Kim Il-sung’s 1955 speech “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work” seems very narrow-minded as he states: “Why does our ideological work suffer from dogmatism and formalism? And why do our propagandists and agitators fail to go deeply into matters, only embellishing the façade, and why do they merely copy and memorize foreign things, instead of working creatively? This offers us food for serious reflection. What is Juche in our Party’s ideological work? What are we doing? We are not engaged in any other country’s revolution, but precisely in the Korean revolution. This, the Korean revolution, constitutes Juche in the ideological work of our Party. Therefore, all ideological work must be subordinated to the interests of the Korean revolution. This statement sounds kind of nationalist. It is not purely nationalist however, but suggests a kind of left-wing nationalism. Unfortunately, this is a very bad basis for an ideology that is tried to be exported in foreign countries to suggest internationalism (or to stand in the internationalist movements). On the other hand, the speech was given after the Korean War and the country was destroyed completely, as well as a part of a separated nation, and focussing on Korea is highly understandable in such a situation since the government had two difficult tasks. The first task was the question how to go on now (which way shall the country go), and thus finding a state reason – which was merely difficult in Korea as we can see from historical faction fights, as well as ideological fights. The second problem was the question of unification, an extremely difficult situation under the political circumstances given after Rhee consolidated his regime in the South. In addition, Korea was a melting pot between superpowers.

However, Kim Il-sung emphasizes the “Korean revolution” and takes other revolutions just as examples and models to learn for their own revolution.

As Kim Il-sung points out, he thinks that his ideological writers do not invent enough own ideas, but copy too much “foreign ideas”, which again is a nationalist hint. I think, putting creativity in this context is not good. To be creative, one should be able to be inspired by ideas from everywhere and accept these so-called “foreign ideas” to work creatively (i.e. to work on something new used by one’s own creativity). Generations build up on knowledge, thoughts and arts of long tradition to develop on a higher stage. Therefore, I strongly disagree with Kim Il-sung’s image of creativity and his ideological course proposed in his speech. Kim Il-sung’s mood that the ideological course “suffers in many respects from dogmatism and formalism” is a clear hint on Confucianism, as I assume that many writers were still under
Confucian influence (which was quite formal) and many revolutionaries learnt Communism from the USSR (which might be the hint to “dogmatism” referring to Stalinism).

Some researchers of political science have suggested that this speech was a justification to a purge. Whether this is the case is a political and not a philosophical question and therefore left out at this point. However, it should be added to complete the historical discourse that purges were conducted between 1955-58 to consolidate the power of the ‘guerilla faction’, as a result of political mistrust and fears typical of that time (the latter two points seemingly appeared in both Koreas).

Just a few sentences later, Kim Il-sung moves back to Confucian reference, national pride (a large problem of Korea that was already mentioned in Part 12) and the scars of the Korean War, when he states: “To make revolution in Korea we must know Korean history and geography and know the customs of the Korean people. Only then is it possible to educate our people in a way that suits them and to inspire in them an ardent love for their native place and their motherland. [...] Only when our people are educated in the history of their own struggle and its traditions, can their national pride be stimulated and the broad masses be aroused to the revolutionary struggle”. The Korean revolution is not based on the economic change only, but also on the national pride, and unlike the USSR where every nation had the right to show its own pride (through their literature, festival celebrations and respect of local language and culture), Korea was mainly homogenous with only one nation, and a pride that goes back to Imperial Korea when the country was still closed, leading to the result that Kim seemingly takes up Imperial Korean thinking, rather than Marxist-Leninist societal thinking. This is a contradiction, since the Imperial reign was always labeled as ‘reactionary’. To solve this contradiction, Kim refers to his ‘revolutionary struggle’. At the same time, Kim points out that his ideological workers prohibited publishing several things in newspapers that Kim saw of revolutionary importance, which shows how insecure people were in publishing not to be in disfavor for the new system and not to be purged, so that functionaries rather tried not to publish events to be on the safe side to avoid disgrace.

