Born in 1962 in Communist North Korea into a well-placed official family, Kim Hyun Hee was, on the strength of her good looks, selected when she was still a child for a career as an actress in state-made films. Her roles included an innocent schoolgirl in many films, which were supposed to counteract the influence of controversial films from the West. To the North Korean authorities, Miss Kim was ideal as a conduit for information across the border. However, in 1974, when she was just 12 years old, she was ordered by her superior to carry a bomb hidden in her shoes to Thailand. The bomb was intended to blow up a Thai military plane in order to escalate the manhunt for Kim Jong-Il, the son of North Korea's leader, Kim Il Sung. Miss Kim's bomb did indeed go off as intended, and all 115 passengers and crew on board perished en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok. But the rest of the plan, from North Korea's perspective, went horribly wrong. Miss Kim and her more senior accomplice were quickly picked up in nearby Bahrain, and their escape was thwarted. Following her capture, Miss Kim was forced to implicate her superiors, who had instigated the plot, in order to save her life. In 1989, she was tried in a South Korean court, professed her guilt repeatedly, and was sentenced to death. However, her death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. In 1991, South Korea's then president, Roh Tae Woo, granted her a full pardon, stating that Kim Jong-II, son and heir-apparent to Great Leader Kim Il Sung, had personally authorized her mission. By the time she emerged to freedom, Kim Hyun Hee was a public sensation in South Korea. From her first news conference through to her pardon, Kim captured the imagination of the South Korean public with her story of survival and her decision to give her account of her past. However, the account of her story provided in her book, "The Tears of My Soul," published in 1991, is too incomplete to be satisfying. While this slender book does include some memorable glimpses of Miss Kim's past - such as her experiences as an actress and her early days in South Korea - it neglects to mention some aspects of her life that would be critical to anyone wishing to assess the reliability and authenticity of her story. Foremost among these is anything that might reveal the extent of her involvement in the South Korean intelligence service. The book itself is a curious piece of work. One might think that a woman of Kim Hyun Hee's singular experience in the two Koreas would wish to share her thoughts about her life and her experiences in both countries. But the book is more of an exotic spy novel than an autobiography. The political assertion that the killing was ordered by Kim Jong-II, son and heir-apparent to the North Korean leader, is the most significant item in the book. However, the evidence presented to support this claim is not fully substantiated. It is not clear whether Miss Kim was informed of the details of her mission before she was sent to Thailand, or whether she was normally briefed on the strategy underlying their missions, or on the authorship of the directives they were to follow.