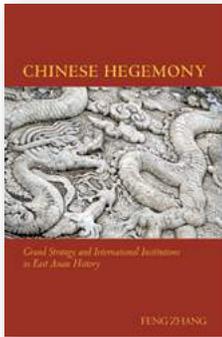


## Chinese Strategy, Then and Now



### Chinese Hegemony: Grand Strategy and International Institutions in East Asian History

By Feng Zhang

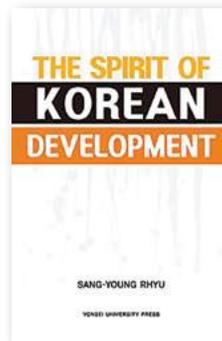
Stanford University Press, 2015,  
280 pages, \$65 (Hardcover)

What can the convoluted ties between Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Mongolians around 1400 AD tell us about our own dawning era of revived “Chinese hegemony” in East Asia? Quite a bit, in the hands of a versatile scholar like Feng Zhang of Australian National University, whose first book dances nimbly on the borders of diplomatic history and international relations theory.

Zhang argues for a new synthesis to explain the underlying default in Chinese grand strategy. Strong rulers in Beijing, he avers, prefer a China-centered regional order of “expressive hierarchy” that sees smaller neighbors treated with a kind of benevolent neglect, leading them to pursue “identification” with the hegemon. But when interests collide, Beijing turns to a self-interested “instrumental hierarchy” approach, leaving neighbors to choose from a menu ranging from self-protective “deference” to outright defiance.

In narrating the tangled web of China’s Korean, Japanese and Mongolian relations in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, Zhang finds deeper patterns in China’s hegemonic relations as they oscillate from benevolence to self-interest. He ends with a challenge to today’s grand strategists in Beijing and Washington to found 21<sup>st</sup>-century Sino-US relations on what Confucians would call “humaneness,” which boils down to considering the other side’s good while safeguarding one’s own interests. The questions left over are whether East Asia can live with two hegemonies — and whether the pair can learn to share.

**Reviewed by John Delury, Associate Professor at Yonsei University Graduate School of International Studies and book reviews co-editor for Global Asia.**



### The Spirit of Korean Development

By Sang-Young Rhyu

Yonsei University Press, 2015,  
129 pages, \$10 (Paperback)

## Success in South Korea’s DNA?

Pestered by foreigners curious about South Korea’s “miraculous” emergence as a posterchild of economic development, political democratization and cultural dynamism, Sang-Young Rhyu has written a succinct, engaging volume to join the dots from Korean War orphans begging bread from GIs to Psy’s “Gangnam Style.” Rhyu, a Yonsei University professor, charts South Korea’s development in three overlapping stages: economic development, democratization, and informatization and globalization (he also posits an emerging fourth stage, “smart power”).

### Rhyu digs into the soil of the ‘Korean spirit’ to unearth unique traits, rooted in culture and history.

He digs into the soil of the “Korean spirit” to unearth unique traits, rooted in culture and history, that drive leaders and masses in a relentless pursuit of collective self-betterment. Spiritual sources are led by a profound dread of poverty, an egalitarian sense of populism and “nomadic dynamism.” Rhyu vividly illustrates the spirit’s workings among political and business leaders and common people: Park Chung-hee’s drive to rout poverty; Kim Dae-jung’s politics of forgiveness; the Hyundai and Samsung founders’ distinctive visions; and, most inspiring, the true grit of the Korean people — whether students dying for freedom in the 1980s, or families selling their gold to save the economy from crisis in the late 1990s.

This is fascinating meditation, stimulating to newcomers to South Korea and experts alike.

**Reviewed by John Delury**