

# Popular Education in Korea

한국의 민중교육

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# Korean Political contexts

- Korea Dynasty (918-1932) / Buddhist aristocracy
- Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910) / Confucian gentry society
- Japanese occupation (1910~1945) – Imperialism, cultural assimilation & extermination policy,
- 1945-1948 US Military Government
- Civil division (South Korea-capitalism/ North Korea-communism)
- 1948 The Government of the Republic of Korea established
- 1950-1953 Korean War (about 3 million people killed)



- 1960 419 civil revolution (over 100 people killed) – President Lee resigned
- 1961 516 coup d'État by army major general Park Jeong Hee
- 1979 President Park assassinated and another coup d'État by Jeon Du Hwan
- 1980 518 Gwangju Democratic Uprising (official record: 195 people killed & 4,782 people injured by soldiers)
- 1987 610 Democratic Uprising – 629 Declaration : Democratic direct election system
- 2008 USA beef import opposition movement
- 2016 Now! Park's Gate and Regime Retreat Movement

# Korean Economic contexts

- Rapid economic growth since the 1960s
- Chaebol-centered growth policy
- 1999 & 2008 financial crisis
- Economic structure dependent on export / vulnerable to global environmental change
- High labor intensity, weak social welfare system
- Greater disparity between rich and poor,
- Increase in irregular worker, youth unemployment & poverty of the elderly

# Korean Cultural and Educational contexts

- Confucian tradition: feudal age ruled by intellectuals
- Educational Society, Patriarchal Society
- Rapid industrialization, centered in Seoul
- Cultural crisis (about 75% illiterate rate in 1945)
- Rapid increase in educational attainment (currently 75% of university enrollment rate)
- Strengthening of Economic Value: Regression of Democracy, Enforcement of Competitive Education
- However, the citizens' strong desire for democracy

Popular Education, 민중교육 民衆教育

People, 민중 民衆

Democracy, 민주주의 民主主義

“民”



# “The Analects” of Confucius

- 人學 (Man learn) : subject of learning
- 教民 (Teaching people) : object of teaching



**People민중** – Oppressed majority / coalition class concept (worker, farmer, women, urban poor people, student, intellectuals and so on who are oppressed by unjust power)

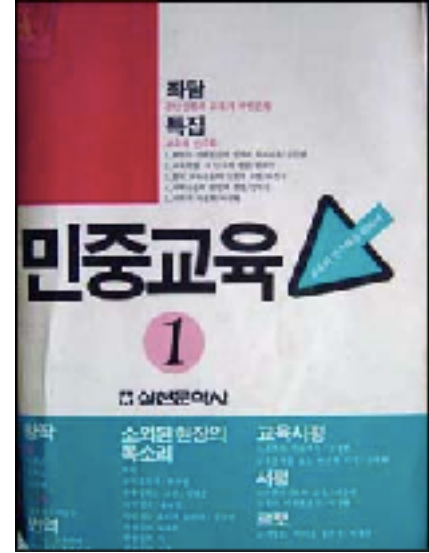
## **Popular Education민중교육**

- Education for restoring the human and subjective life of the people who are oppressed
- Education combined with “popular movement” (old social movements- labor movement, the poor movement, student movement)

