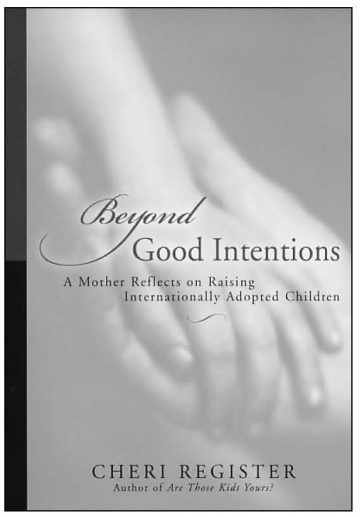
book reviews

CHANGING THE PARENTAL PARADIGM

Beyond Good Intentions: A Mother Reflects on Raising Internationally Adopted Children
By Cheri Register
Yeong and Yeong Books
St. Paul, 2005
ISBN# 1-59743-000-5

Review by Martha Vickery



It is normal to view new knowledge and insights through the filter of one's own experiences. Conflicts between parents and their teenage or young adult children often stem from how they look at situations through different filters.

Trying to see the world through the filter of another is hard work — even admitting that another filter exists is hard work for some of us.

Cheri Register's slim new book of essays entitled ***Beyond Good Intentions: A Mother Reflects on Raising Internationally Adopted Children***, is an appeal to parents to recognize those other filters, even to put them on and look through them for awhile, in order to understand the frame of reference of their internationally-adopted children.

International adoptees, who negotiate life from the very challenging standpoint of growing up in a culture which is different from the culture of their birth, and often as members of a racial group which is different from the racial group of their adoptive family and of the mainstream culture, have a very different filter indeed from that of their parents.

A lack of recognition of those differences and what they mean in family life has been responsible for either strife or silence in adoptive families, and a kind of benign denial by the adoption community as a whole, a concept Register brings up immediately in ***Beyond Good Intentions***.

The author's frank recognition and succinct discussion of those differences, divided into 10 short essays, are drawn from her experiences as a parent, academician, philosopher, member of an adoptive moms' support group from which she obviously has drawn strength, and as long-time observer of the international adoption community. Register is the author of a 1992 overview of international adoption entitled ***Are Those Kids Yours?***, as well as the autobiographical ***Packinghouse Daughter: A Memoir***, and ***The Chronic Illness Experience: Living the Imperfect Life***.

Each of the essays in ***Beyond Good Intentions*** begins with a provocative statement, written by a hypothetical prospective adoptive parent (or new adoptive parent), which expresses cartoon-like wide-eyed good intentions for the new internationally-adopted child.

In this book's short life (I had a publisher's proof early on, and was able to talk to others who read the proof), it is these cartoony statements that seem to irritate some readers who are adoptive parents the most, of all the information contained within this controversial book of essays (*See Letters to the Editor, this issue, for one adoptive parent's reaction to the book*)

It is also the author's honest and accurate attacks on long-held truisms of the adoption community that make us all uncomfortable — there are some sacred truisms of adoption that we all, let's face it, have sneaking suspicions about.

Good-intentioned, seemingly good-sounding concepts of child rearing like treating the adopted child the same as the other children, keeping peace in the family by not dwelling on problems, keeping quiet any veiled contempt for the adoptee's birth country, or maintaining the child's adoption story as simple and upbeat when it may actually be tragic and messy, all get a thorough airing (often a trouncing) by Register, in a style that is at once simply stated and philosophically complicated.

For example, in her essay about "Parenting on the Defensive," Register begins with the hypothetical parent's statement:

I feel like I'm always on the defensive because my daughter is so full of complaints. She seems to think it's my fault if she's unhappy, and yet I try really hard to stay in control of everything that happens in our family. ...she should be thankful instead of blaming us all the time.

The gratitude thing sure comes up a lot in adoption talk doesn't it? Register lays the gratitude issue bare with one sweeping statement sure to spread silence throughout the adoptive community. "Underneath this defensiveness lies a grandiose fallacy about parenthood: The belief that how our children fare in life is a direct measure of our competence."

The adoption process and the professionals in adoption unwittingly promote this fallacy, Register believes, as she facetiously states that:

...if you stick to the plan, your children will be happy and ever grateful. If they turn out ornery or distant or depressed, well ...you rack your memory for what you might have done wrong. ...In either case, you feel obliged to defend yourself. You meant well. You followed all the expert advice. You did your best. You were a loving parent. ...You're so caught up in absolving yourself that you can't even hear correctly. Your child isn't blaming you for anything. She's only trying to tell you how she feels.

How freeing, how empowering it can be to try on another filter and realize "oh, it's not about me at all." And how few of us really do that.

Later on in the same chapter, Register emphasizes the crucial need to "listen without defensiveness" to adult children as we "run up against larger questions of this social experiment we are all living through," that is to say, international adoption. It is a big question, much bigger than Register's one chapter in a very slim book. But Register is willing to bring it up for the reader's consideration, and even offers some reassurance at the chapter's end

This is not just about you; it's about the injustice. You are blameworthy only if you refuse to listen. Human beings live with moral ambiguity all the time ...few of us leave our home countries when our governments engage in policies that trouble us. We adhere to religious faiths that others cite to justify abhorrent behavior. We tolerate scoundrels in our family circle. Ambiguity is a fact of life. That's not your fault.

What will be the fate of this deceptively simple book? My prediction — the foment over it and interest in it will grow over time, and, like Register's ***Are Those Kids Yours?***, it will emerge as the new international adoption classic.

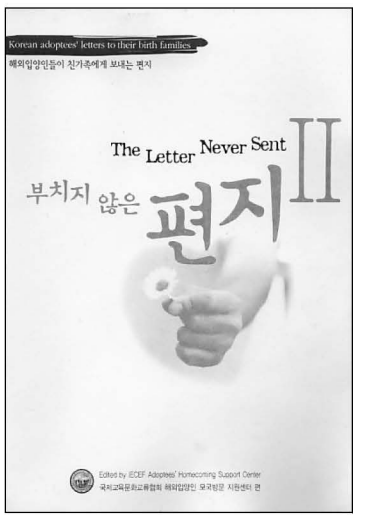
Why? It's because of the ideas that are far ahead of their time, ideas that will be gathering strength as time passes and the international adoption paradigm begins to shift, and appropriate a new language for itself and honestly face its own shortcomings.

To Register, the truth within the ideas she promotes is paramount. She kicks the tires of all new and old concepts, tries them out from all philosophical angles, gives them a thorough test drive before recommending them to anybody else. As a writer, she knows where she is going, and as a thinker on this topic, she speaks with authority about her own considerable personal experience. As a philosopher, her logic is unassailable. And, most importantly, a person of compassion, she can put on another's filter and learn from it.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION, PART TWO

The Letter Never Sent II
Editor, IECEF Adoptee's Homecoming Support Center
(Jessica EunYung Fairbanks, JuHyun Park, Jinkyung Choi)
Published by IECEF
Seoul, 2005
ISBN# 89-91392-08-3

Review by Bill Drucker



The Letter Never Sent II is the second in the book series published by the International Educational and Cultural Exchange Foundation (IECEF) for the ongoing support of adoptees in their birth searches. This is a larger and richer collection of personal letters, poems, and pictures submitted by Korean adoptees to their birth families. There is a wonderful section where adoptees and birth family members write to one another.

Like the first installment, the second of the series maintains its dual format of English (on the left hand page) and Korean (on the right hand page) or English followed by Korean for longer letters. The dual language approach provides Korean speakers with first-person concerns of adoptees searching for their roots. For adoptees, the book is a forum to engage with the people and country with which they still feel a bond.

As Jessica EunYung Fairbanks points out, in the time between the first and second book, significant events occurred in the Korean adoptee community, most importantly, the 2004 Seoul Gathering of Korean adoptees, which brought 450 adoptees from around the world to their birth country to participate, and to represent themselves as a vital and unique group. This event did not go unnoticed. The South Korean government and the international media paid attention.

This second book is more expansive and divided into the *Prologue; Loss; Hope; Before/After Reunion; Re-Connecting; History*, and *Epilogue*. As with the first book, the letters, poems, and pictures of the Korean adoptees are all heartfelt and very tender. They evoke the reader's sympathy.

This is always a special subject among adoptees. The letters and poems with pictures of adoptees reach out with touching messages of hope, longing, and the desire for closure. In *Part 1, Loss*, Hanna Sofia Jung Johansson's feelings are expressed as "a never ending farewell." James Seddon (UK) writes to his birth parents, "You can breath a 'sigh' of relief to know that I am not going to look for you." There is anger, and resentment for being given away. Seddon still needed to write his letter.

In *Part 2, Hope*, Sunny Jo (Norway) articulates how connected she is to her father, Daddy Jin-soon, even though they may never meet. Manouk van Liesbout (Netherlands)

writes to her birth mother, "You will always have a place in my heart although we have never met." Ross Oke begins his letter to his birth mother with "Forgive me, for I cannot offer you any warm words of affection." The themes of connection and disassociation are common among adoptees. Words may be kind and forgiving, curious, or angry and resentful. Some adoptees vent their sadness and pain.

In *Part 3, Before/After Reunion*, Kathy (Hong Song I) Sacco attended the Seoul Gathering, and through a Korean television program, found her and her sister Kristy's relatives. Their letters before the Seoul Gathering and the follow up letters after are especially poignant. In the first letter, Kathy is reserved in her birth search. If nothing can come of it, she hopes her mother is at peace. In the letters after finding their relatives, Kathy and Kristy describe their overwhelming feelings once they've reconnected with birth relatives. This is the successful ending IECEF and ***The Letter Never Sent*** books strives to achieve.

In *Part 4, Reconnecting*, adoptees and birth siblings write to each other. Coming to terms for both parties is as overwhelming as the initial searches. Adoptees and birth family members must overcome time, distance, and culture. Adoptee Christina (USA) was found by her younger birth brother Jae Hyuk, amazingly, through other Korean adoptee contacts at the 2004 Seoul Gathering. Christina corresponded with Jae Hyuk and sister Jae Yi. She receives a letter from her birth mother. There is a heartfelt letter from the birth mother to the adoptive mother.

For adoptees, the process of birth searches is emotionally charged. It is no less emotional for Koreans searching for the children they had placed for adoption years before. Shame or guilt may temper their decision. IECEF encourages adoptees to submit letters and pictures to *adopteecenter@iecef.org* for future book projects. The dual text of English and Korean encourages the Korean families to search as well. Adoptees and birth families can also learn more about IECEF by contacting this Seoul, Korea based organization.

Along with the ongoing publication and distribution of the ***The Letter Never Sent I*** and ***II*** books to Korean-speaking nationals and Korean adoptees, the other goals of IECEF are to provide a host of services for adoptees: Serving as guides to new arrivals in Korea, providing language and culture information, assisting with housing and employment for those considering extended stays in Korea including homestays with local families, and assisting with birth searches. The organization may be contacted at:

International Educational & Cultural Exchange Foundation
115 Oryu 2 Dong, 5th Floor
Korea Baptist Convention Building
Goorogu, Seoul, Korea 152-102
Telephone: 82-2-2683-7315
Fax: 82-2-2683-7310
Email: adopteecenter@iecef.org
http://www.iecef.org

HUNGRY GENIUS

Im, Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema
David James and Kyung Hyun Kim, eds.
Wayne State University Press
Detroit, 2002
ISBN# 0-8143-2869-5

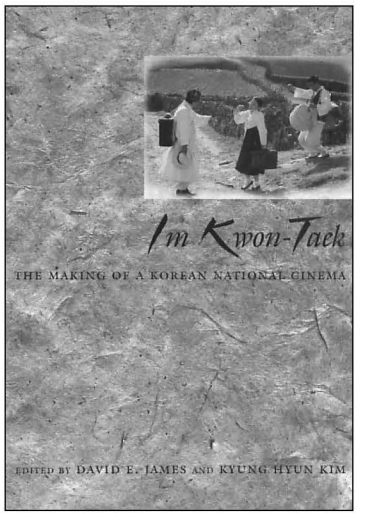
Review by Adam Hartzell

For the first scholarly work on Korean film in the United States, it make sense that such a work would center around Kwon-Taek Im. This prolific filmmaker is now closing in on his 100th film. His most recent film, ***Low Life*** (2004), is number 99.

Im's work spans over 40 years of Korean cinema, starting in 1962 near the middle of what is considered the golden age of Korean cinema. Studying Im allows one to survey more than just one genre, since he has done popular films, melodramas, action films, historical epics, and art films. When Im's ***Mandala*** (1981) won the Grand Prix at the 1981 Hawaii Film Festival, Im became the first Korean director to show on the festival circuit in Europe for some time, and was asked to compete in the Berlin Film Festival.

Later, ***Gilsottum*** (1986) would win an award at the Berlin Film Festival, Soo-yeon Kang would win Best Actress for her role in ***Surrogate Mother*** (1987) at Venice, and ***Come, Come, Come Upward*** (1989) would be awarded at Moscow.

More recently, ***Chunhyang*** (2000) was the first Korean film to be invited to compete at Cannes and was Korea's official selection for the Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award. In 2002, Im received what is perhaps the film world's highest honor, the *Prix de la*



Mise en Scene (best director award) at Cannes for ***Chilwaseon***. Im isn't representative of all that is Korean film, but he is largely responsible for the present success of Korean film.

Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema edited by David James and Kyung Hyun Kim, came out of a retrospective on Im at the University of Southern California in the fall of 1996. Although not "the first English-language scholarly book on South Korean cinema published outside of Korea," as the preface of the book claims, (such honor should be credited to Hyangjin Lee, a Lecturer at the University of Sheffield, who published ***Contemporary Korean Cinema: Identity, Culture, Politics*** in England), it begins to fill the void in scholarly writings on Korean film.

Kyung Hyun Kim, an assistant professor at the University of California, Irvine, starts off the collection with an overview of the history of Korean cinema, Im's life, and his *oeuvre*. Im is unique in that he was able to walk the diplomatic line throughout Korea's tumultuous history. No other director of his generation was able to accomplish such longevity.

He started out not as a dreamer, but as a pragmatist. He was not hungry for art, but food. He needed to work to feed his family and he stumbled upon the film industry. His drive was making money, not art. Thus, he focused on low production costs and high output.

In his first 10 years as a director, he averaged five films a year. In 1973, Im directed ***The Deserted Woman***, a film he says represents his change in film-making direction. He was feeling degraded by the cheap films he was making and was becoming increasingly aware that he could not compete against American films, so he decided to begin making serious art films.

Im arranged an agreement with his financiers that he would make successful films to help pay for his art films. After the huge surprise success of ***Sopyonje*** (1993), a film seemingly pre-destined for a huge loss that ended up grossing more than any film had before in Korea, Im has been given free reign to create whatever his new heart desires.

The following Im films are discussed at length: ***Adada*** (1988), ***Come, Come, Come Upward*** (1989), ***Festival*** (1996), ***Fly High, Run Far: Kaebyok*** (1991), ***The Genealogy*** (1978), ***Mandala*** (1980), ***Sopyonje, Surrogate Mother*** (1986), and ***The Taebaek Mountains*** (1991). An Im filmography is included at the end of the book along with an appendix of significant moments in Korean history and Korean cinema history.

The articles included tackle Im's films from multiple interests. Of particular interest of many of the scholars was how Im uses the suffering of women's bodies as metaphors for Korea's traumatic history. Eunsun Cho, at the time a graduate student in the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California, notes in her chapter, *The Female Body and Enunciation in* ***Adada*** *and* ***Surrogate Mother***, that these two films are rare in Im's *oeuvre* since they allow for moments when the women are permitted to resist the silence imposed upon them. Interestingly, since their bodies are used as metaphors, these characters resist and speak out through their bodies not their words.

Similarly, Chungmoo Choi, an associate professor at the University of California, Irvine, in her chapter *The Politics of Gender Aestheticism and Cultural Nationalism in* ***Sopyonje*** *and* ***The Genealogy***, argues that these films demonstrate how "colonized Korean men attempted to respond to the deprivation of national identity and loss of masculinity by inflicting violence on colonized indigenous woman or onto the emasculated self."

Of particular note in this article is Choi's argument that Song-hwa was raped by Yu-bong after he blinded her with poison. I can not do Choi's argument justice in a few sentences, but a key aspect of the argument is Song-hwa's dress changing to "the time-honored fashion of a married woman" soon after the blinding.

Although Im, in the translated interview that closes the book, said, "I argue that you should not see ***Sopyonje*** as a film that exploits women," after reading Choi's argument, it is difficult not to read the scenes that follow the poisoning as evidence of an incestuous rape.

Kyung Hyun Kim's second article, *Is This How the War Is Remembered?: Deceptive Sex and the Re-masculinized Nation in* ***The Taebaek Mountains***, and Han Ju Kwak's article, *In Defense of Continuity: Discourses on Tradition and the Mother in Festival*, both continue with this feminist critique of Im.

It is commendable, having brought Im in for this retrospective, that most of the scholars here have not held back in taking Im to task about the repetition in his films of rapes and scenes of women being abused that border on sado-masochistic, such as in ***Surrogate Mother***. Im's insistence on this trope has continued on into ***Chunhyang*** which is a traditional folk tale, the choosing of which requires the further display of a woman suffering as a symbol of Korea.

Kim argues that Im focuses on "abhorrent, illicit, and transgressive sexual encounters" in ***The Taebaek Mountains*** to make the crisis of the film the crisis of Korean men, which later justifies "the restoration of 'tradition' and order under a recharged masculinist identity." Kwak, who at the time was a graduate student in the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California, also looks at the appeal to "tradition" that Im presents in ***Festival***. The utopian conclusion of the film "is a retrospective and closed one, made possible only on the basis of communal patriarchal values and the suppression of individual desires and differences, particularly female ones" (pg. 240).

Cho Hae Joang's and Julian Stringer's articles both look at ***Sopyonje***. Cho, a professor in the Department of Sociology at Yonsei University, addresses the Korean public's response to the success and artistic power of ***Sopyonje*** in her article *Sopyonje: Its Cultural and Historical Meaning*. Through an overview of student essays and Korean critics' essays, Cho summarizes all the questions about "Koreanness," including tradition, modernity, and post-modernity that ***Sopyonje*** sparked in the Korean populace.

Yi Hyoin, a lecturer on film theory and Korean film history at several universities in Korea, including Kyung Hee University, chose to

address ***Fly High, Run Far: Kaebyok*** in his chapter, ***Fly High, Run Far*** *and Tonghak Ideology*. After summarizing Tonghak ideology that all people are heaven, Tonghak's place in Korean history, and the Tonghak Rebellion which the movie covers, Yi addresses the controversy around the film, that is, both rightists and leftists were unhappy with it. Yi argues that the film is a critique of the left from a director that can be argued to be more left of center. Im wanted to show how any ideology followed to the extreme will cause problems regardless of that ideology.

David James, who teaches at the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California, is featured in a chapter entitled, *Im Kwon-Taek: Korean National Cinema and Buddhism*, an abbreviated version of which appeared in the Spring 2001 issue of ***Film Quarterly***.

James discusses Im's two films that relate to Buddhism, ***Mandala*** and ***Come, Come, Come Upward***, noting how they both "explore the same question: What is socially at stake in the choice between a pure ascetic life in the mountains and a life of active participation in the world's affairs." It is argued that Im's concerns in these films are institutional Buddhism's times of unresponsiveness to the national social conditions of Korea.

Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema ends with an interview with Im. The filmmaker's responses throughout the interview underscore that Im did not pursue film initially because of a dream or some political or artistic statement he wanted to make. He pursued film to meet life's basic needs, not the luxurious ones.

Im answered a question about influences on his art and the particular styles that inspired him in these words: *Growing up, I wasn't in the environment where I could watch many movies. I only began working in the film industry in order to survive during the post-war period. Once working in film, naturally I watched all the films that were imported. And I think that influences were there, but mostly I learned the craft directly from the production set.*

Im poses a challenge to certain ways of thinking about the emergence of directors and their *oeuvres*. So many directors talk about their influences and an urge to create from their earliest beginnings. In contrast, Im wasn't entering the film world based on some past artistic influence nor some existential anguish to create. The man just wanted to make sure he brought home the bulgogi. Only later did he start to create art, did he start thinking about representing Korea to the world and saving its traditions from being extinguished by the modern world.

To survive, Im had to walk a political tightrope along with the financial tightrope. The military dictatorships that ruled Korea during much of Im's adult life were never sympathetic to families with leftist backgrounds such as Im's. Ever cautious, Im held back the release of ***The Taebaek Mountains*** until a civilian president was in power. Yet, Im was able to present a rare sympathetic view of the Japanese after colonization in his film ***The Genealogy***.

Im may not have posed the stark challenges to Korea's government or people that many argue he should have, but, as Kim notes "He has exuded a spirit of endurance and tolerance, if not resistance, that far outweighs the complicity and compromises involved in the shaping of his career."

Many have mis-analogized Im as the Kurosawa of Korea. Others have compared Im to Mizoguchi, which isn't really accurate either. It is Kyung Hyun Kim, again, who has provided the truer analogy of Im: "He was Korea's Spielberg — but more versatile, radical, and profound than Spielberg ever dreamed of being."

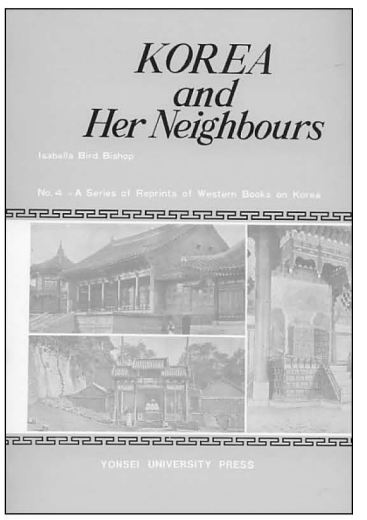
DIPLOMATIC TOURIST MEETS TOURIST DIPLOMAT

Korea and Her Neighbours
By Isabella L. Bird
Yonsei University Press
Seoul, 1970
ISBN# 89-7141-199-6

An American Adviser in Late Yi Korea: The Letters of Owen Nickerson Denny
By Owen Nickerson Denny
University of Alabama Press,
University (AL), 1984
ISBN# 0-8173-0189-5

Review by Daniel Corey Kane

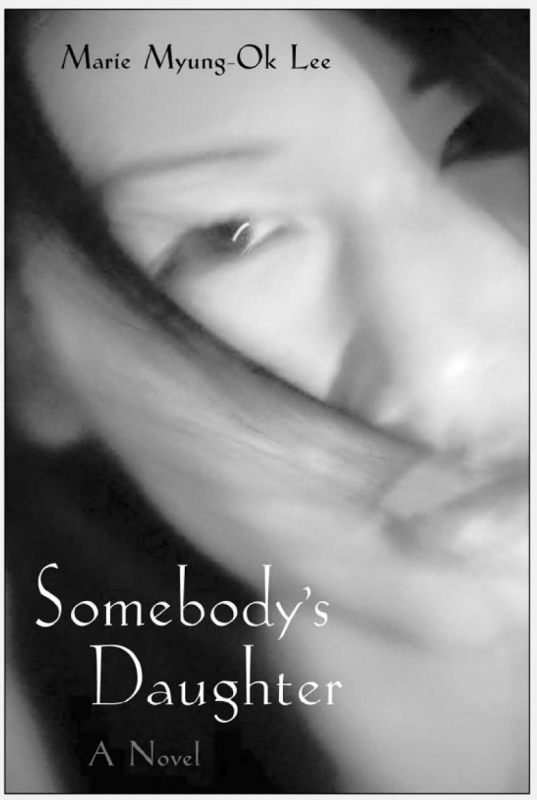
Only a few years separate the diplomatic experiences of Owen



Nickerson Denny in Korea with the more peripatetic — and open-minded — ones of Isabella L. Bird. Between the two of them one catches a glimpse of the changes that enveloped Korea in the eventful decade of 1885-1895; from its opening to Western powers to the period of Russo-Japanese rivalry, the Sino-Japanese War and ultimately Japanese ascendancy.

It is also, however, to catch the death throes of a vanishing, more traditional Korea and the birth pangs of "modernity." Or in the words of Isabella Bird, Korea in

"A moving portrayal of an adopted girl's search for her biological mother."
—**Nora Okja Keller,** author of *Comfort Woman* and *Fox Girl*



Somebody's Daughter
A Novel
Marie Myung-Ok Lee
$23.95 hardcover

Somebody's Daughter is the story of two women: nineteen-year-old Sarah Thorson, who was adopted as a baby by a Lutheran couple in the Midwest, and Kyung-sook, the mother who has always longed for her lost child.

"In this moving portrayal of an adopted girl's search for her biological mother, Marie Lee gives voice and validation to a segment of the Korean American community that has been overlooked too long and too often. *Somebody's Daughter* is a gift for those forgotten, for the thousands of Korean children adopted by white parents, for those who search and yearn for a sense of home and self."
—**Nora Okja Keller,** author of *Comfort Woman* and *Fox Girl*

"Lee's first adult outing is an authentic, emotionally powerful portrayal of two cultures."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"What a beautifully realized and emotionally rich but subtle novel this is. Lee's story of one young woman's search for self in Korea will resonate equally with both adult *and* young adult readers—a remarkable achievement."
—**Michael Cart,** author of *Necessary Noise: Stories of Our Families as They Really Are*



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1895 was "in a curious condition. The 'old order' was changing, but the new had not taken its place".

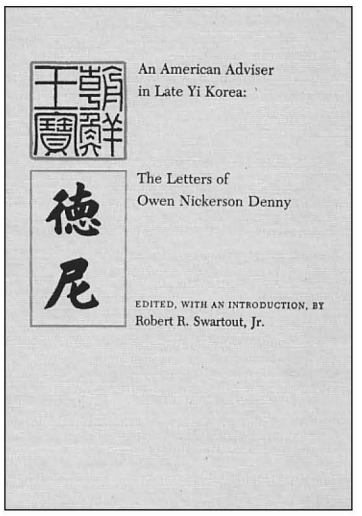
The varying impressions to be gleaned from the collection of Denny's letters and published writings, composed while he served in Seoul as the Korean King Kojong's Minister of Foreign Affairs, are naturally worlds apart from Bird's voluminous impressions of her nearly two-year sojourn in Korea between the years 1894 and 1897; an extended, if intermittent, stay that allowed her to travel rather extensively in the peninsula's northern and northeastern regions.

The letters of the former offer a glimpse into the workings of the diplomatic corps, in particular Chinese efforts to stymie Korea's attempts to assert its sovereignty in the new world of international politics newly opened up to it. The latter are much more personal in nature, reactions to the experiences of travel in the hinterland and impressions of and reflections on the customs of a people wholly foreign to her.

