Development and Conservation: A Case in Korea
- Saemangum Reclamation Project -

May 2007

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I. Economic Development and Environment in Korea

- Compressed development: growth of 8% per year for four decades
- Swift social transformation:
  - agricultural society \(\Rightarrow\) industrial society \(\Rightarrow\) information society
- Rapid environmental change by industrialization and urbanization:
  - ecological change, pollution and contamination, energy consumption

Fig 1. Evolution of Income per capita in Korea
Fig 2. Change in Industrial Structure (%/GDP)
II. Evolution of Korea's Environmental Policy

1960s  a moderate degree of decline in environmental quality
        ➔ totally preoccupied with growth and industrialization

1970s  a serious deterioration of environment (growth in heavy and chemical industries, major rivers polluted by domestic and industrial sources)
        ➔ some concerns about it, but ignored by government

1980s  a sustained deterioration of environment (air pollution with motorization)
        ➔ environmental conservation first adopted as an official goal of national plan, but not realistic
        ➔ some concerns about it, but ignored by government

1990s  sharply enhanced public interest in environmental quality
        ➔ improvement of environment truly placed high in the policy priority

2000s  any development impossible if environmental degradation induced
        ➔ not enough administrative capacity to absorb such social demands, so many and extreme conflicts over development projects
III. Saemangum Project at a Glance

1. The Significance

- World's the largest man-made reclamation project

- To cause long-lasting, bitter, extreme controversy between developmentalists and conservationists

- To involve various stakeholder and national interests
  - central and provincial governments, politicians and constituents, state-run corporation and fishermen, domestic and international NGOs

- To be a momentum to turn the environmental perception of people and government
  - Environmental aspects should be 'seriously and practically' considered in development projects.
2. A brief of Saemangum Project

- Location: Southwestern Coast of Korean Peninsular (Jeollabuk-do)
- Construction: totally 33km long 3 dikes (or sea-wall)
- Reclamation: 40,100ha (farmland-28,300ha, freshwater lake-11,800ha), two thirds of the size of Singapore
- Period: 1991-2011 (21 years)
- Cost: 3.7 trillion Korean Won (US$ 4 billion)
- Objectives: mainly new land, additionally water resource, tourism assets, transportation networks
IV. History of Saemangum Project

- 1970s: Many reclamation projects on the western coast for arable land
- 1987: Public commitment by a promising presidential candidate (connected with political interest)
- 1991: Start of the dikes construction
- 1996: Concerns over water quality started after a different pollution case (Siwhaho: a lake made with reclamation similarly)
- 1998: Request for cancellation by environmental NGOs, Completion of the 1st dike
- 1999: Joint civil-governmental team for the environmental impact assessment launched, 1st suspension of the construction
- 2001: Government's decision to resume the construction
- 2003: NGOs to ask court to suspend the construction, 2nd suspension of the construction by a court's ruling
- 2004: Resuming the construction by a higher court's ruling
- 2006: Final verdict by supreme court to continue the project
- 2006. 4.: Completion of water closure work
- Ahead: Completion of inner work by 2011, Decision on how to use the land and to develop eco-friendly
V. Issues in Saemangum Project

1. Stakeholders

**Pro**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Agriculture Corporation (state-run),
- Provincial government (Jeollabukdo),
- Its citizen, Politicians based on the region

**Con**
- Environmental NGOs both domestic and international,
- Fishermen, Progressive intelligent, Ministry of environment(?)