At the same time, the need to please the government is strongly Confucian rooted which dominates both Koreas until today. The nationalist ignorance that arouse at that time can be seen once again when Kim Il-sung states: “Once I visited a People’s Army vacation home, where a picture of the Siberian steppe was hung. That landscape probably pleases the Russians. But the Korean people prefer the beautiful scenery of our own country”. I think that sentences like these are no more Communist and even dangerous for internationalism and building bridges among other cultures. Despite the dangerous nationalist slogans, we cannot
say that Korean politics already reached the far right at that time since many aspects of politics such as economy were still very Communist. In the first years after the Korean War, a reconstruction of the whole country had to take place since everything was destroyed. The DPRK economic plan was to push forward heavy industry, while at the same time developing light industry and agriculture should not be missed. The success of this economical line was growing the parts of industry that were most necessarily, and therefore resulted in the best efficiency. Especially to avoid foodshortages in the period after war, grain production was focussed in agriculture. The basic ground for this economical development was the political course of the three-year plan from 1954. In the Five-Year-Plan of 1957, technical reconstruction and Socialist industrialisation with the focus on food and clothes questions, as well as housing problems were faced. If the technical ground exists, then production and building measures can be taken, while at the same time providing the people with food and needs. The two plans seemed being successful and the North developed even further. Economically! But politically? Kim Il-sung stated in 1965 that within two years, the antiimperialist, anti-feudal and democratic revolution was brought to a success, and with this success of the democratic revolution, a transformation to Socialism had begun.

I have to agree on Kim Il-sung’s economic success, which indeed must have been envied in underdeveloped post-war South Korea. Strengthening his line might be one of the reasons why politics was that successful, and without establishing strong political power North Korea probably would have suffered a lot in the post-war period, since fractions were that disastrous that otherwise it remained a struggle to unify the country. We should not shed a light on him as if he was a monster-like dictator, as we know from political business, every politician in any country has his skeletons in his closet. However, in a stateless society, this problem would probably be far less. I don’t think that everybody has a good natural character, so I don’t think that human-beings are good enough to do good only and there will always be people who just think of themselves. Anyways, we can handle this problem by minimizing this factor. If politics is a share and everybody has a direct participation, then the key idea of Juche, which is freeing human-beings and making them independent, supporting their creativity and developing their consciousness will lead to the result that everybody is free to shape his or her own destiny. If there are no borders, no limitations, and everybody can try everything, working on it, to achieve something which is useful for the community, enriching oneself and making developments in which a worker is not the one who operates the machine, but who is the one who creates and uses his abilities to develop, where the peasants are not exploited by price-junking of supermarket chains, but use their knowledge and ability to
produce and cooperate, support each other in production and make a living not only for himself, but for every hungry worker, then we have reached freedom. We can reach a society where intellectuals are not regarded as the know-it-all who can do good talk but less practise, but where the research of every scientist is treasured, even if it is not a milestone for humanity, where literary work, philosophy and other important disciplines of thoughts are not regarded as something for nerds, but as something that can enrich consciousness, political life, and decision making by the people. A world where it does not matter where the worker, peasant and intellectual comes from and which religious background he has. If Juche had achieved this, the world could be much better. However, North Korea failed to implement Juche and instead emphasized on some kind of nationalism with left-wing politics which is the result of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, rather than Juche. Even in the countries where Juche was exported, the situation failed until today. In Somalia, we have a civil war since over 20 years; in Nigeria, confrontations among different groups (mostly radical Islamists versus Christians) continue, and in Zimbabwe at about 3 million people are on the run, most of them fled to South Africa. That’s a sad result for a philosophy that has such a good basis. Misconceptions seem to appear since the theoretical development of the philosophy and it’s ideological teaching in North Korean politics seems to be like day and night.