Robert Swartout's introduction to ***An American Advisor*** serves to familiarize the reader both with the Korea of the period as well as with the author of the collected letters. Owen Nickerson Denny (1838-1900), who from 1886-1890 served as adviser to King Kojong and vice minister of the Korean Home Office, was originally from Oregon. Denny was a lawyer by vocation and for a short period held the position of police court judge in Portland, Oregon (and thus the title 'judge' that would subsequently form a part of his name). An active Republican, in 1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Denny United States consul at Tianjin (Tientsin), China.

As it turned out, it was Denny's fateful appointment to Tianjin that would pave the way for his career in Korea, for in Tianjin, Denny befriended Hongzhang Li (Li Hung-chang), the Chinese viceroy and arguably the most powerful man in China of the period, and who had his base of operations at Tianjin. It was through Li's influence that in 1886 that Denny was appointed adviser on foreign affairs to King Kojong. It was Li's misplaced hope that through Denny he might gain some powerful leverage over the conduct of Korean foreign affairs. It was a great miscalculation.

Denny arrived in Korea with the loftiest of intentions — and one that must have immediately troubled Li (to whom these words were



addressed): "So long as I remain here [Seoul] I shall do all I can do to advance the interests of Corea." But arguably Denny's personal character, honorable to a fault, was ill prepared to deal with the vagaries and intrigues of Korean politics of the time. Denny comes across in his letters as a thoroughly stubborn and self-righteous character, and not a very endearing one.

The book's editor has arranged Denny's letters under four general headings: Personal Affairs, International Diplomacy, The Controversy Over "China and Korea" (a published essay of Denny's, strongly condemning Chinese meddling in Korea's affairs), and Economic and Financial Development of Korea. Included as well are two appendices to include Denny's various published writings on Korea and the entire text of his 1888 essay China and Korea.

Though not an absolute failure, Denny's stint in Korea seems to boast few victories. Drawing upon his skills as a trained lawyer, Denny's greatest successes perhaps came in his composition of the amity treaty opening relations between Korea and France in 1886. He also claimed other credits, however, such as working to defuse the Port Hamilton crisis, during which the British navy seized Korea's Geomun Island and the Russians threatened to match the British gesture with the seizure of Port Lazareff Yeongheunghang, (north of Wonsan in present North Korea). He also boasts of thwarting a putative Chinese plot to annex Korea that same year.

Such victories as the latter, however, serve also to characterize the nature of the times confronting Denny in Korea. It was a period during which the newly-opened country was awash in plot and counter-plot, when it was a full-time job to simply safeguard the nation's sovereignty, to say nothing of promoting its further interests. Denny came into his office at a time when Chinese ambitions and influence on the peninsula were at their zenith under the immediate direction of the Chinese Resident General Shikai Yuan (Yuan Shih-k'ai), and via him by his erstwhile benefactor, Hongzhang Li in Tianjin. It was Denny's repeated frustrations regarding Yuan's perceived meddling that found their culmination in a vituperative essay privately published in Shanghai accusing China of gross violations of Korean sovereignty and attacking Chinese aspersions as arbiter of Korea's external relations.

Overall, Denny's letters portray personal frustrations and setbacks. For example, a fire at a Yokohama hotel while en route to Korea destroyed much of Denny's personal property and left him financially strapped for years to come. Much of Denny's frustration seemingly comes from professional challenges posed by the very nature of the assignment and of the times. Denny comes across as particularly thin-skinned and quick to take offense. He strikes one, in fact, as perhaps the typical American: Idealistic, with a keen sense of justice, an earnest (read Christian) desire to do good and be appreciated for it, and perhaps a bit naïve. Through his letters and writing, he does not seem to be a man of striking intellect and offers no poignant insights, but rather is supremely loyal to his charge, fighting for the legal rights and privileges he feels should be accorded Korea as one of the newest members of the international community of nations.

How different in tone are the writings of the traveling Englishwoman Isabella L. Bird (1831-1904). Though she encounters frustrations, she communicates in her writings a palpable optimism and an insatiable curiosity. She certainly waxes judgmental, and reveals herself a product of her times (such as in her periodic concern with racial features), Bird comes across as the image of patience and understanding.

Isabella Bird was a fiercely Christian woman, a fact reflected in her more-than-travelogues of Korea and elsewhere, where she more than once gave expression to what she perceived as the "desperate needs of the un-Christianized world". As the daughter of a preacher, one would expect no less. And yet, Mrs. Bird's observations from her extended travels in America, Hawaii, the Near and Far East still stand on their own merits as keen observations of the behaviors of peoples with whom she interacted and among whom she traveled.

The fact that in 2001 a Korean translation appeared of Bird's ***Korea and Her Neighbors*** (1898) stands as testament to the continued relevancy of her detailed writings and her descriptions of Korea. In particular, her accounts of Seoul and the personality of Queen Min (with whom she enjoyed several royal audiences) are still cited regularly by scholars on Korea for the detail and insight of their description.

Like most western travelers of the period, Bird saw much to criticize in Korea: The state of the roads, the corruptness of officialdom, the backwardness of the people, and of course the "demon worship" that prevailed amongst the commoners. Yet hers is not only a pontificating voice. She sees much of value in Korea, further enhanced by her delicate eye for beauty. Where other westerners saw in the Korean capital only a miasma of ill odors, rude mores, and corruption, to Bird, Seoul is preternaturally blessed ("few capitals are more beautifully situated").

Considering she had arrived in Korea on the cusp of the Sino-Japanese War, she still retains the presence of mind to sing the delights of the Korean spring, the beauties of the upper reaches of the Han River ("in its variety, beauty, and unexpectedness exhausts the vocabulary of admiration"), and the wonders of the Geumgang Mountains ("There is assuredly no single view that I have seen in Japan or even in Western China which equals it for beauty and grandeur"). In short, Bird's description of her months traveling in the central and northern Korean peninsula — disregarding the nineteenth century prose — reads even today as a balanced and open-minded impression of a clearly troubled but very remarkable land.

That the 62-year-old Bird found the stamina — and she was nothing if not the image of Victorian vim and vigor — for a several week voyage up the Han River in a cramped *sampan* (five passengers, baggage, and provisions in a boat 28 x 4 feet) in spring and summer is remarkable enough. Far from worn down from that adventure, Bird went on to travel by horseback through the Geumgang Mountains, by boat up the Taedong River to Pyongyang and, after a stint in China and Siberian Russia returned to Korea for more. Travel in Korea certainly posed its unique challenges. Roads were often nothing more than muddy one mule tracks and tigers threatened the unwary or unwise traveler (Bird confesses that though terror of the tiger was universal in Korea, she had never seen one). She was often rudely turned away from inns by proprietors unwilling to lodge a foreigner. And finances were particularly problematic. As there were obviously no banks in the Korean hinterland and cash impossible to come by, all money had to be carried along. It took six men and a pony to carry a hundred yen in cash — about $20! And yet, Bird's party was never set upon by bandits (which could be not be said for her time in Manchuria) and Bird continually praises the safety of Korea, where a woman such as herself could travel by night with nothing to worry about (save for the rumored tigers).

Bird's book is much more than a travelogue. The writer's descriptions are unusually rich in natural and cultural detail. Particularly fascinating to this reader were her descriptions of Seoul, both on her first trip to that city in 1894 and again upon her return there from China and Russia (where she had fled to escape the Sino-Japanese War) in 1896. Also long valued have been Bird's rare description of Queen Min, with whom she enjoyed several interviews.

As the book's title reveals, though it is primarily about her voyages in Korea, it also includes brief descriptions of her forays in northeast China and Siberian Russia as she waited out the Sino-Japanese War. Bird augments her already-detailed narrative with tables and statistics for the years 1886-1896 on such matters as Korean foreign trade, imports by country of origin, population, and missionary statistics, which could also prove very valuable to the reader or researcher. The text is accompanied by Bird's original photography and the book's original engravings and benefits as well by a thorough indexing.

Of all Bird's virtues, perhaps her greatest credit is the fact that she was not only indefatigable but imperturbable. A westerner, in particular a western woman, traveling in the Korean hinterland in the nineteenth century, was sure to attract much unwelcome and exasperating attention from the locals. Her sojourns in roadside inns often devolved into circus sideshows, with entire villages elbowing their way into her small room to stare through the night in fascination at her bizarre ensemble of oiled sheets (to keep off the vermin), camera and tripod, and curry dinners.

Yet she remained through it all the image of stoic forbearance. As she herself points out, "No Englishman could have kept his temper in such circumstances from 8 p.m. til midnight. He would certainly have knocked somebody down, and then there would have been a fight. The ill-bred curiosity tires but does not annoy me…" Indeed, did not most "international incidents" of the late nineteenth century between Asia and the West not begin with the short temper of a man?"

Bird died in 1904 at age 73 — while contemplating another voyage to China! Shortly after her death, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography described Mrs. Isabella Lucy Bishop Bird as "small in stature, quiet in speech and manner, and… a traveller [sic] of extraordinary courage. Fearless on horseback, she explored alone the most dangerous and barbarous countries and possessed of 'a restless disposition' and 'a keen observer with a retentive memory', she was a fluent speaker and had great power of vivid narrative."

One might be apt to dismiss this description as so much national conceit and Victorian obfuscation, but because I read that description after closing her ***Korea and Her Neighbors***, I am entirely prepared to concede the point.

A JOURNALIST'S VIEW OF THE NORTH

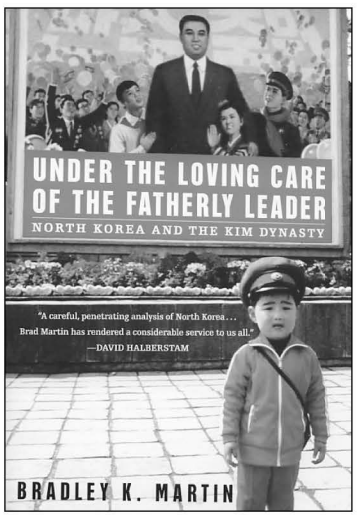
Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader
By Bradley Martin
St. Martin's Press
NYC, 2004
ISBN# 0-312-32221-6

Review by John Feffer

It is often said that North Korea is the most puzzling country in the world. It is a difficult place to visit. The few journalists who make it there do not have the freedom to interview anyone they want. Its archives are not open to scholars.

This does not mean, however, that no information is available on North Korea. It just requires a little bit more digging and interpreting. For the last three decades, veteran journalist Bradley Martin has been compiling his notes drawn from four trips to North Korea, patient scrutiny of official publications, and interviews with numerous defectors.

His book ***Under the Loving Care***



of the Fatherly Leader, an immense and detailed examination of North Korean history and politics, integrates much of the recent scholarship on the country and adds some new pieces to the puzzle.

At over 800 pages, Martin's tome is not for the casual reader. One must have more than a passing curiosity about North Korea's two leaders — founding father Il Sung Kim and his son Jong Il Kim — in order to stay with the text. For those who hang in there, however, the book has numerous rewards. Martin adds considerably to the portrait of Il Sung Kim provided by political scientist Dae-Sook Suh in the last significant work on the North Korean leader. With the help of defectors' testimony, Martin provides a wealth of information about Jong Il Kim and his prospective successors, such as sons Jong Nam Kim, Jong-chol Kim, and Jong-un Kim.

The value of Martin's book does not lie in any particularly novel argument about the genesis or character of the North Korean regime. As the book explains, Il Sung Kim's worldview and policies trace back to his days as a guerrilla fighter, and to the loyalties forged among his small group of combatants as they fought in China and then fled to exile in the Soviet Union. The author's depiction of the Korean War and the subsequent economic revival of the North follow fairly conventional lines.

Rather, the book's importance lies more in its accumulation of intriguing details, some new, and some that serve to confirm earlier rumors. The picture of North Korean society that emerges from the narrative is far more thorough and detailed than the usual monochromatic depiction of a monolithic state. Martin reads between the lines of Il Sung's official biography — which runs to multi-volumes — to trace the switchbacks in North Korean policy: Against capitalism and then pro-market, against the West and then pro-engagement.

He supplements this close reading of the North Korean texts with information from his four reporting trips to North Korea. On his first trips, he found some things to admire about the country. Subsequent trips left him considerably less enthusiastic.

Martin's extensive interviews with defectors provide the most interesting — and controversial — glimpses into the lives of various North Koreans. His interviews with former high officials reveal considerable divisions within the North Korean elite. Several defectors, for instance, suggest that Jong Il's rise to power was more calculated than hitherto assumed. To win out over his uncle Yong-ju Kim, Jong Il Kim deliberately elevated his father to near-deity status, in order to improve his own chances of dynastic succession. Another high-ranking defector reveals that North Korea's gift of food to the South after the extensive flooding of 1984 was a miscalculation. North Korean officials assumed that the South would reject the offer. When Seoul agreed, however, the North had to follow through, with the result that the official who'd come up with the idea was sent to the countryside to dig latrines for six months.