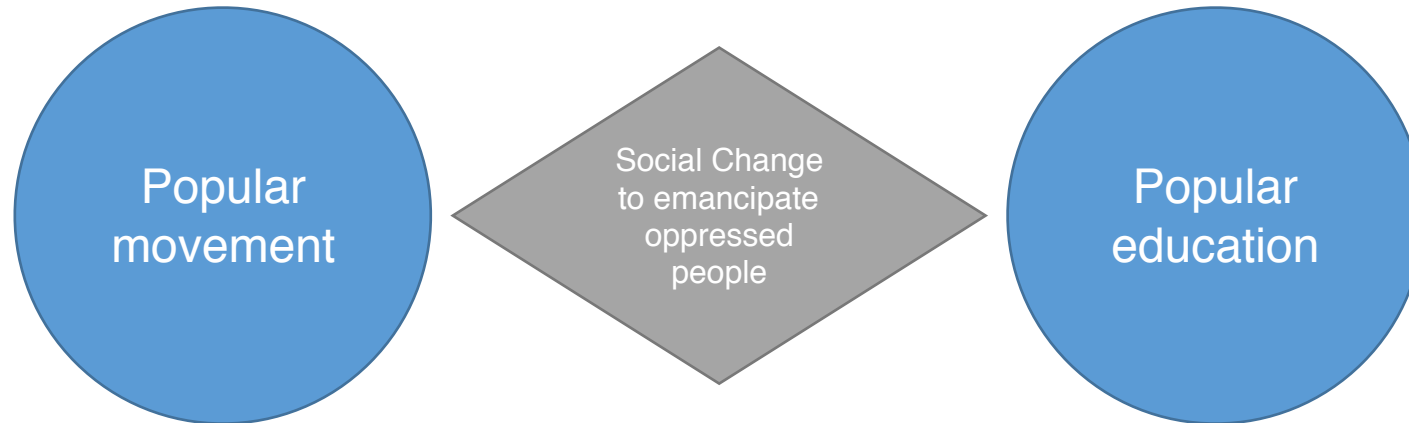


# Past, Popular education

- Social Education, more common concept in Korea
- Since 1970s, popular education, introduced with Freire's theory and Emancipatory theology
- 1985 the magazine "Popular education", published by school teachers protesting against the dictator.
- 1988 the first theoretical book on popular education "Let the people speak for themselves", published by Heo, Byeong Sub who was a pastor and practitioner in the movement for the poor people.



# Past, Popular education



- Independent movement
- The movement for poor people
- Labor movement
- Student movement etc.

- Ya-hak
- Church
- Factory
- Trade union
- Study circle etc.

# Today, Popular education

- Popular education, neither popular nor local concept in Korea
- Expansion of new social movements and diversification of concerning education
- Civil education, political education, environmental education, feminism education, human right education, labor education, alternative education and so on
- But the idea and value of popular education, still alive in contexts of education for alienated people

# Today, Popular education (1)

## Social Movement Learning

- Civil movements
- Political movements
- Environmental movements
- Community movements
- Women movement
- Peace movement
- Culture movement
- Labor movement and so on

Open courses or membership training to realize NGO's own missions.