At the same time, Kim Il-sung emphasized that North Korea has to learn from foreign countries, stating that “we should develop fine things of our own while introducing advanced culture. Otherwise, our people will lose faith in their own ability and become a spineless people who only try to copy from others. Hearing us say that it is necessary to establish Juche, some comrades might take it simply and form a wrong idea that we need not learn from foreign countries. That would be quite wrong. We must learn from the good experiences of socialist countries. The important thing is to know what we are learning from. The aim we pursue in learning is to turn the advanced experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to good account in our Korean revolution” 18. This clearly shows the leftist spirit, although it is not internationalist – and especially anti-Left-wing Communism (which Lenin described to be an infantile disorder). Instead, Kim seemingly adopts the Stalinist Principle of ‘Socialism-In-One-Country’, but with his national and patriotic understanding he puts it into a Korean context, in which Korea should be the important Socialist country. Kim never left this line, as later he tried to export North Korean ideology to foreign countries, but as mentioned above a correct instruction must have failed because of the lack of practise in politics.

In a rhetorical sense, he makes an interesting point when stating “It does not matter whether you use the right hand or the left, whether you use a spoon or chopsticks at the table. No
matter how you eat, it is all the same insofar as food is put into your mouth, isn’t it?” 19, because it shows both sides, the need for plurality and diverse thinking (which is especially emphasized in the whole paragraph), but at the same time can also stop the above mentioned, since he emphasizes that everything has the same effect and therefore discussing about it is seemingly useless, which again leads to a contradiction for me, because on the one hand he is right that discussing about too many abstract details things can get lost out of reality in a certain situation, and that is what is going wrong in some Western states that there is much talk, but less action (something which is a recent issue in Germany where it was concerned that parliament speeches are too long while the effects are too small); but on the other hand politics is not like eating food, it is far more complex than deciding how to eat food and often requires deeper analysis that has to be brought up in detailed discussions.

I wished that as many people as possible could take part in a debate to state their points. Let me make an example, if we had a community, everybody would be free to debate and to be heard. When those who are suffering of social problems have the right for major decision making, it does not make any difference how long the discussion takes place, but it is important that something really changes (although time optimizing would be perfect anyways, but that’s something future communities have to decide). The point is that we have to keep individualism (and the three attributes of social being of man named in Juche, i.e. independence, creativity and consciousness – and in a perfect manner it would be in the sense of the individual and not in a political sense; although the DPRK prefers to put these attributes to the latter), while at the same time participation and possibilities of debate are an important matter. It would be wrong to state that the quarrel among Ho Ka-i, Kim Jae-uk and Pak Il-u which is mentioned by Kim Il-sung is stupid in its nature of discussion, since possibilities and methods should be discussed freely, while at the same time solutions should be found directly together to progress the societal development. As Lenin stated there should be freedom in discussion and unity in action 20. So if a community has decided a solution in accordance with every participating member, the action should be supported by everybody, as long as the individual consciousness is not rejecting the action, and if large dissentiments arise, it shows that the solution is not perfect. However, while Lenin stated: “The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local Party organisations implies universal and full freedom to criticise; so long as this does not disturb the unity of a definite action” 21, I think the word party should be exchanged with individualism. For those who followed my articles on the New Constructivist Communism, it is clear that therefore it applies to the community self-organised organs, the confraternities and the factory collectives. A point that is worth to
criticize in my philosophy is the probable result that so much discussion and debate will arise that action would be impossible. In this case, the Leninist principle takes place that everybody can freely criticise, but the community has to find solutions that guarantee unity in action to fulfill the solution, but which does not use force and even accepts individual compromises. If three people quarrel, they all should be heard and all three should have the chance to fulfill their ideas independently, but when the whole society is involved, everybody should voluntarily act in unity if he voluntarily involves in something on a political level. In this way, large projects and development can be ensured, because these projects are done through the unity of the community which decides together about the projects through discussion in which everybody gives his ideas and where there is ensured that no one's interests are affected. After that, everybody tries to help fulfilling this community goal in unity – a very Communist model. In the community conception, we have one major advantage, as the factories are community-based, and the people working there are working for their community’s success. In a kolkhoz, for instance, one is producing for a state, but in my model people are producing for the locals themselves (and for trade among neighbour communities and further communities in which there is an exchange of goods – i.e. the things that one community has can be given to another in exchange for things that the giving community doesn’t have in return).