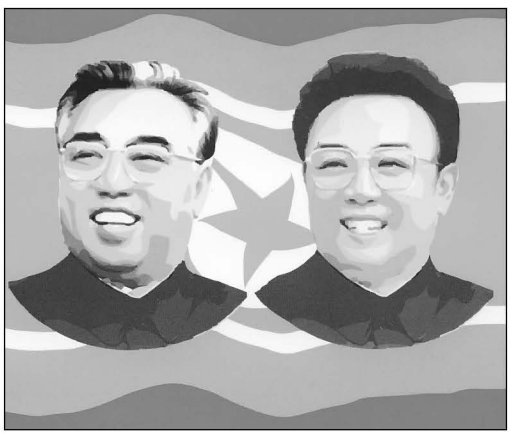
Interviews with former prison camp guards and inmates offer more details about the harrowing experience of those who fall afoul of the regime or those who are related in some way to dissidents, real or imagined. The days are long past when the testimony of defectors could be dismissed as South Korean government propaganda. While some stories remain the stuff of rumor — and Martin unwisely includes the most unlikely of stories such as the rendering of the bodies of victims into soap for the leadership — there is simply too much overlap in the descriptions of executions, starvations, arbitrary punishment and so forth to describe the human rights situation within North Korea as anything but hellish.

Some of the most interesting defector information about North Korean society, however, has nothing to do with the lives of the VIPs or the transgressions of the regime. There is much in Martin's book about the lives of ordinary North Koreans as they meet partners of the opposite sex, try to advance careers, struggle with a food crisis that gathered momentum in the 1980s, and revere Il Sung Kim (even after defecting from the country) while disdaining Jong Il Kim. Some of this information is startling.

Defectors describe the juvenile gangs they joined and the brutal fights they conducted (which puts the recent near-riot in Pyongyang over North Korea's loss in the World Cup qualifier against Iran into perspective). Some of the information debunks received wisdom. Rather than being conscripted for "forced labor" in Russia, North Koreans eagerly sought the assignment in Siberian logging camps in order to earn additional money.

While most of this information fascinates, there is, frankly, just a little too much of it. Indeed, some of the book reads like barely assembled raw material, such as long transcripts of interviews with defectors and extended conversations with government officials. The specialist on North Korea will perhaps welcome all this information, as well as the extremely thorough and useful footnotes. But Martin — or his editor — might

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have exercised some restraint in order to ensure that not just experts reach the end of the volume. Some readers also might find his occasionally irreverent tone off-putting. But Martin is a wisecracking journalist not a Koreanist, and journalists love to take aim at sacred cows.

Several policy recommendations emerge near the end of the book. Through the accumulated facts, a few conclusions stand out. North Korea doesn't appear to be near collapse, Martin argues, and it would be naïve to assume that North Koreans would welcome an American intervention. Martin believes that diplomacy can still resolve the differences between the United States and North Korea, perhaps facilitated by a high-level envoy such as George Bush Sr.

After 800-plus pages of analysis, Martin concludes that Jong Il Kim could compromise if the United States, Japan, and South Korea also compromise, and these countries "showed respect rather than hostile contempt." It can only be hoped that American policymakers — a group not noted for their literary patience — will make it through the long build-up in order to get to this very important punch line.

RESEARCH WITHOUT RHETORIC

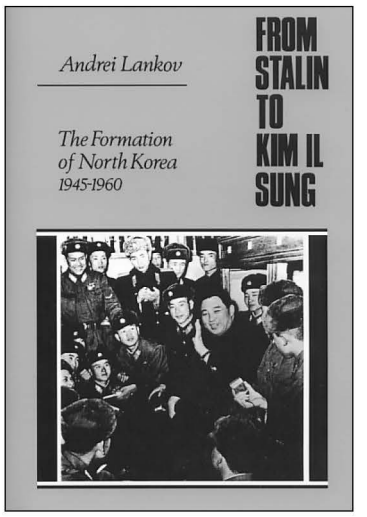
From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945-1960
By Andrei Lankov
Rutgers University Press
New Brunswick NJ), 2002
ISBN# 0-8135-3117-9

Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956
By Andrei Lankov
University Hawai'i Press
Honolulu, 2005
ISBN# 0-8248-2809-7

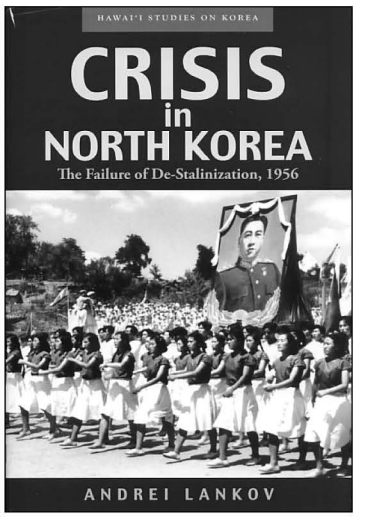
Review by R. Mark Frey

There is such a paucity of information about the workings of the North Korean political system that virtually anything is welcome to those seeking to understand how North Korea got to be where it is today. Especially valuable are well-reasoned accounts that dispense with right wing ideological spin and are a sincere attempt to find out what is going on there.

In recent years, readers have finally begun to encounter publications which try to provide context and, hopefully, guidance for a more balanced and less bellicose U.S. policy in dealings between the U.S. and North Korea.



Andrei Lankov is a lecturer in the Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia and, following years of research, is now providing a wealth of information about the origins of North Korea as a communist state, and its later evolution from Soviet puppet status to an independent totalitarian state which amazes even its detractors by its continued ability to survive despite innumerable obstacles. In ***From Stalin to Kim Il Sung***, Lankov observes:



Yet, the same regime has demonstrated an uncanny ability to survive the most dangerous challenges virtually intact. By the late 1990s North Korea is the only surviving example of an avowed Leninist (or rather Leninist-Stalinist) state. To almost everybody's surprise, the seemingly fragile, awkward and irrational Pyongyang political and social system has outlived similar regimes which in the 1970s or even mid-1980s looked far more efficient and more successful.

How did North Korea come to present a serious threat to world stability with its nuclear capability? As Lankov so adroitly notes: "Still, North Korea is a rather unusual place, and it is difficult (indeed, impossible) to understand its present without knowledge of its past."

Lankov two books offer some sorely needed historical perspective. In ***From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945-1960*** he describes the origins and development of North Korea with the help of resources formerly unavailable to researchers, namely, materials from the recently-opened Russian archives which became available following the collapse of the Soviet Union. While admitting that the materials reflect an overtly Soviet perspective, he nonetheless argues for their utility due to their insights into the Soviet influence on North Korean development.

According to Lankov, the Soviet forces were critical for the defeat of Japanese forces in 1945 which, in turn, led to a continued Soviet presence and influence. At the same time, a Cold War dynamic was playing out with a U.S. presence in South Korea and Japan during the 1940s and into the 1950s.

Unlike other Soviet-dependent states in, for example, Eastern Europe, North Korea had to be dealt with differently because there was no effective communist system in place. Hence, "The Soviet authorities had to create a foundation for the sort of regime they wanted to see there ...Very important roles in the formation of the North Korean state and its early development were played by numerous Soviet Koreans — Soviet citizens of Korean extraction. They were sent to North Korea by the Soviet authorities and occupied various leading positions during the period of 1945-1960."

The Soviets attempted to impose their version of communism (Stalinism) on North Korea at the time by using its Soviet Korean faction. By the mid-1950s, however, with the rise of Kruschev and his efforts to modify Stalinism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, there were some interesting developments in North Korea. The moderate tendencies were rejected and Il Sung Kim relied upon Korean identification with independence and nationalism to oppose the Soviet presence and influence. It appears that Il Sung Kim used the Soviet presence to systematically eliminate his opposition, consolidate his power, and more effectively take control of the country — in essence, fashioning his own North Korean version of Stalinist state socialism (what is now referred to as *juche* or *juche* socialism), one in which there was a significant degree of independence from Soviet (and even Chinese) control.

In his 2005 book, ***Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956***, Lankov observes:

The crisis of 1956 basically was a conflict of two trends; the more indigenous, more independent, more nationalist, but also more repressive, reckless, and eventually harsh political line personified by Kim Il Sung versus the more open-minded, more liberal, but also pro-foreign political line personified by the opposition leaders. Kim Il Sung — or rather, his camp — was on the (ostensibly preemptive) offensive in late 1955, maneuvering in early 1956, repelling sudden and forceful assaults in August and September, and eventually winning the struggle from late 1956 onward.

The effect of this consolidation of power was the eventual glorification of Il Sung Kim and his family; essentially an all-powerful personality cult, which, in turn, was obsessed with protecting North Korea from outside encroachment. (See, also, Bradley Martin's ***Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty***

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for an even more pronounced examination of this theme.)

Lankov's two books make a solid contribution to greater understanding of the development of a brand of state socialism within the North Korean Stalinist state. This type of work will hopefully help inform our policy makers in their dealings with a country which does indeed have nuclear capability and must not be dismissed.

UNDERSTANDING TWO LEADERS

Great Leader, Dear Leader: Demystifying North Korea Under the Kim Clan
By Bertil Lintner
Silkworm Books
Seattle, 2005
ISBN# 9-749-57569-5

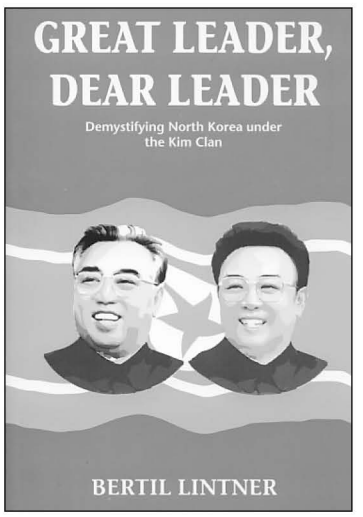
Review by Bill Drucker

After September 11, 2001, there was a policy shift to the right in this country. The Bush administration announced hard-line tactics toward terrorism, and the countries that support terrorism. In his famous 2002 State of the Union speech, Bush labeled by name three countries as the "Axis of Evil" — Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.

In 2001, many U.S. political pundits and sources from North Korea suggested that the U.S. would consider military action against North Korea. As the situation played out, the aggression was ultimately turned to Iraq. But North Korea is never out of mind for America. As recent as 2005, the North Korean leadership declared that it possessed nuclear weapons. This statement rippled across the Pacific.

A true analysis of a country's leader is a great source of insight about that country. North Korea has had only two leaders in its modern history, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, father and son. Analyses of these two, of varying quality, with a lot of plain guesswork, have been plentiful.

Great Leader, Dear Leader is the latest book to make such an analysis. Bertil Lintner is a seasoned Far Eastern journalist. He was one of a few western correspondents to visit North Korea in 2004. In this book, he interviews Koreans on both sides, Koreans in Japan, and other Korean experts in an attempt to demystify this least-known and most-demonized "Axis of Evil" country.



Granted, North Korea has not extended any friendly or negotiating hand to the U.S., or even to its closest neighbors. North Korea's rhetoric has been by turns evasive, seemingly irrational, fiercely militaristic, and openly hostile. North Korean is the only modern nation that can defy international pressures and shut itself off from the world. Lintner marks off the critical time period from June 2000, when South Korean President Dae Jung Kim entered Pyongyang with his Sunshine Policy and huge sums of money, to the present time of North Korea's nuclear weapons admission. He contrasts the hopeful note struck with the 2000 Korean Summit for detente and peaceful reconciliation with the recent deterioration of agreements to tensions between the two Koreas, and with North Korea's tense relations with China, Japan, and the U.S.

In the recent past, North Korea has made attempts to attract foreign investors. It received few takers because of the government's poor track record of repayment, and due to its lack of any actual success with foreign investments. To raise cash, missiles and missile technology have been sold to countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. North Korean diplomats around the world have set up illegal operations. However, ordinary commercial products such as seafood, clothes, and medicines are also exported. To maintain a sense of power, North Korea has continued in its nuclear weapons program.

Lintner sees the internal failings of North Korea which have been caused by its two leaders imposing *juche*, North Korea's unique ideology based on self-reliance. The three principles of *juche* are *chaju* — political independence from other countries, *charip* — economic self-sufficiency, and *chawi* — self defense. *Juche* worked when an industrial infrastructureexisted, such as during the 1970s and 1980s. This infrastructure collapsed in the 1990s and has not been replaced. Most of the few industries that were upgraded were confined to those supporting missile production and nuclear programs.

The *juche* ideology was so fused with Confucian ideals of respect for authority, starting with the regime of Il Sung Kim, extending into the regime of the son, Jong Il Kim, that even in the harshest of famines, when death tolls climbed into the hundreds of thousands, the people did not rise up. The elder Kim was clever in his gradual construction of a myth about himself to the people. He also consolidated power until his was the first and last word in the North Korean politburo.

