



# The Odyssey of Korean Democracy : Korean Politics, 1987-1990

Manwoo Lee



Manwoo Lee offers his readers a rare opportunity to closely observe Korean political leaders as they follow the chaotic, frequently violent, and twisted road to democracy. This is an eyewitness account of the Korean odyssey of Korea's three famous Kims and Roh Tae-woo of the dramatic political events leading to the presidential election in December, 1987 of the parliamentary elections in April, 1988, and of the formation of a super-ruling party in 1990. Manwoo Lee's readers benefit from his presence in the office of one of the presidential candidates and from his conversations with leaders directly responsible for the fate of Korean democracy. His thesis: South Korea's political instability is primarily the result of an imbalance between the country's social and political development compounded by its undemocratic political culture. The Odyssey of Korean Democracy covers the period from December 1986 to January 1990. Chapter 1 provides a broad introduction that includes a discussion of the major contradictions in Korean politics and society. Chapter 2 explains the emergence of the two Kims, their confrontations with the ruling party, and their rough road to compromise. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with regional problems, the presidential campaigns, and the emergence of Roh Tae-woo. The last three chapters focus on post-presidential politics: the demoralized opposition parties voting frenzy in the spring general elections and how Roh and the three Kims run Korea's new, very fragile democracy. Understanding what happened in Korean politics since 1987 is a prerequisite to understanding the breakdown of Korea's repressive authoritarian system.

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