Or learning in social movement

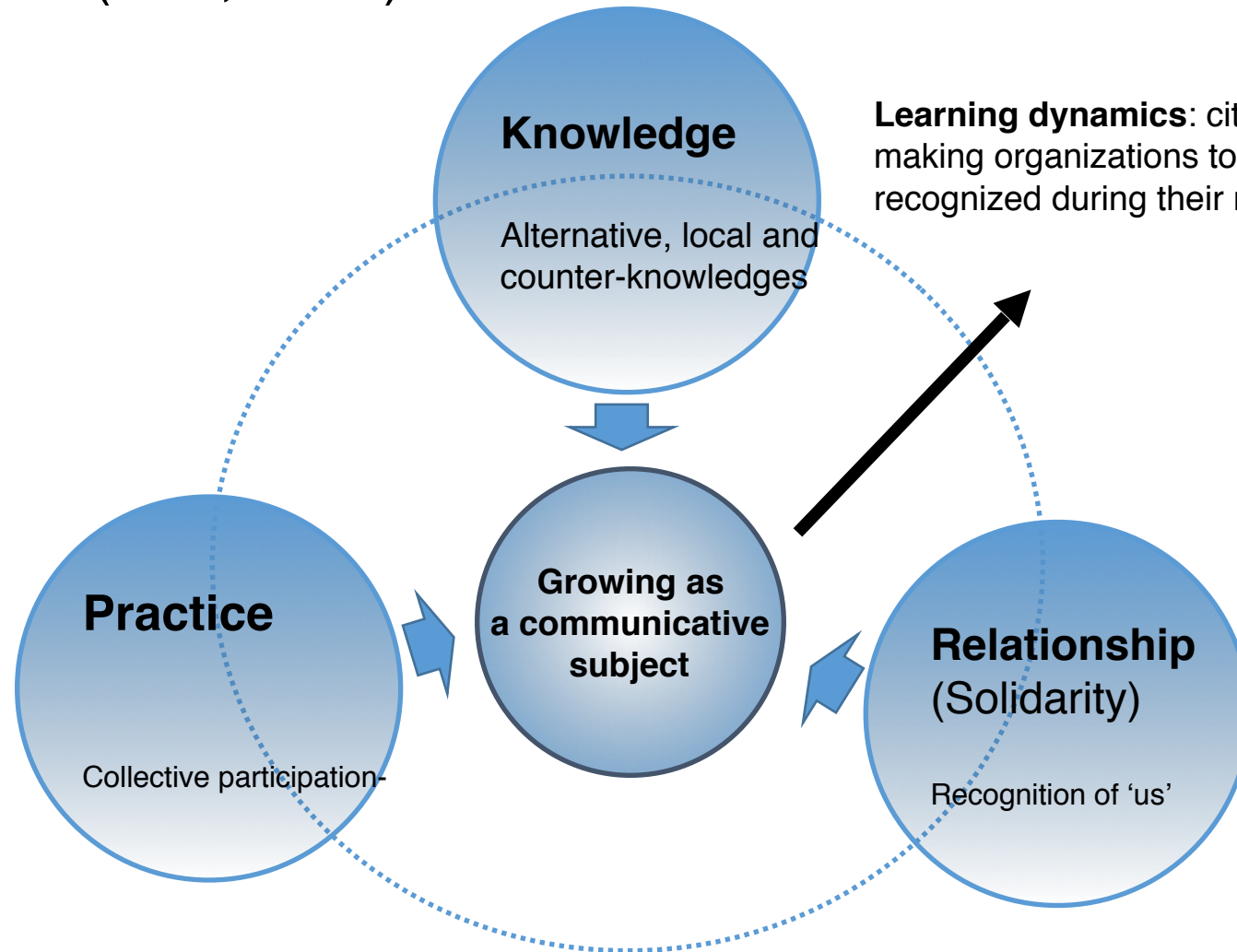
# Social Movement Learning

## Case > the Movement against constructing nuclear waste facility in Buan (2003~2004)

- Rural town – farming and fishing (about 60,000)
- Citizens' struggle against the government for 18 months
- Everyday candle vigil (free speech, cultural performances, expert lectures, struggle report etc.)
- A variety of autonomous learning groups
- Refusal to go to school, self-governing school, self-governing vote, etc.
- The government gave up!
- New organizations (Parliament surveillance, alternative energy, environmental movie festival, independent news paper etc.)



# Three dimensions of learning in social movement (Heo, 2006)



**Learning dynamics:** citizens dominating the movement and making organizations to realize values which they learnt and recognized during their movement, not following leader's directions.

## **Social movement learning**

- Having a clear learning goal, solving collective problems
- but also a process to generate new knowledges, cultures and practices over given contexts

# Today, Popular education (2)

- 夜學, Evening School
- 野學, School in the field
  
- Non-formal School for the people
- Non profit & non governmental,
- Low academic level learners, Disable people, Immigrants, Foreign workers, Adolescents out of school and so on
- About 150 schools (about 40 schools for disable learners)

# Ya-Hak, 야학

Period	Main learners	Traits
1897 ~ 1950s	Farmers, Workers	+ independent movement + enlightenment
1960s ~ 1980s	Youths working in factories or living in slums	+ the movement for poor people + labor movement + student movement
1990s ~ now	Low academic level women Immigrants (women from other Asia countries) Disable people	+ civil movement + movement for disable people



# Ya-Hak, 야학

- Basic education, civil education, human right education, democracy education, etc.
- Volunteerism (college students)
- Learning culture: “equality and freedom” ”mutual respect”

**Teacher : Gang-hak**

**Student : Hak-gang**

Gang-”강”-teaching

Hak-”학”-learning

# Today, Popular education (3)

- CONET (<http://www.conet.or.kr>)
- Education for grass root leaders (community organizer)
- Freire's & Heo, Byeong-Seb's approaches
- Curriculum to train community organizer
- Based on the poverty movement



# Today, Popular education (4)

- **Civil society+ Local governments**
  - **Suwon** : Human library project, Everyone school (everyone can teach, everyone can learn)
  - **Chil-gok** : Supporting Program cooperative associations based on citizen learning, Citizens' Biography Project

**감사합니다. Kiitos!**