

HW (JL)

Re yr 4.2.74 memo to JL re Tongsun Park, Park is one of several ways the Koreans romanize a very common Korean surname. It occurs variously as pak, pack, paik, park, and all are ~~PKKPKK~~ written with the same Chinese character, 朴, pai in Mandarin and pak or sometimes even park in Cantonese. (Don't ask me why the Koreans, who have their own phonetic system of writing, still write their names in Chinese. Snob stuff, I suspect.)

Anyway, I think Chunghee Park chose Park because, as HW suggests, Americans would find it less strange. Incidentally, the various ways of romanizing the one character may reflect regional differences in pronunciation, but this is only a guess.

If Tongsun Park is, as Anderson says, a "patrician Korean businessman," really, this lessens the probability of his being a relation of Chunghee Park, who is of humble origin, having been a military gendarme under the Japanese. They were extremely tough characters, usually of peasant origin, and I've even seen them kick Japanese around when Korea was still part of the empire.

In any case, since Park (they pronounce it Pakk, the same way they pronounce Pak) is such a common name, this further reduces the probability of his being a relation of Tongsun Park. It's possible, of course, that his patrician status was acquired purely through being a relative of Chunghee Park, but I'm certain I recall the Park spelling from long before I ever heard of Chunghee Park, so he didn't invent Park. Better ask any Korean, who should be able to tell you immediately.

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