Before we compare the advantages and disadvantages, not only among Juche, but also whether it shares a compatibility towards the New Constructivist Communism, I want to finish analyzing Kim Il-sung’s speech. Until now, I figured out the problem of nationalist tendencies, but also the advantages concerning its socialist politics. However, although Korean patriotism is probably one of the strongest in the world (which makes differentiating between nationalism that difficult), we can prove through this speech, however, that the Early Korean Communists and Kim’s fraction as well, were originally truely Communist, embracing international solidarity and befriending with other countries with a revolutionary history. They showed a large respect towards them and admired them highly, but as the Koreans fought a bloody struggle, the main focus during Japanese occupation, of course, could not mainly be the internationalist affiliation, but the implementation of internationalist character on a lost nation. And if a nation with such a strong patriotism is lost, patriotism also affects the internationalist matter. Therefore, already in 1955, Kim had to face the question whether Korean Communism is part of the internationalist solidarity movement or whether patriotism is more important. Kim stated towards this question: “Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma, it is a guide to action and a creative theory. So, Marxism-Leninism can display its indestructible vitality only when it is applied creatively to suit the specific conditions of each country. [...]

Instead, if we just gulp it down and spoil our work, it will not only harm our work but also lead to discrediting the valuable experience of the fraternal parties. In connection with the problem of establishing *Juche* I think it necessary to touch on internationalism and patriotism. Internationalism and patriotism are inseparably linked with each other. You must know that the love of Korean Communists for their country does not go against the internationalism of the working class but conforms fully with it. To love Korea is just as good as to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp and, likewise, to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp means precisely loving Korea. They constitute a complete whole. For the great cause of the working class has no frontiers and our revolutionary cause is a part of the international revolutionary cause of the working class throughout the world. The one supreme goal of the working class of all countries is to build a communist society. The difference, if any, lies only in the fact that certain countries do this earlier and others later.\(^{22}\)

This again is a very piquant matter, since the contradiction gets evident. Kim Il-sung who enjoyed a very patriotic (maybe even more nationalistic) education – as everyone in Korea at that time – did not oppose internationalism, but the logic gets difficult when he states that internationalism needs patriotism. I think that this is wrong, and just a way to solve the contradiction in Korean mentality. This goes along with the Soviet idea, to be proud of the country for what it had achieved, however, patriotism is a difficult matter, since the state won’t wither away if people love the state, a clear contradiction to Karl Marx. But, as of now, since an ideology always need to fit into state mentality to make the masses move, Kim seemingly had to incorporate national tendencies, since he mentioned the fear himself to “lose broad segments of the masses”\(^{23}\). He also addresses those in South Korea who have a “national conscience”\(^{24}\), which shows that he wants to address all political fields to strengthen his own power against the South Korean regime, and it can be assumed that Kim knew that factionalism would weaken his power, and that embracing the factions was the only solution – while in paradox, he eliminated the factions within his own party.

In his speech, he continues to stress the need for Socialism and despite his slight national stress, he emphasizes the need of corporation with Communist countries and the implementation of a Socialist society. His focus on internationalist topics is done through the question of colonialism and the decolonialisation – something that Che Guevara admired about *Juche* idea as it is sometimes rumored. Kim Il-sung mentions “The peoples of India, Indonesia, Burma and other independent states in Asia and the peoples of the Arab countries are fighting for peace”\(^{25}\), and seemingly hopes that this way he can find support for the Korean reunification question (and succesfully found some partners in some of these
countries). Up to this point we can say that Kim Il-sung advocated a nationalist internal policy, a left-wing foreign policy and Socialist economic tactics – in a wave of very insecure political conditions in both Koreas and strong governmental opposition, again referred to both Koreas.