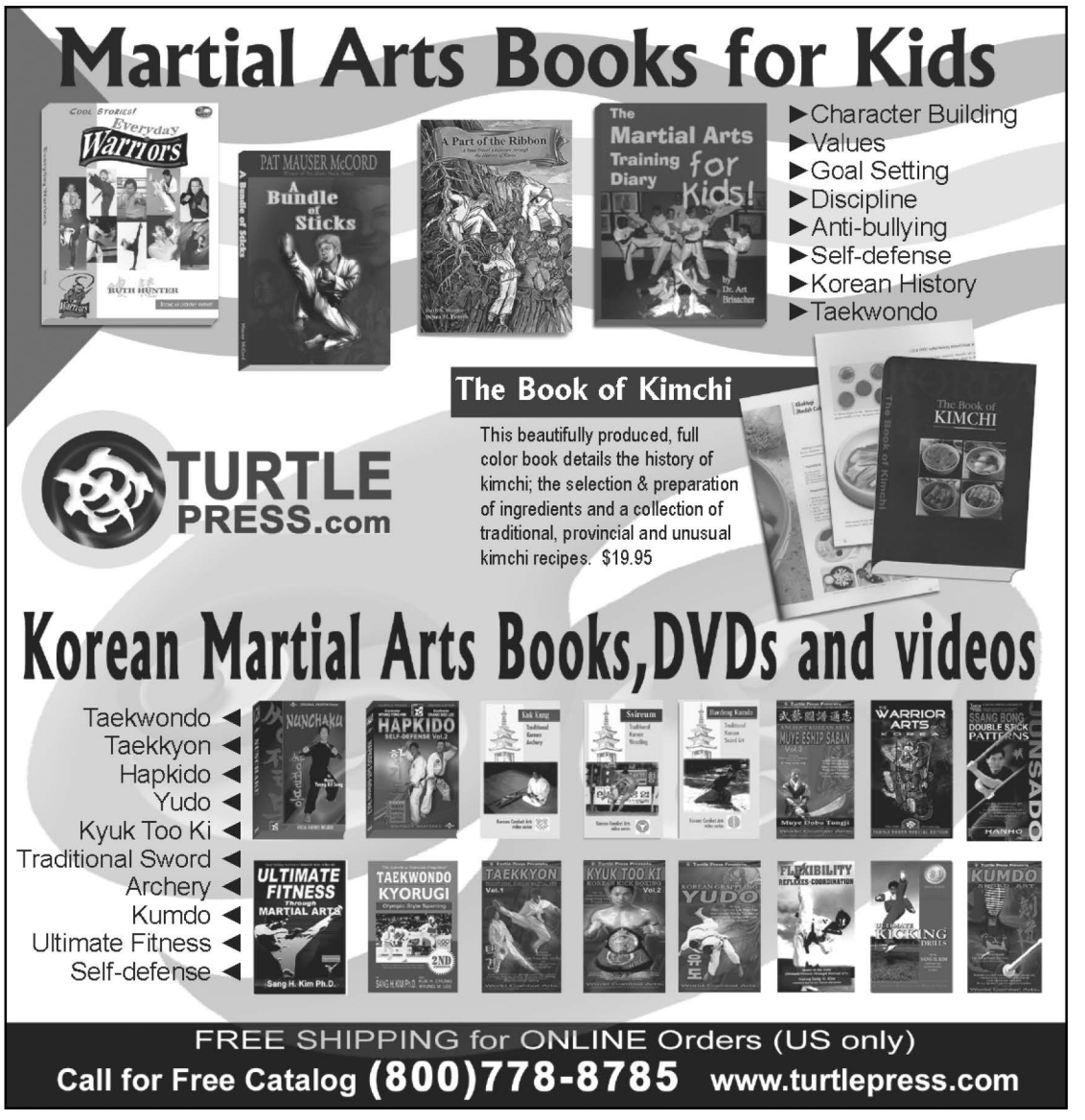
Under his son and heir, the Central Committee echelon and the high-ranking military have been controlled by bribes, promotions and jobs for their families, better housing and food, and constant monitoring. Under the younger Kim, individuals and institutions that are farther away from the central power and Pyongyang receive less state subsidies of food or health care. Therefore, the poorest people in the remotest provinces were the first to starve.

Along with the ideals of *juche* and Confucianism, the North Korean people are indoctrinated from birth to the supreme virtues of the two leaders. All citizens serve a mandatory military tour of duty. The media, news, and education are state regulated. The secret police quietly eliminate critics and dissidents. The state has so effectively controlled the lives of all North Koreans, that if there is opportunity for the people, they choose escape over insurrection.

Outside North Korea, illegal activities behind the North Korean diplomatic missions help raise cash, get deals for arms sales, and serve as satellites for intelligence gathering. The *Chongryun* or the association of North Koreans in Japan acts as an overseas post with Koreans loyal to Pyongyang. This group has provided money and technology directly to North Korea. Despite crackdowns and internal defections, the *Chongryun* are still around and provide a vital link for the North Korea.

One other important factor that Lintner (and Erik Cornell before him) points out is that North Korea's neighboring countries need the country to be sustained more than they need it to fall. The burden of subsidizing millions of North Koreans would ruin the economies of South Korea, China, Japan, and even the U.S. The expedient way to help North Korea is to provide aid to help North Korea rebuild an economic infrastructure. Lintner concludes that maintaining status quo on the Korean peninsula is not an option. Tensions between the two Koreas and the U.S. remain high. The foreign residents in Pyongyang see the next reform coming with the nuclear confrontation between U.S. and North Korea.

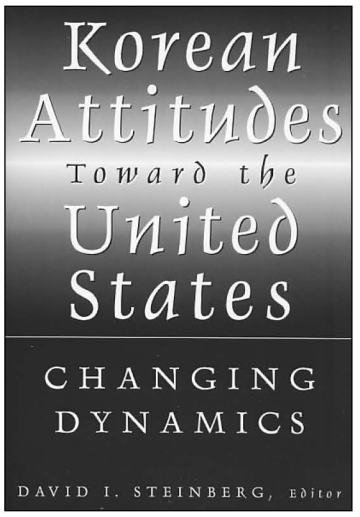
Great Leader, Dear Leader is a well-analyzed and thoughtfully-written book. The author Lintner shares common ground in his ideas about North Korea with other western writers, such as Bruce Cumings (U.S.) and Erik Cornell (Sweden). Like these contemporaries, Lintner sees the inevitable reforms coming, by gradual evolution, external aggression, or by internal power struggle. The book includes a historical chronology of North Korean events, and a who's who of the North Korean Central Committee. Lintner has the right idea here, in that understanding the leaders and their motives is the key to securing stability in the volatile Northeast Asia region and in the world, today and tomorrow.



GETTING RID OF BIG BROTHER

Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics
David I. Steinberg, ed.
M.E Sharpe, Inc.,
Armonk (NY), 2005
ISBN# 0-765-61436-7

Review by Bill Drucker



Nothing is ever simple in geo-political situations. If it were, "Yankee go home" could have been taken seriously and U.S. forces would have left South Korea decades ago. ***Korean Attitudes Toward the United States*** describes in-depth, analytical studies of the Korean American relations and the rise of anti-American sentiment. The contributors to this book are well-known scholars, writers, historians, and political analysts, including Victor Cha, Bruce Cumings, Meredith Woo-Cumings, Robert Gallucci, G. John Ikenberry, Uichol Kim, and Ronald Meinardus. Twenty authors have provided their insights into to a critical issue and proposed possible solutions.

The book is divided into four sections: *Part I, Global, Regional, and Comparative Perspectives*; *Part II, Structural and Strategic Phenomena*; *Part III, Alliance Perspectives*; and *Part IV, Civil Society Perspectives*.

South Korea has deep and complex ties with the United States. Over the past five decades, the two countries have become entwined economically, politically, and militarily. Korea's strategic position in the Pacific Rim impacts neighboring nations, including China and Japan.

The growing anti-American sentiment, while at its highest in recent years, is nothing new. There are plenty of past incidents that have touched off waves of anti-American hostility. For example, there was outrage shortly after 1945 when U.S. forces brought with them to Korea some Japanese military as consultants to help manage Korea. At various times, throughout the 60s, 70s, and 80s, students rioted against U.S. support of dictators Syngman Rhee and Chung Hee Park.

There is simmering hatred for the U.S. military's mangled involvement in the 1980 Kwangju Massacre. In view of some Koreans, U.S. extols the virtues of democracy and independence for other countries but has remained an entrenched military and policymaking occupier within South Korea. Under the façade of normalcy, tensions between South Korea and the United States have been constant since the two nations first met.

For South Koreans, one of the key issues is the preservation of Korean sovereignty versus the necessity of a quid-pro-quo alliance with the United States. There is a generation divide on this issue among South Koreans. As a rule, younger Koreans tend to be fiercely nationalistic, and want the U.S. out. Some Koreans blame the U.S. for the tensions between the two Koreas. Older Koreans and Korean Americans tend to believe in a strong military presence and containment of North Korea, viewed as a hostile and opportunistic enemy. This DMZ mindset is fueled by new evidence of nuclear technology in the North, and North Korea's bellicose statements of nuclear capability. North Korea also reinforces the position of younger Koreans — that there is only one enemy, the United States.

Anti-American sentiment is a global force. An important focus from this panel of writers is America's self-criticism of the Americanization of other countries; usually backed by money and guns. In the current U.S. administration, America is hard pressed for staunch allies around the world, while anger and hostility rise against U.S. policies and practices, its institutions, and its citizens. In the wake of 9/11, the U.S. lost its sense of invulnerability.

In *Part I*, G. John Ikenberry states that people admire America's ideals and open society. The misgivings are over U.S. role in the world and its policies. With Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. implemented its "preemptive" action to its policy. Before democracy and human rights, first there must be security and order.

In South Korean minds, the U.S. policy of democracy and human rights is surface rhetoric. In reality, the unstated agenda of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), the continued support of dictatorships, and the suppression and arrest of opposing leaders and students have been the norm. Skirmishes between Koreans and U.S. military, even with citizens' protests, have been swayed in favor of Americans.

Ikenberry sees the problem of an American shift of alliance-based multilateral consensus to a unilateral, imperial strategy. He points out that Western European allies have decisively expressed their concerns about recent U.S. policies. The new ethos of "going after the threat" and "getting the job done" has the ring of unilateral decisiveness. The problem is that it tramples over other countries' autonomy, policies, and treaties. Hence, resentments are transformed into anti-Americanism.

Brad Glosserman compares the anti-Americanism in Japan to that of Korea. With Japan, the resentment stems from national identity. Korea is the unique case of a country divided, so the resentments are around reunification and national autonomy.

In Woo-Cumings' and Meinardus' essay, the comparisons of Germany and South Korea with the U.S. are examined. Despite similarities in their histories, Germany and South Korea are culturally different. The political alliance of Germany with the U.S. is more multilateral. Korea's alliance with the U.S. is bilateral but unequal. The Korean peninsula has seen radical shifts of security, economy, and the military from the Clinton era to the current Bush administration.

In *Part II*, Bruce Cumings explores the structural and strategic basis for Korean anti-Americanism. In 2000, still fresh from the Two Koreas summit and after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Dae Jung Kim visited Bush at the White House. The events turned disastrous, politically and personally, with Bush's hard-line position on North Korea. The Sunshine Policy derailed; any hopes for more Korean summits were crushed. In a few hasty moves and with few belligerent words, the U.S. President had turned Korea, both North and South, from anti-Americanism to anti-Bushism. His hawkish attitudes have had a galvanizing effect among other nations dubbed "theaxis of evil."

For Victor Cha, protests in South Korea are not anti-American per se but expressions of a new Korean identity. Nationalism is a passionate feeling among Koreans. Public demonstrations and protests, to young Koreans, are their right to democratic display, their differences of opinion with current U.S. policies. In the wake of the Korea summit, Cha sees the shift of U.S. policies as the impetus to relations on the Korean peninsula. U.S. has rankled and squirmed when South Korea without U.S. consent moved to stabilize relations with North Korea. The way Bush responds to North Korea is 180 degrees opposite to the way in which South Korea deals with North Korea.

Chung-in Moon explores anti-Americanism in terms of the Korean national psyche. The Korean language has developed special words: *banmi* (anti-Americanism), *sungmi* worship of United Sates) and *hyonmi* (loathing). Other words include *yonmi* (associate with America), *chinmi* (pro-American). As the Korean vocabulary expands, so does the image of Americans. For Koreans, or any other nationals, images of Americans is neither fixed nor monolithic. What is certain is that anti-American sentiment has been rising in recent years among the younger Korean generations.

Part III considers the changing relationship in the U.S.-Korean alliance. Chung Min Lee sees the need for revamping the alliance for new roles and missions, particularly for regional security. Lee predicts troubles if South Korea purses greater autonomy and national security at the expense of the U.S.

Part IV considers the civil society perspectives. For most of the American military presence in South Korea, Koreans were free to praise U.S. but not to criticize it. This ended with the Kwangju Uprising in 1980. This student demonstration that turned into a melee became young Koreans' watershed to demonstrate against the wrongs of the Korean and American governments. The protests and demonstrations have not stopped since then.

If the U.S. wants to be loved and respected around the world, it will get neither with its current policies and practices. In South Korea, if U.S. demands gratitude for past assistance, as Katherine Moon puts it, this has no place Korea. At least, not anymore.

South Korea must come to terms as well. This love-hate relationship with the U.S. cannot continue any more than the tenuous state of North and South Korea. To truly resolve the situation, South Korea must suffer the consequences, either to break free of U.S. and be an autonomous power, or remain a dependent, though economically viable ally. Both routes have their own risks. Ironically, the high price of independence is the very thing the U.S. preaches.

Korean Attitudes Toward the United States is a serious, thought-provoking, and stimulating read. These writers are the best and the brightest analysts on the Korean issue. It is important to understand not just the situation in the Korean peninsula, but the international dynamics of the situation as well.

In the conclusion by David Steinberg, the notion of South Korea's own political agenda and how this agenda will be realized is a key issue. As he puts, "…too great a reliance on the United States has become a political sin in the South." Yes, North Korea is a constant nightmare. Yes, there will be a withdrawal of large number of American troops by end of 2005, with the remaining forces moving farther south." Korea's anti-Americanism continues to grow.

South Korea must ask itself if it has now outgrown its American big brother, and if it can now be autonomous. Korea must revamp its own thinking toward the U.S., North Korea, and the world. Can South Korea make its own multilateral alliances with China, Japan, and North Korea, thus driving its own destiny? And is the U.S. holding South Korea down to prevent such alliances from developing?

