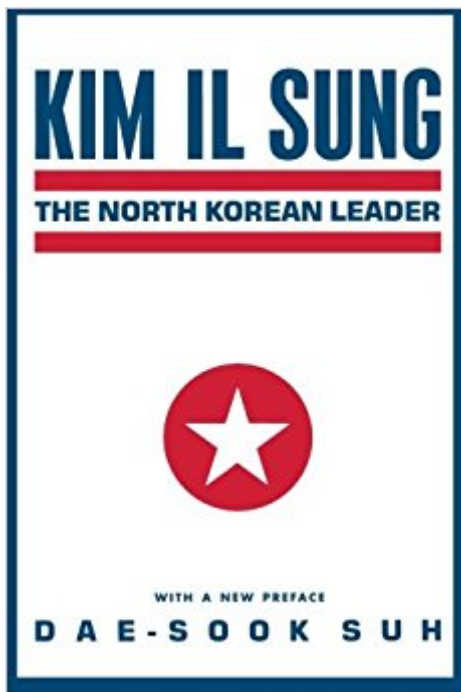


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Kim Il Sung



Synopsis

This book is especially important now with Kim Il Sung's death, the ending of the nuclear crisis between North Korea and the United States, and the obscured emergence of a successor regime ostensibly headed by Kim Il Jong, Sung's son. Suh's book investigates the impact of Kim Il Sung on the history and politics of North Korea and what his death will mean for the future of the country and its relations with the rest of the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Necessary background for our understanding of this mystic leader and the regime that he built...a major contribution to scholarship and essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary Korea. (Journal of Asian Studies) Dae-Sook Suh... has to be commended for a thoroughly-researched study of the first North Korean president Il Sum King. Suh has produced a first rate historical study of the North Korean leader, his life and his politics. (Korean Quarterly)

This book investigates the impact of Kim Il Sung on the history and politics of North Korea and what his death means for the future of the country and its relations with the rest of the world.

Many books exist in the English language on North Korea and the Kim dynasty. The thing to understand, however, is how Kim Il Sung did the things he REALLY did, because this is the baseline for why the country is the way it is. Written when he was still alive (1988), this book seeks to tear

down myths of Kim Il Sung's infallibility (from the Northern view) and completely fictionalized back story (from some Southern views). In some regards this is a dry affair, being highly historical and focused on getting names, dates, and events as closely aligned to factual history as possible. But seeing how history unfolded and was revised continuously in efforts to change his image in the public eye is worth any dryness you have to endure. Enlightening and fascinating, if you want to know North Korea, this is the one and only place to start.

Seminal work which highlights the background and rise of Kim Il Sung.

I was hoping for something more impartial than the usual bashing of North Korea by Western authors. Instead, the writer hedges all his statements with qualifiers, as if America isn't itself guilty of propaganda campaigns and war-mongering. As for the prose, it is dense and not engaging. Too many unimportant details are given with very few "takeaway" statements. Read something by Bruce Cummins instead.

This is essential for understanding North Korea and how it relates to the world of today. To understand North Korea you must understand its founder Kim Il Sung. The book goes on to show how he created a Stalinist State and huge army to insure its survival. It talks about the many attempts on the lives of South Korean presidents and his unpredictable nature that he passed on to his son and successor. Understanding Kim Il Sung will help the reader understand why North Korea is today run more like a cult than a country and why it is the most secretive country in the world today and a failed society.

In 2001 I visited North Korea and found this book very helpful because our guides would only give us the official version of their history. The book is packed full of information and the only one I have found that explains how Kim Il Sung gained and kept power. Dae-Sook Sue has put a great deal of research into the book and let's hope he writes another book on North Korea covering Kim Jong Il's present reign and the future of the country. There is no other country like North Korea so I recommend reading the book then visiting the country.

Ever wonder why North Korea is such a ... arrogant little country? This book will tell you exactly why. Guerrilla leaders scarred by years of eating rats, living in the hills, and butchering Japanese invaders do not necessarily possess the skills needed to run a country! This book is a must for

anybody interested in the current standoff between America and Pyongyang, which North Korea seems to believe will end with the Korean peninsula being devoured by a sea of fire. Kim Il Sung's early days as a revolutionary and guerrilla fighter are given much attention, as are the purges he carried out in order to become the supreme leader. If you're looking for a play-by-play account of the Korean War, look elsewhere though- this book sweeps quickly through that period. The author focuses primarily on Kim's tight-rope act between the Soviet Union (which gave him the job in the first place), China (which saved his butt from the American-led U.N. forces), and the U.S. (which has refrained from crushing lil' Kim's summer camp of starvation in the name of East Asian harmony). Other topics addressed by the author include: Kim's frustration at not being acknowledged as the Emperor of the Third World, Kim's frustration at not being able to feed his population while spending 99.99% of his country's slight earnings on military hardware, Kim's frustration that the rest of the world didn't care much about the Korean problem (until now, of course), and Kim's frustration at not receiving a THIRD honorary degree from some university in Africa or Southeast Asia (naw, just kidding...but you get the point). The only complaint I have is this: the avalanche of names and details that sometimes disrupts the narrative. Perhaps a little too scholarly for anybody not specifically interested in the history of the North Korean Communist Party from 1946-1980's. Still, if you can get past this, the book is rewarding, and one will walk away knowing who Kim Il Sung was, how his son maneuvered into power, and why North Korea is a country with a Napoleonic complex.

This book is advanced but very good. It is complicated at times but in the long run it is good for reports or projects. It is very interesting. Kim Il Sung's career is much more interesting than Lenin's or Stalins. Very Good!

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