Kim Il-sung who is often portrayed as a narrow-minded leader actually showed a lot of important ideas, and if those ideas were realised, Korea would not be a melting pot today. Kim for instance stated that: “We demand and fight for democratic rights and liberties in South Korea — freedom of speech, the press, assembly and association—which are perquisites for the peaceful reunification of the country. We aim at securing conditions for our own free activities in the southern half while allowing political parties of south Korea to conduct political activities freely in the northern half” 26. One might say that due to the party-internal chaotic instances, this had rather been a utopia than a real goal, but one also has to notice that Rhee Syngman had little interest to cooperate with North Korea and that the tensed situation led to a real mistrust. The credo that everybody could be secretly working for the other side, splitted the society and fueled the factional fights, instead of implementing both, the Marxist and Leninist principles that were praised in documents.

In the end of the speech Kim Il-sung firstly mentioned the point that man is master of everything, however reducing it to the good care of machines and loyalty towards party ideology as can be seen in the statement: “What is most important in this connection is to give the workers and peasants, especially the workers, a clear understanding that they are masters of power. When they have such intense consciousness, the workers will do everything as masters—take good care of their places of work, machines and equipment, work hard, maintain good discipline, and effectively combat counter-revolutionaries” 27. How shall man be master of everything if it is only reduced on work and equipment? Same than the mentioning of creativity and independence and their narrow explanation, I was very disappointed about that statement as well, because the basic idea that every human-being can shape his or her own destiny is a very good one. Even further, Kim states that the peasants will regard their government as in their favor and therefore use their ‘power’ to cultivate the land in a good way and enjoy paying the taxes. Gee, does it make a difference whether one is paying taxes to a bourgeois leader or to a revolutionary? Especially, because the country labels itself as tax-free country.

How can we neutrally discuss Juche, and find advantages of DPRK politics, in a system that was very national, but Socialist in economy, as well as being internationalist when it goes to find partners? This cluster is so complex, many ideas were already suggested during the
analysis, since it would be an even more complex cluster otherwise. At first, we have to drop all national tendencies that happened in Korea. They are part of Korean history, but useless for philosophy, and even more useless for internationalism. We have to pick up the theory of Juche Idea and explain it first, and then compare it with Socialist practise and internationalist consent. However, the period of left-wing nationalism (and later fractional nationalism which was a step away from Leftism) are not worth to be discussed in depth, except the outpointing of its disadvantages that are very important to mention, so that we can learn from history.

As mentioned several times in the analysis of theoretical Juche Idea, we can use the tag words as a foundation to work with. Juche Idea puts human-beings in their center and declares that they can shape their own destiny since they are master of their own. However, Kim clarified in 1972 that Juche Idea is the force of revolution and construction of the people which is not a creation by the Koreans but a worldview supported by all Marxist-Leninists, which is indeed historically not correct and Juche is partly even opposing Marxism-Leninism, although Marxism talks about human-beings (in the context of society which is the sum of all his interrelations), and seemingly Kim wanted to emphasize this key, although putting it into another context. I like the idea that every human-being is master of his or her own destiny and can shape it his or her own way. I disagree however that this is the revolutionary force in Kim Il-sung’s sense, since it is affiliated to a party. In my sense, independence should not be affiliated to a peculiar party, but through the identification of a common society that is living in a certain place using all its ability as well as coping with difficulties. It is clear that all places in the world show different conditions. Some places are rich of minerals, others are very diverse in nature and others are sparse without anything. The need for a global trade is evident, but unlike now, no one should be exploited. Some people dig out the minerals under bad conditions, so that they can be used in industrialised countries on ease. A fair globalisation will solve the recent problems of globalisation, in which countries tend to close to go a more national way, which is a way induced by the fear of globalisation. However, globalisation works, if it is done in the right way. Anyways, in a world where politics dominates the people, who are just voters who have to obey to their system, where capitalism is ruling and where the rich are in power (which results in the lack of equal opportunity), human-beings are not able to decide over everything and shape their destiny on their own, in a community, however, it would work. Kim emphasized that Juche means solving problems on one’s own and with one’s own force and in harmony with the reality of one’s country, which is rather a justification for isolation than supporting the citizens. Therefore, the 1972 proposed version of Juche philosophy does not fit into the community system of the New...
Constructivist Communism. In the New Constructivist Communism a.k.a. the Community Communism (Kommunalenkommunismus), everyone is independent and master of him- or herself and free to shape one’s own destiny. There is equal opportunity, and everyone can use his or her creativity to fulfill one’s goals, and is conscious of the basic ethics that were proposed in my previous articles. While some Communist countries only emphasized on peasants and workers, the DPRK also includes the intellectuals, using hammer, sickle and paintbrush as their symbol. I agree on that three-level system making up the proletariat. Why should the intellectuals be excluded? In many countries, they were the main force in spreading the revolution, through their papers, flyers and ideology-coining speeches. In addition, unlike North Korea, the communities should not isolate themselves. The DPRK proclaimed internationalism, hides behind patriotism and conducted isolation – even among those countries who fought alongside for the Socialist cause. Especially, Socialist countries should go hand in hand.