A RACE WITH NO FINISH LINE

The Race to Prosperity The Melodrama of Moblilty: Women, Talk, and Class in Contemporary South Korea
By Nancy Abelmann
University of Hawai'i Press
Honolulu, 2003
ISBN# 0-8247-2749-X

Review by Y. Kim Choi

Things have changed so quickly in South Korea and we have become rich so fast that people don't know what to do. Even at my level, which, of course, isn't the highest level at all — we're just average — when I think about it, I really don't know how I should live. Should I just focus on my own family? Or should I do something for society? Nothing is clear. — Mi-yon's mother (November 2, 1995)

Mi-yon's mother is only one of the eight middle-aged South Korean women whom anthropologist Nancy Abelmann has chosen as the subjects of her research for this book. Yet the ambivalence or uncertainty in her words strikes a recurring note in the "mobility stories" of the other women interviewed.

Through a close analysis of these stories, Abelmann explores how Koreans, specifically the women, have managed to "get a grip" on the rapidly changing landscape of the twentieth-century Korea and negotiate it with varying degrees of success.

Both the end of Japanese colonialism (1945), along with the Korean War (1950-53), mark the beginning of modernity in Korea. This transition is characterized by the collapse of the traditional fixed social order, and the unleashing of a massive social transformation. The three-year civil war, with its total destruction, resulted in the near-complete refiguring of the country's political, social, economic, and cultural landscape. Syngman Rhee's post-liberation



autocratic regime was toppled by the Student Uprising (1960), only to be followed by the military coup of Chung Hee Park (1961). Although Park's regime laid a solid foundation for continued economic growth, it was only at the expense of ideological freedom and civil liberties.

Subsequent to the equally oppressive military regimes of Doo Hwan Chun (1980-1988) and Tae Woo Roh (1988-1993), Young Sam Kim became South Korea's first democratically-elected civilian president (1993), followed by Dae Jung Kim (1998), the first democratically-elected opposition-party president. Both democratically-elected presidencies, however, were marred by egregious political and social scandals. Modernity in South Korea, to say the very least, has been marked by great turmoil as well as drastic compression.

It is in the swirl of this staggering post-war transformation that Abelman's eight women interviewees reached adulthood, got married, raised families, managed their children's education, and raced for prosperity. Straddling class lines and generational divides, the women of this generation had to "read" the times with accuracy and speed, and learn the constantly changing "grammar of social life." Failure to do so would have grave consequences for them as well as their children.

Hardly surprising, these women invariably consider their lives to be "stuff of drama," not unlike the dramas popular on South Korean television and film. The melodramatic elements, such as improbable twists and turns of plot and overdrawn characters, appear to speak to the sensibilities of these women whose own life experiences bear affinity to the exaggerated conventions of the genre. Melodrama, these women feel, is not only a fitting genre for expressing and representing their turbulent lives, but also an effective vehicle for making sense of existing in an unsettled, ever-shifting universe.

Abelmann deftly sets real-life personal narratives against films and soap operas to suggest that the women's aspirations of social mobility can best be understood as a "melodrama" in which personal character and historical circumstances intertwine and in which individuals and families struggle to work out the thorny issues of modernity. It is a struggle that calls into question the conventional notion that the rapid economic development in South Korea has had only positive outcomes.

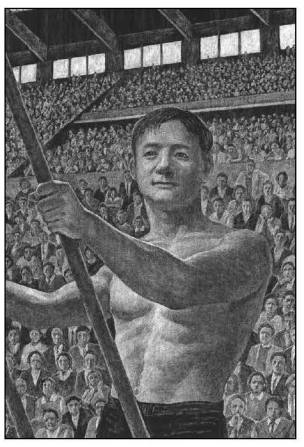
Mi-yon's mother sums up her sense of disillusionment with this rapid rate of change with the following:

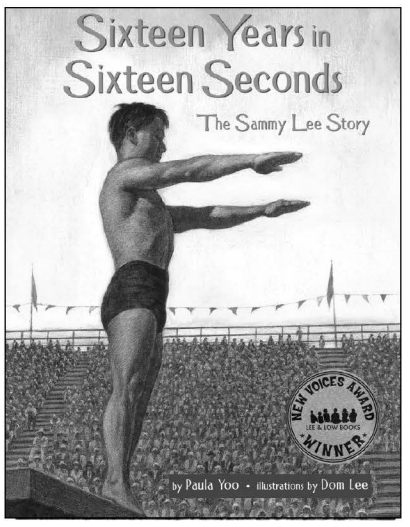
In the past there were yangban (hereditary elite), sonbi (scholar/gentlemen), and sangnom (derogatory term for commoners). The yangban and sonbi didn't have anything to do with work or money, so the people below them did all of that. But now that we are a democracy and supposedly everyone is equal, everything has become topsy-turvy. Everything is all messed up. We've taken this democratization stuff in the wrong direction. We've learned all the wrong things.

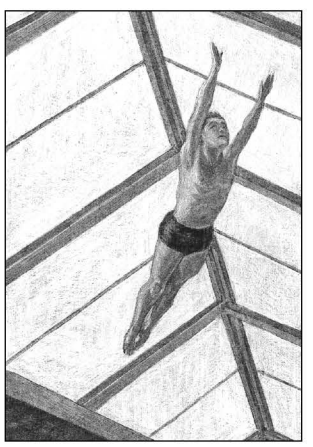
In this well-researched, engagingly written book, Abelmann captures the feel and idiom of a generation of women swept up in South Korean modernity. Her critical analysis offers fresh insight into their personal and social struggles, which, intended or not, invites the reader to a debate on the direction the modernity is headed.

Whether the reader is an enthusiast or skeptic of the rapid changes in the last few decades in South Korea, Abelmann's in-depth exploration and analysis provide an excellent springboard for the reader to jump into the debate.

★ Starred Review, *Booklist*







★ [W]innner of [LEE & LOW's] New Voices Award, Yoo introduces Sammy Lee, the son of Korean immigrants who overcame formidable odds to become an Olympic diving champion. . . . The minimal, well-shaped language focuses on facts, particularly on the boy's seemingly indestructible determination . . . [A] handsome, inspiring biography. —Starred Review, *Booklist*

Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds

by Paula Yoo • illustrated by Dom Lee

$16.95, HARDCOVER • ISBN 1-58430-247-X • May • 6 and up

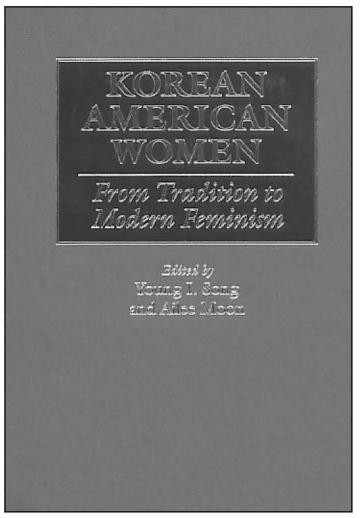
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SUCCESS AT A HIGH COST

Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism
Edited by Young I. Song and Ailee Moon
Praeger/Greenwood Publishing
Westport (CT), 1998
ISBN# 0-275-95977-5

Review by Ellen S. Kang



This collection of works by researchers in sociology covers a wide range of issues facing Korean women who immigrated to the United States following the initial immigration of the first Koreans a century ago.

These more recent groups of women are compared with their contemporary immigrant men, with their female counterparts in Korea, with other Asian immigrant women in America, and sometimes with white and/or black women in this country. Findings are discussed and interpreted in scholarly ways open to sociologists and scholars of closely-related areas. While sample sizes included in these approaches may fall on the short side in several of the reports, by and large, the interpretations of data are handled appropriately and are of interest to the reader.

The authors describe the various immigration waves in the context of the political and social circumstances spurring each migration. Since 1970, the Korean American population increased nearly tenfold, reaching numbers surpassed only by the Chinese among the groups of expatriate Asians in the U.S. This increase can be explained in part by the close military, political and economic ties between South Korea and the U.S., particularly through the influence and presence of the American military, beginning with the Korean War through the present. Through contacts, middle-class Koreans came to value the apparent higher standard of living of Americans, and considered immigration as a way to improve their lives.

Additionally, many women had become wives of servicemen, and moved to the West after their husbands' tour of duty. Political oppression from a totalitarian government in the era from the 60s to 80s forced many students and political opponents to immigrate to the U.S. These dissidents did not return despite changes in the Korean ruling parties. For a time, the adoption of Korean children by Americans was quite prevalent. And in the 1970s, many Korean nurses were allowed to immigrate to fill a labor shortage in nursing. These were much higher-paying jobs than could be found in Korea. Since 1970, the elderly parents of the immigrants already in the U.S. immigrated and became citizens through naturalization.

Overall, the perception of better economic opportunities seems to have been the most compelling reason for Korean immigration. The author discusses demographics of the various waves of Koreans and compares them with immigrants of other ethnicities, and with other groups of Korean immigrants.

Several chapters consider the factors contributing Korean immigrant women's situation in the U.S. Many of the factors stem from the prevalence of traditional Confucian values in Korea. The patriarchal nature of Confucian thought leaves little room for women to assert themselves in Korea, virtually holding them hostage to serve the men in their families irrespective of their generation.

The researchers further describe how these values, which prescribe a division of roles and labor in Korea, play themselves out in the new society once a couple immigrates. Most Korean immigrant men tend to adhere to their traditional customs and attitudes as they try to make a "go of it" in the new country. Due to underemployment caused by language and cultural difficulties, husbands are under financial and emotional stress in the host country. Wives then seek employment in various occupations, by either helping without pay in their own small businesses, or by taking on a job either to augment the family income or to supply the total household income. Despite this shift of in the traditional division of labor, the old Confucian manner of division of household labor continues, with the wife assuming the major burden.

As a natural consequence, the heavily-burdened wife undergoes undue stress, conflicts arise, and in the ensuing tension the wife is frequently abused. Women in this predicament often suffer depression, requiring referral to specialized services. Although counseling and similar services are available in most communities, Korean immigrant women's cultural isolation may prevent them from seeking appropriate help.

While the ethnic religious centers serve as an important social outlet for Korean families, outreach services to cover the above-described needs, have not developed. A growing issue concerns the increasing cultural gaps between the first and the 1.5 generations as well as between the first and the second generations. These culture gaps threaten the stability of the Korean immigrant families. Key questions are posed about the cultural issues facing both the older and the younger members of these families, and the results are analyzed. Divorce rate among Korean Americans is one of the highest of the Asian groups and is many times higher than in Korea over the same period. One account discusses the factors contributing to this phenomenon.

How can achievement be measured? One researcher points out that there is higher academic achievement of the Korean American immigrants compared with other immigrants, despite the authoritarian nature of parental control, the minimal communication between parent and child, and the less effective supervision of their children's scholastic work. Alarmingly, the number of Korean American adolescents belonging to high-risk groups is increasing. A possible relationship between the development of behavior problems of Korean American adolescents and the rigidity of Korean immigrant parental behavior is also raised and analyzed with appropriate discussion.

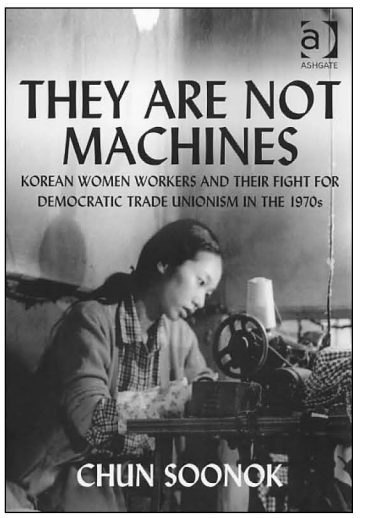
In the closing chapters, special consideration is given to issues confronting women, particularly Korean immigrant women, concentrating on the Korean heritage and customs that are a part of immigrant identity.

Overall, this collection of works successfully covers the traditional expectations, culture and behavior of Korean women from Korea to America, defines the character of their success or/and failure in the New World, identifies the underlying problems that limit the continued successful acculturation of the women, and exposes areas of problems that are either in place or in need of addressing in the coming generations.

REMEMBERING THE COST OF DEMOCRACY

They Are Not Machines: Korean Women Workers and Their Fight for Democratic Trade Unionism in the 1970s
By Soonok Chun
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Hampshire (England), 2003
ISBN# 0-7546-3545-7

Review by Jerry Winzig



They Are Not Machines is a difficult book to read. I say that with reluctance because the challenge of writing in another language is beyond my capabilities. However, readers who brave Chun's sometimes turgid prose will be rewarded with important insights into the often unhappy role of women in South Korea's rise to a world economic power and its development into a full-fledged democracy.

These are insights vividly supported by personal experience, for the author's brother, Tae-il Chun, poured gasoline over himself and set himself on fire in 1970 to draw attention to the inhumane treatment of Korea's garment workers, and her mother, Soon Yi, remains an important Korean human rights and trade union leader.

The author's first insight is into how poorly Korea was served by Singman Rhee's first republic from 1948 to 1960. Rhee's administration was a failure at economic development, social reconstruction, and democratization, the author claims. Furthermore, the American military government in South Korea was complicit in these failures. Chun writes that America's occupation of South Korea "was not as well-planned or as efficiently conducted as was the case with their occupation of Japan." Perhaps worst of all, many of the oligarchs who profited under Rhee's uneven policies, particularly in the textile industry, were Japanese. For Korea's former colonial masters to profit from the suffering of their former colony has been a bitter pill for South Korea to swallow.

