

The Korean Peninsula

A Central Conflict in East Asian and International Security

von *Jonas Seyppel*¹

Hanns W. Maull and Ivo M. Maull provide in 'Im Brennpunkt: Korea' (Korea in the focus point) a broad overview over Korea - North and South -, its people, history, culture, as well as its perspectives.

The first part gives an overview over geography, climate, flora and fauna, language, emigration, as well as traditional every day life.

The second part provides a overview over the Korean history from the first sources of Korean culture, over the Three Kingdoms and the Middle Ages, to the modern Korea. The chapter on modern Korea includes relations to China, Japan and Russia, colonial times, the Korean War, as well as the First and Second Republic.

The third part on South Korea focuses on Korean politics and analyses the Korean modern history during the domination through the military, democratic consolidation, as well as economic development and social change after the Korean War.

The fourth part on Korean culture focuses on philosophy and spiritual life, and arts. Spiritual life contains of Confucius,

Buddhism, Christianity, as well as folklore. The part on North Korea focuses on international politics during the Cold War.

The perspectives for a reunification is rather negative at the moment. No country in North East Asia seems interested in a reunification. North Korea's leadership is fighting about its own survival, South Korea is afraid of the social and economic costs. China, Japan and the US all prefer the Status Quo.

Hanns W. Maull and Ivo M. Maull provide a very compact overview with many aspects on the Korean Peninsula and provide all important aspects. This is not only a good book for people looking for an introduction to Korea, but also for people who have background knowledge on Korea and want to deepen this knowledge

Köllner's book on Korean politics, economy and society 'Korea: Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft' contains 10 essays on South Korean and three essays on North Korea.

Manfred Pohl focuses on South Korean politics. Joachim Bertele wrote an essay on basis trends of South Korean foreign policy in 2003 and 2004.

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Patrick Köllner outlines main aspects on the Korean economy. Bernard Seliger criticizes the concept of South Korea as an economic center of East Asia. Heike Hermanns essay analyzes the economic open-up of South Korea since the Asian crisis.

Phillan Joung writes on the ELSI-programm. Mascha Peters provides an essay on South Korean press politics between 1945 and 1987. Tobias Stern provides an essay to the related subject of international conflicts in the focus point of the South Korean press at the case study of 9/11. Thomas Kern wrote on the more sociological issue of anti-Americanism.

The three essays on North Korea focus on North Korean politics and economy 2003 and 2004 (Patrick Köllner), Chinese interests in the Korean peninsula (Harald

Maass), as well as the US and the nuclear crisis (Heinrich Kreft).

Fritz provides a short book with the most important issues on the North Korean nuclear crisis: It includes chapters on the North Korean political system, related historical aspects, the military, the economy, Chinese interests & involvement, the new strategy of reconciliation instead of reunification, as well as an outline on possible paths towards a peace.

The book provides an excellent analysis on the background of the crisis from one of the best experts on North Korea. Fritz also points out that this country which seems to be so incalculable might be driven by cruel logic nevertheless. He also explains the mixture of separation and dependence on the outside. The book is well structured, easily understandable, but too short and sometimes a bit too subjective.

Die Bücher:

Maull, Hanns W.: Im Brennpunkt: Korea. , [C.H. Beck](#) 2004
232 Seiten, 12,90€, ISBN 978-3-406-50716-8.

Köllner, Patrick: Korea 2004. , [Institut für Asienkunde](#) 2004
307 Seiten, 10,-€, ISBN 3-88910-308-1.

Fritz, Martin: Schauplatz Nordkorea. Das Pulverfass im Fernen Osten,
[Herder Verlag](#) 2004
158 Seiten, 8,90€, ISBN 3-451-05464-7.

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