If we say “Workers of all countries, unite!”, then we should really think of how to support cooperation between nationalities. We have to meet their needs, respect their history and worldviews, but we cannot tolerate racism (which is present in both Koreas).

Despite these tag words, the philosophy is seemingly contentless, which is no surprise since it was never fully implemented and only consists of key words given in several talks. Instead of developing Juche and implement the Juche spirit, the ideological key in freeing man (rather than isolating him), DPRK politics failed. Even important thinkers and intellectuals of the DPRK left the country, such as Hwang Jang-yop, who moved to South Korea, stating that the Kim’s betrayed Juche and established a feudal instead of a Socialist state. However, I think that North Korean intellectuals are not enough treasured in foreign countries. Hwang for instance was called ‘main ideologue’, but in fact Hwang was a philosopher. He is one of the main responsibles for creating Juche, which Kim never adopted, making Hwang seemingly unsatisfied. Many of North Korea’s philosophers are unknown outside the country, and probably even within the country, since all tribute goes to the Kim’s. Indeed, Kim Il-sung was a great rhetoric who was good in giving speeches and also worked on literature and arts. Anyways, everyone besides Kim who could become a rival if known by name, was never mentioned and therefore philosophy became state service (for the Kim’s), rather than productive reasoning (such as Marxism-Leninism and even theoretical Juche requires).

In my analysis of the main speech given in 1955, it became clear that Juche was still contentless and a matter of political fractional fights and paving politics in a war-torn state. Kim added the key concepts in 1965, advertising Juche in foreign countries, but only used the
philosophy as justification for his internal policies and as justification towards it steps. In the speech answering the requests of journalists of the Japanese newspaper “Yomiuri Shimbun” on 10 January 1972, in which Kim Il-sung gave a short abstract on Juche ideology, he clearly shows that the content is meant to be on a political level and not on an individual, which means that the goals of Juche are directly connected to the party. At this point, the philosophical main idea of Juche was already abused. However, answering requests of the Japanese-based newspaper “Mainichi Shimbun” on 17 September 1972, Kim describes the success of his political line and the support of Marxism-Leninism in the context of the after-war situation. Since Korea was completely destroyed and there were almost no technical possibilities, people had to work with primitive machines and their own hands, making all workers being proletarians, who have to work together to reach their goal. This is indeed one of the reasons while economic Communism worked, while the political line failed.

To put it in a nutshell, after studying parts of an online Juche Idea Course for 5 years, I think the basic tag words are useful and I could implement them in my philosophy. Juche Idea as it is taught today is useless and failed completely because of political misconception. The Juche Idea Course is very slowly moving forward and from time to time becomes very contentless, and just repeats or precisely the first tag words. In addition, I analysed three speeches. The first one was contentless and just introduces the name of the philosophy, the second speech was very disappointing since it abuses Juche to justify isolation and makes a party-affiliated idea out of it, that cannot exist without the party (probably a reason why the NK propagated version doesn’t work in other countries), and the second speech makes political talk out of it, but gives no precise details.