When Rhee's government collapsed in 1960, it was followed by the short-lived second republic and an interim government under Chong Ho. This government was toppled in a military coup by General Chung-hee Park, who held power first as a military ruler and then as a repressive, authoritarian dictator until 1979. Park's rule is the focus of much of Chun's book. Park immediately began to build South Korea into an exporting economy. While he succeeded in that particular goal, Chun points out that much of South Korea's significant economic gains under Park's policies came at a terrible human cost to South Korea's workers, and especially to women workers in the textile industry in the 1970s. Their working conditions were horrible, their total work hours were excessive, and their pay was so low as to render them virtual captives to their employers.

The author's brother's descriptions of a visit to garment workers in the Peace Market captures the working conditions:

The place of work is no bigger than eight pyung [four and a half square meters], which means that there are four workers in every pyung. The space is so cramped, with tools, fixtures, and sewing equipment taking up so much room that there was none remaining for workers to stretch freely in their chairs. The height of the ceiling from the floor was so low; it was the infamous 'attic.' The smell of formalin from the fabrics piled up in the corner was enough to suffocate anyone. Not only that, but there is so much ravel [fibers] and dust from the fabric that the workers' hair becomes coated almost as soon as they begin to work.

Chun quotes from a 1980 poem by Ji-ha Kim to illustrate the pathos of young women coming to Seoul to work:

I must go, / don't cry, I must go on the hard road to Seoul, climbing the white and black parched hills to sell my chastity. Without a promise of when I'll return, or if I will come back with brightly blooming smiles, / and without the humble promise of untying the ribbon. / I must go, / however hard and miserable life may be. / How

can I ever forget the hills covered with / green-bean flowers and the smell of wheat / growing in the fields surrounding the village where I was born. / I will not forget, but will cherish them deeply in my heart. / I might come back in tearful dreams, / I might return with starlight in the night. / I must go, don't cry, I must go / on the painful road to Seoul, / climbing the many hills which make even the sky weary, / to sell my labour.

While the unionization efforts of women textile workers were not a traditional political success, their efforts did lead to the end of General Park's rule. In 1979, when police prevented opposition legislators from entering the National Assembly chamber, all 69 opposition assemblymen courageously resigned their seats. That, accompanied by massive street demonstrations, led to Park's assassination by one of his close aides. Even though Park's death was followed by years of even more repressive military rule under General Doo-hwan Chun, followed by General Tae-woo Roh, the seeds had been planted.

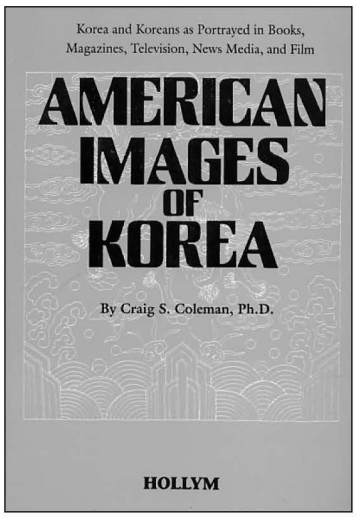
While South Korea's economic gains came at a terrible human cost, democracy and accountability were purchased at the same time. In 1995, former Presidents Chun and Roh were tried and convicted of bribery, treason, and murder. The author concludes, "[T]he democratic principle is now firmly embedded in the South Korean labour movement, and it is due to the efforts of the female textile and garment workers of the 1960s and 1970s that this is so. Just as the full extent of the achievements of those pioneers can no longer be denied, the 'genie of democracy' and workers rights that they so courageously liberated can never be put back into the bottle."

FRACTURED IMAGE

American Images of Korea: Korea and Koreans as Portrayed in Books, Magazines, Televisions, News Media, and Film
By Craig S. Coleman
Hollym International Corp
Elizabeth (NJ), 1990
ISBN# 1-56591-089-3

Review by Mary Lee Vance

Ahhh — what we would give to know what others think about us! Yes, we all wonder and want to know (even though we say we don't). And then, to mix the picture up even more, we think we know what people say about us, but do we really know?



For example, most Americans only know about Korea courtesy of the television show ***M*A*S*H***, an initially paternalistic show about a foreign culture that in later episodes became more realistic and sympathetic (due to the addition of some newer and more enlightened writers on the staff). To this day, with reruns of ***M*A*S*H*** still playing, I have to explain things to new viewers curious about what they have seen on the reruns, for example, the episode where they thought there was a buried bomb and it ended up being just a kimchi pot.

In the earlier days, reporters, soldiers and various authors, like James Michener, contributed toward our limited knowledge of who Koreans were, and what we thought Korea was like. Today, we have "experts" like President Bush telling us that North Korea is one of three countries he characterizes as the "axis of evil." The question that comes to mind is, do many people differentiate between North and South Korea? And, more importantly, what does this characterization mean to the average American?

As a whole, the majority of American mainstream "Korea experts" have provided negative perspectives of the people and culture, due, of course, to their limited understanding of the history and people. And, to this day, there still exist far too many inaccuracies and misperceptions of Korea and Koreans.

This fine publication from Hollym helps provide some additional perspectives of Korea, featuring Craig Coleman in the role of author and resource compiler. Coleman has developed an extensive list of books related to Korea, interspersed with brief bits of historical data and information to put things into context.

Coleman notes that Korean studies has become a more accepted discipline in the United States, but there is still a severe shortage in our country of English language books related to Korea. In addition, there is a shortage of Korean nationals who are U.S. experts in Korean studies.

The author provides a chronological look at images and resources contributing to our present knowledge of Korea. American images of modern Korea began with tragic images related to American military involvement in its bloody civil war. Therefore, American viewpoints of Korea began with pity, which later turned into a belief that Korea was another Vietnam. There were also negative images related to the "Korea gate" scandal and other stories of Korean government corruption. It was not until the 1988 Olympics that the mainstream media provided a positive look at the Korean culture and people.

Unfortunately, despite the increase of Koreans in America through adoption and marriage, the media and Americans did not take full advantage of this "open house" provided by the Olympics. Most of what we know of Korea today is still from the pre-Olympic days.

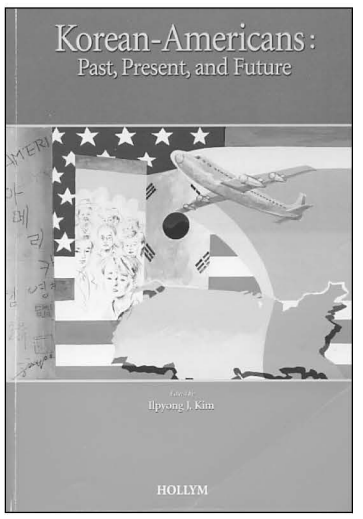
By detailing not only the American perceptions, but also the experiences of the early westerners in Korea, including Dutch explorers and traders, and various western missionaries, the author provides readers with a wider perspective of Korea, as seen by the non-Koreans. The work would be further improved, however, if it contained perceptions of Koreans about themselves. It is laced generously with anecdotes, quotes, and personal observations making it an easy book to read for non-scholars, yet containing valuable information for anyone wanting to become more involved with Korean studies.

REVIEWING THE FIRST CENTURY IN AMERICA

Korean Americans: Past, Present and Future
Ilpyong J. Kim, ed.
Hollym International
Seoul, 2004
ISBN# 1-56591-121-0

Review by Ellen Kang

This account of Korean Americans was written at the centennial of the immigration of the first Koreans to America. Thomas (Byung T.) Cho, the General Chairman of the Korean American Foundation, states in the Preface that the work was undertaken to note the outcome, growth and prosperity attained by immigrants during the first 100 years of migration of Koreans to America, and to plan for the next 100 years to come.



The Introduction, written by the editor Ilpyong Kim, outlines the work: Part I deals with the past centennial covering the whys, hows and wherefores that launched the first and subsequent waves of immigrants to America and the

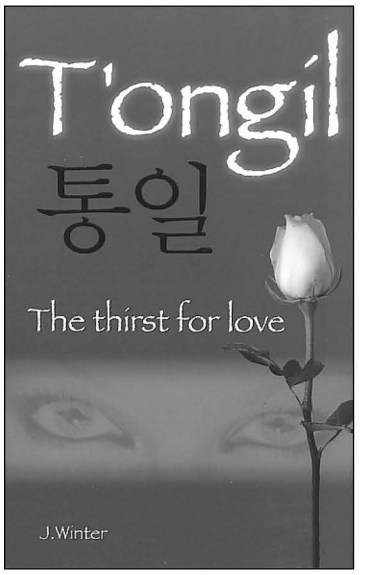
T'ongil

The thirst for love, by Julian Winter

T'ongil is about separation and loss. However, it is the unions and shared experiences, those unexpected moments of grace that unite us all, that the author chooses to focus on. The characters learn that their lives are not as separate as they thought, and that there are underlying threads that connect them all in ways they could have never anticipated.

*"**T'ongil** is not just a love story, rather this novel shows love in the many forms is takes. It illustrates, indirectly, that perhaps even with our different cultural backgrounds and perspectives, we can find similarity in our very human experiences on earth: Love, anger, sadness, grief, joy, passion, and wonder." **Korean Quarterly***

One ***autographed*** edition of ***T'ongil*** is free with every donation of $20 or more to ***Korean Quarterly***, a 501(c)3 charitable non-profit organization (remember to specify that you would like this book!)
Additional copies are $9 each (list price $19.95)
Mail your check to:
Korean Quarterly, Box 6789, St. Paul, MN 55106
(postage is free for Korean Quarterly subscribers)



*Author Julian Winter has generously donated a limited number of copies to help **Korean Quarterly**'s fundraising. All proceeds will go to Korean Quarterly's operational budget — so we can continue to cover the accomplishments of the Korean American community.*

beginning adjustments and events in the early immigrant communities. Part II deals with a wide variety of issues arising among immigrants in America, including: intergenerational conflict and cooperation; gender-business-social issues; Korean adoptees and their unique and expanding presence; and the role of religion in the social and communal lives of Koreans in a sample metropolitan population. Part III presents some ideas for the future to raise the prominence and participation of Korean Americans in the wider American communities.

The editor leads off in the first chapter of Part I with a summary of the political and socio-economic climate in Korea and elsewhere in the world that has contributed to the initial immigration of over 7,000 Koreans to America and the subsequent immigration of more than a million others over 100 years in identifiable waves.

Kim describes the impact of immigrants who supported the Korean government in exile during Korea's occupation by Japan from 1905 (officially, 1910) through the end of World War II in 1945. This diaspora established a provisional government designed to step into leadership of the nation if and when the independence of Korea from Japanese colonial rule would be achieved. Its activities included raising a military force for possible deployment to help in the recovery of Korean sovereignty.

After the Korean War, a second wave of immigration occurred with the arrival of wives of U.S. servicemen and of Korean orphans adopted by American families, half of whom had American fathers. Nearly 27,000 other Korean students, businessmen, and tradesman comprised the next wave subsequent to the Korean War.

After the 1965 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Act abolished the quota system based on the nation of origin of immigrants, up to 20,000 Korean immigrants came to the U.S. annually. With this wave of immigrants came a large number of children who now make up the 1.5 generation of Koreans in America. Many of this generation have conformed with the economic model of this country. Amazingly, the last census indicated that Korean Americans own and operate nearly 136,000 businesses in the U.S. with gross sales and receipts of $46 billion, employing nearly 334,000 with an annual payroll of $5.8 billion.

Chapter 2 by Yong-ho Cho'e leads off with the history of the Methodist Church during the first centennial. The Methodist Church had played an important role in the recruitment of the immigrants for the plantation owners in Hawaii and continued to be engaged in the affairs of the Korean immigrants until leaders of the church spoke approvingly in public of the Japanese occupation of Korea. This inflamed the immigrants even leading to Syngman Rhee's severance of his ties with the Hawaii Methodist Mission to establish the Korean Christian Church in 1915.

An excellent account of the national independence movement of the Korean immigrants before 1945 is summarized by Han-Kyo Kim in Chapter 3 with emphasis given to the roles played by three prominent leaders of the time, Syngman Rhee, Chang-Ho Ahn and Yong-Man Pak. The different paths taken by these leaders, their fates, and the outcome of their combined efforts toward the struggling birth of a national identity are presented.

Part II includes a number of works dealing with socio-economic-political issues confronting the immigrants where, despite their departure from the old country, their adaptive behaviors still reflected the values of the Korea they had left.

In addition, the growing numbers of Korean adoptees spanning five decades and representing the largest continuous foreign adoption program in the world raised new issues and a new unique set of challenges to be met. As these orphans grew to adulthood, they asserted autonomy from their adoptive parents, adoptive agencies, and government institutions, congregating in Washington, DC for the first Gathering to relate to one another and to to establish a connection with their birth country.

Though fraught with difficulties initially, the cohesion of this group has finally earned the attention and respect of the Korean government with the granting of visa rights and the establishment of an adoption center in Seoul in 1999 through the efforts of President Dae Jung Kim and his wife, First Lady Hee-ho Lee, to build a bridge between the country of the adoptees birth and the country of their citizenship.

Two chapters in Part II deal with sociological studies which could have been published in an academic sociological venue for critical review before inclusion in this book but do represent ongoing inquiry into current demographics of Korean adoptees as well as the adjustment of 1.5 generation Korean Americans of college age with respect to acculturation. The inclusion of some of the data and analytical methods used by sociologists detracts from the essay format of the rest of Part II.

