

Local publishers produce Korean adoption books

When You Were Born In Korea (Stephen Wunrow/Brian Boyd)

When You Were Born in China (Stephen Wunrow/Sara Dorow)

And various Francis Koh books (Winter 1997 issue)

Two local publishers have produced books of interest to the Korean American community, and the adoptive community in particular.

Frances Koh is the editor and publisher of East West Press, a firm she founded in 1981 originally to publish her own book documenting her research into differences between children brought up in Korea compared with children brought up in the United States. The book, entitled *Oriental Children in American Homes* was prompted by Koh's own interest in differences between cultures, her observations of Korean adoptees who were older children when adopted, and their behaviors in adjusting to new homes and a whole new culture.

There was a need for information on that topic and others related to Korean adopted children at that time, Koh said, but there were few books for parents to refer to. In the '70s and early '80s, there were more children adopted when they were older, and the adjustment period to their new culture was more difficult. Koh hypothesized that many of the adjustment behaviors reported by adoptive parents had their roots in the differences between the way children are brought up in Confucian-based cultures compared with Western cultures. She used direct research through observations of adoptive families to support her hypothesis. "I also thought that if parents were aware of some of these differences, it would help them be more patient and tolerant of their children through these adjustments," she said.

Since then, Koh has published five more books, four of which she has authored. All are on Korean cultural and adoption-related topics. She has also published a booklet targeted to adoptive parents about how Korean parents name their children. Her most recent project is in writing fiction for both children and adults. She hopes to publish a short story for adults and fictional books for children in the future.

Brian Boyd is the owner of Yeong and Yeong Book Company, named after his two Korean-born daughters whose birth names, coincidentally, are Po Yeong and Soo Yeong. His interest started because he wanted to find his girls a book on what their life was like before they came to Minnesota, and no such book was available.

From that, *When You Were Born in Korea* was created, a children's book, published in 1993, that chronicles the life of Korean babies placed for adoption from infancy to placement in a home in another country. Boyd wrote the text, and photographer Stephen Wunrow provided the photos that also tell the story for children.

As a regional sales manager for Penguin Putnam, Inc., Boyd knows the sales end of the book business, and said he decided to self-publish "because I wanted the book to be a

fundraiser, so I wanted all of the margin.” The proceeds from the book sales go to Eastern Child Welfare Society and to Children’s Home Society of Minnesota. About 9,000 of that book have sold so far.

Because of the popularity and fundraising success of *When You Were Born in Korea*, Boyd was contacted by Families With Children from China (FCC) and asked about the possibility of a similar book for children adopted from China. From that came Yeong and Yeong’s second book *When You Were Born in China*, published in 1995. Sara Dorow, who worked for Children’s Home Society at that time on the Chinese adoption program, wrote it, and Wunrow supplied the photographs.

This book is used as a fundraising project for FCC chapters around the country. About 8,000 copies of that book have sold so far, and sales are still steady, Boyd said. The proceeds go to the Amity Foundation, which helps children in Chinese orphanages.