In the end, I am very disappointed that Juche is used as a curtain for isolation and national fuss, rather than the left-wing libertarian spirit that lies in it (if we remember the first chapters of the Juche Idea Course). However, Juche could give me some inspiration to add some elements in my New Constructivist Communism, and use the advantages of Juche to clarify questions that were not solved yet. In this article, I added the idea that everyone should debate freely in the community, but that action has to be taken in unity, while everybody can participate in shaping his destiny, both on an individual and on a political level (in community-organised-organ, confraterities, factory collectives – which are, unlike parties, non-exclusive). Solutions should be found together to move forward social development and if disenchantment arises, it shows that the solution is not perfect. Although everyone can participate in politics, no one is forced to do so. The communities should not be isolated, but globalised as people exchange goods that are needed for other goods (or as an alternative in
agreements in which both sides have a profit). In the community people are independent and can conduct self-realisation, they are creative without limits (whether it is architecture, arts, literature, or just designing one’s own life, etc.), they have consciousness (in fulfilling basic ethics) and there is no one above them (which means that they are their own masters).

Annotations by the author:

(1) As already pointed out in Part 12, the references made in North Korean literature have to be checked further. For instance, the North Korean Juche Idea Course makes reference to both Heine and Philon, but doesn’t state any sources from where the assumptions were taken. I looked for the poem by Heine that was quoted in the text, but could not find the whole poem. One reason might be the possibility that the poem bears a different title in Korean than in German, or was insufficiently translated. However, it could be possible as well that North Korean sources are not serious at this point and it can’t be precluded that the writers just made it up. The same goes to the claims on Philon, stating that there are 208 kinds of views concerning human-beings, as despite the mentioning in the Juche Idea Course, I could not find any source confirming that he ever stated such a thing.

(2) The main problem in analysing any attitude nowadays is the presence of nationalism in all kind of society in whole Korea. Although seemingly, many Koreans are not actively racist, the consciousness shaped through the means of information, education and societal pressure led to passive national-overestimation, which leads to passive non-intended racism. I hope for the future of Korea that the question of racism will be solved and that nationalist tendencies will be defeated.
Notes:

1. compare PART 12: “Philosophical Principle and Historical Context of the Juche Idea”
2. For the three main principles of Juche and a quick summary of the philosophy, see Schmitz, Timo: “Who are the Left”, self-published online publication, 22 February 2015, [https://schmitztimo.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/who-are-the-left-secured.pdf](https://schmitztimo.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/who-are-the-left-secured.pdf)
3. see PART 2: “Problems of Individualism”
6. ibid.
7. for a quick introduction of the historical background of Juche Idea and the political factions of North Korea in the early 1950s, see PART 12: “Philosophical Principle and Historical Context of the Juche Idea”
9. A good example to show that Confucianism still influences the society is the subordination of women. In many movies and public events women look down shyly in front of men and it is still difficult for North Korean women, while in other Communist countries such as the USSR and China, gender equality was imposed.
11. On the other hand, Kim could use these slogans to please the fascists (many of them sought contact to South Korea), and it was assumed that those who disfavored the Korean Worker’s Party gained majority. The disfavor did not come because of economic policy (as often reported in Western media), but instead because of the narrow-minded Imperial mentality that was still present (in which the Korean nation was higher than anything else). Until today, Korea has not undergone a cultural change with the result that it lacks of progressiveness in many kinds (such as the
outdated and well-feared education system of South Korea, as well as hierarchy and authoritarian thinking, as well as toleration of injustice on the basis of social relations)

12. They swapped to the far-right in the 1950s which led to a chaos in the country, as well as a stagnation of economic and societal life, and therefore the country later swapped back to the left. After the Eastern Bloc collapsed, the Koreans again swapped their political course on a national emphasized course, but it remains unclear where it can be placed in the political scale. Officially, it is placed in the political left spectrum.


14. ibid.

15. ibid.


17. Kim Il-sung, 1969, p. 3


19. ibid.


21. ibid.


23. ibid.

24. ibid.

25. ibid.

26. ibid.

27. ibid.


30. Timo Schmitz, 22 February 2015

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