

Preface

To many Westerners, the countries of East Asia, whatever their formal system, seem heavily controlled from top to down. They might find the title of this book quite surprising. Do social movements really exist in East Asia? Yes, they do, and with increasing vitality and importance throughout the region. Social movements have been and are now playing key roles in East Asia's transition to democracy and to its gradual maturation and fulfillment. Like the force of nature that sprouts up through the crusted soil and into the sunlight, social movements give public voice to long suppressed or newly realized aspirations by marginalized people for justice and dignity. Often these aspirations lead to pursuit of a more diverse and liberal society, but sometimes they envision solutions through a more authoritarian political regime. In pursuit of their goals, social movements often have to push against obstinate resistance and suffer punishment and failure. But sometimes they succeed, and in the process contribute to producing a new, often more pluralistic and diverse society and political order.

Up until recently, professional social science writing in general, and the study of social movements in particular, has mostly originated in Western countries and flowed outward from there. This book represents one of the first reversals of that flow—with social scientific ideas generated in East Asia flowing to the West and establishing a dialogue. In the process, this book, with its representation of China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, also contributes to social scientific dialogue among the countries and areas within East Asia. The authors, all of East Asian origin except one, range from established senior scholars to recent assistant professors in universities, colleges, or research institutes.

Producing this book has taken many years and required great patience from editors, authors, and publishers. Its difficulties illustrate the barriers in the way of attaining better cross-cultural understanding. At the 1989 conference on "Frontiers of Social Movement Research" held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, a social movement scholar editing a series on the topic approached the senior editor with the request to edit a volume on social movements in East Asia. The purpose was to introduce East Asian social movement scholars and their works to the Western audience. Here we finally

have the product, more than 20 years later. Assembling and editing the manuscripts took a great deal of time, and it was only possible with the help of a graduate student (at the time) in social movement studies, Vicky Brockman, who by her great service to the book became its co-editor. As a result of the care everyone has taken along the way, the chapters, hopefully, explain their subjects in a readily accessible manner to the non-East Asian reader without a deep knowledge of those societies.

We deeply thank our colleagues who provided excellent comments on the introductory and concluding chapters: Mark Selden, Ron Aminzade, Jeff Goodwin, Doug McAdam, and Craig Calhoun. We also express our great appreciation to the editor of Springer books, Teresa Krauss and her assistant, Katherine Chabalko, who stayed with us through the long gestation of this book and shepherded it to publication.

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East Asian Social Movements

Power, Protest, and Change in a Dynamic Region

Broadbent, J.; Brockman, V. (Eds.)

2011, XIV, 516 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-387-09625-4