The last Chapter in Part II deals with the role of the Korean churches in the Washington, DC area in community life and incorporation of the Korean community in the larger environment. As the metropolitan home to over 100,000 ethnic Koreans, the DC area, which includes several surrounding counties in both Maryland and Virginia, has seen the exponential growth of numbers of Korean churches from "two in 1960 to five in 1970, 50 in 1980, 113 in 1990, and 192 in 2000." Koreans felt estranged from American churches and felt the need to belong with their own countrymen. The formation of church groups appears to have been an "unwavering tradition" among them and may be understood as a quasi-community service organization, which stood in for many social service agencies which would spin off the church later and specialize in Korean American concerns.

In general, most churches have undergone several stages of development as described by the leader of the largest Korean Baptist church in Maryland, Deacon Sung Hee Yun: An initial "launching stage" where the pastor's service was the key factor for growth; the "lifting-off stage" where the pastor's vision is given support by lay members; and capping off with the "growing stage" where resources are effectively mobilized, church organization is effective, and a mission strategy is incorporated.

The Council of Korean Churches in the Greater Washington, DC area, made up of purely Protestant churches serves to reinforce the solidarity of the Korean churches and the Korean community. A Korean Pastors' Association has also been formed. Amazingly, there are nine Korean Protestant Theological Schools in the DC area reflecting the high level of religious participation of the Korean populace in the region.

With the growth of the second generation of Koreans, many of whom are not fluent in spoken Korean, different models have been tried in the churches, including a separate service in English, simultaneous translations, or independent churches. How this will pan out in the long run remains to be seen both in the DC area and elsewhere.

The pastors themselves have noted a tendency for the various church groups to merely focus on the numerical growth of their churches, failing to identify leadership needed to be involved with the larger community. This leads to reinforcing their exclusiveness in their adopted communities. The need to extend fellowship and involvement beyond the church membership alone is beginning to confront some of the church groups in the DC area leading to greater dialogue about these matters.

In Part III, several writers have offered suggestions for the future. The deep influence of Confucian thought among first generation Korean Americans has lead to an emphasis on education for their children, particularly in technical areas such as medicine, engineering, law and banking.

More recently, there has been a call for Korean Americans to expand these roles to leadership roles in politics, other entrepreneurial arenas, and the arts, including the performing arts. The two writers propose several means to bring about greater interactions among Korean Americans. They suggest collecting individual life stories of immigrants for publication, and launching a resource-type website for Korean Americans. Finally, the writers call for more political and entrepreneurial leadership for Koreans in the next century.

Reviewer's comment: The assumption that all avenues of endeavor should be sought by Korean Americans for full acculturation is a bit naïve, given the natural tendency of Korean Americans to select medicine, law, and banking and their much smaller numbers in comparison to other ethnic groups. Further, the fact that Koreans as an Asian ethnic group had the highest percent of out-marriages in the initial second generation of immigrants arising from the first immigrants to Hawaii (see historian Wayne Patterson's accounts, among others) would suggest that we might expect to see increasing assimilation with full bloodline incorporation of Korean Americans into the American mainstream in another few generations.

This publication fulfills the plan laid out in the preface and should be of interest to students and readers of Korean American history. A Korean translation of this work would make this viewpoint accessible to readers in Korea. In America, adoptees in particular may get a better picture of the group they resemble physically, but with whom they differ in major psychosocial ways. Their reading of this publication may fill in the gaps and grant them greater understanding of immigrant families who came to America on their own. Such understanding could lead to more interaction between the Korean American immigrant communities and the Korean adoptees in this country.

DIVIDED FAMILY

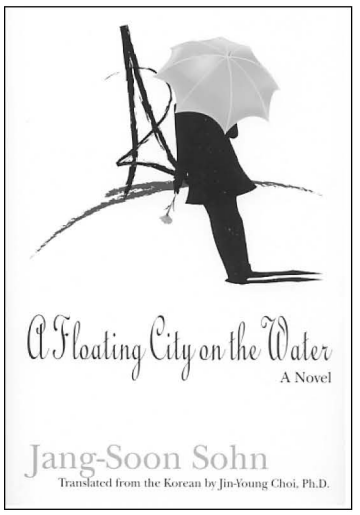
A Floating City on the Water
By Jang-Soon Sohn
Translated by Jin-Young Choi
Homa and Sekey Books,
Paramus (NJ), 2005
ISBN# 1-931907-18-8

Review by Bill Drucker

A Floating City on the Water is a modern novel of unforeseen consequences and choices, revolving around how the impact of a divided Korea affects a family for three generations.

The most devastating event is the meeting of Sujin and Hansuk, two Korean students, in Paris. Sujin was raised in South Korea. Hansuk was born in North Korea. They fall in love but discover, too late, that they are blood siblings of the same parents. Sujin returns to Korea and raises their son, Hyungwoo, alone.

The story is told through the eyes of Sujin, a somber and resigned woman. Abandoned by her parents, she was raised by her uncle. Sujin carries the emotional baggage of her parents, who possibly were communists. In spite of her good education and the freedoms of a modern South Korean, she is a stifled, inward-looking creature, who seems unable to fully come to terms with her past, or to make a fulfilling life for herself. The time abroad in Paris could have been the liberating, romantic point of her life, but it is not. Sujin remains the sad Korean wherever she is. Hansuk, the North Korean, fully exploits the open society of Paris. So does Sujin's cousin and best friend, Susie, who takes in the best of Korean and European ways.



Through several examples, Sujin's character appears flawed. For example, she debates with herself about having an abortion or having the child. She decides against abortion, but once her child is born, Sujin has no maternal feelings for her son. Instead, she repeats the abandonment pattern begun by her mother by transferring her son Hyungwoo's upbringing to aunts and uncles. Sujin expresses no deep angst in this action.

When she meets her mother and discovers the true relationship between Hansuk and her, the realization releases a rare anger in Sujin. She burns all bridges to her mother, and might have gone into a complete self-exile if not for Hansuk's continued persistence.

A Floating City on the Water is about personal liberation and reconciliation. Jang-Soon Sohn skillfully covers several mature themes. Incest is never addressed as a horrific vehicle for moral or social ax grinding. It is not a Christian or intellectual sin. The child of the illicit affair bares no mark of shame, physical or mental. When Hyungwoo discovers the truth of his parents, he is not repelled but glad that the truth is finally revealed. Rather, he is portrayed as the first in this family to be liberated, free to live his life as he chooses.

The background of the story is based on the author's own studies and time spent in Paris. Paris, the City of Lights, is the famous Mecca for Asians and Americans, political exiles, poets, artists, and writers. Fitzgerald, Hemingway lived and worked there, as well as Ho Chi Minh. In addition to the interpersonal story, Sohn's tale is also a portrayal of a place where both Easterners and Westerners have exiled themselves to think and remake themselves in a new culture.

PERKS AND PITFALLS

Chopsticks and French Fries: How and Why to Teach English in South Korea
Samantha D. Amara
Good Cheer Publishing,
Hubbards (Nova Scotia), 2002
ISBN# 0-96814-443-8

Review by Bill Drucker

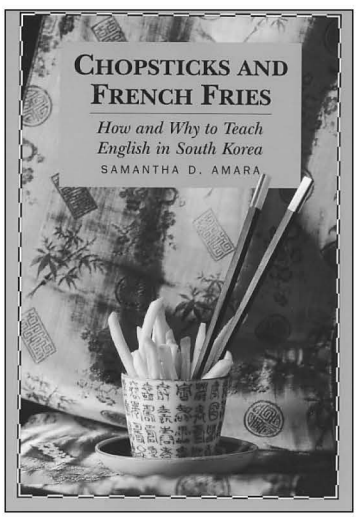
For anyone considering teaching English in South Korea, ***Chopsticks and French Fries*** is the perfect guide to help navigate through the bureaucracy of securing work, and then adjusting to the culture. Samantha Amara describes the rewards as well as possible pitfalls with humor, anecdotal excerpts of stories from other teachers, and lots of practical advice.

The author taught in Korea for two years. With this experience, Amara details the issues that a first time instructor confronts — types of schools, employer requirements, getting paid, and the daily needs of a foreigner for food, housing, and transportation.

This informative little book includes a checklist of a job search dos and don'ts. Do your homework before you accept a position. This includes asking questions, and getting things in writing. Your contract may be in English, but the employer and copy for the authorities is written in Korean. Make sure that the English contract is the binding contract.) The book includes a questionnaire that serves as a survey to past teachers in Korea and as a self-evaluation to overseas English teacher wannabes.

Amara shares her experiences of teaching in Yosu City, a seaport town in the southwestern part of Korea. The largest city in this province is Kwangju. She describes the flight from Canada to Pusan to be almost as strenuous as teaching. She describes the long overseas flight, the non-English-speaking cab driver, and the general confusion of being thrust into a classroom full of students only days after her arrival. Once in Korea, she has only one encounter with a North American before starting her teaching career. Patience, courage, and creativity help her get through the first day of class, and through the weeks and months that follow.

Amara describes potential problems in dealing with a job in a new culture, both mundane and bizarre.



For example, she points out that housing is physically smaller than in America, and that it may cleaner, safer, and more comfortable to share a place than to live alone.

There are always small adjustments to be made in working and housing conditions. The author counsels that the new teacher must get to know the culture, learn to negotiate, and build a relationship with the employer. Women especially need to find diplomatic paths in the male-oriented culture.

The author points out, that in rare cases, the employer may be just a freak. Then it's just a matter of getting out of a bad situation as fast as you can. There are a few matters that are non-negotiable and require common sense, no matter what country you may visit or work in. Guard identification papers, and always keep your passport with you. The author also states that the worst-case scenarios cited are usually the exceptions. More often, teaching in Korea is a good experience. If the employer and employee are agreed to all things in the contract, then the only daunting task for the instructor is to teach English to a room full of Koreans. Amara doesn't make a big issue of teachers not speaking any Korean. She praises the Koreans for their eagerness to help strangers and for their generosity.

Chopsticks and French Fries provides a sensible user's guide on what to expect as a foreigner teaching English in Korea. As to the book title, Amara alludes to Koreans eating American-style French fries (*kamja twigum*) with chopsticks. Another guide, ***The World is a Class: How and Why to Teach English Around the World***, by Caleb Powell is mentioned and worth reading for teaching in other countries.

Note: While learning English is still a priority in Korea, it is North Korea that shows the greater interest in the language. South Koreans are recently seeing new opportunities in mainland China and are increasingly studying Mandarin Chinese. *Ni hue shuo Pu Tung hwa ma*? Can you speak the Chinese national dialect?

PERSISTENCE OF TRADITION

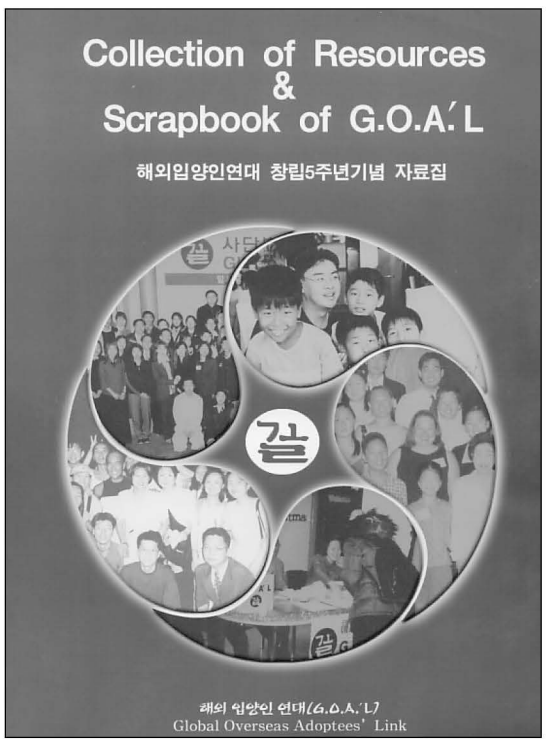
Korean Patterns
By Paul S. Crane
Seoul Press
Seoul, 1999
Royal Asiatic Society, Korean Branch (1978 edition)

Review by Bill Drucker

Korean Patterns portrays Koreans around the 1960s and 1970s, and compares traditional social patterns with those developing in modern times. Surprisingly, there are numerous traditional patterns which have been carried into modern times in business and family life. The vertical structure of status can be seen in the business relationships of Korean conglomerates or chaebols. The relationship of the king-

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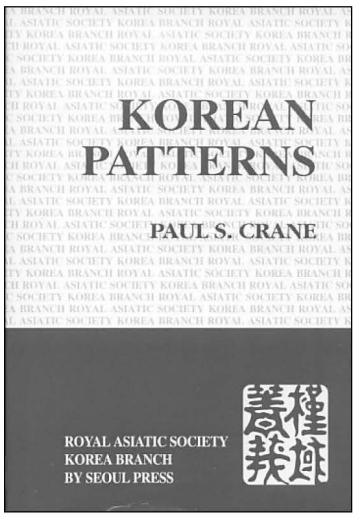


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minister is seen now as company boss-employee. Family relationships of father-son, and husband-wife persist, although sons will now question fathers. Unlike the traditional Confucian beliefs about women, wives and daughters are viewed with a certain level of respect, particularly in the cities.

The shift in social and family relationships is the biggest concern in Korean society. Economic growth, education, and democracy pushed against the old Confucian traditions of status and order for a more level social order. The radical economic shift from agrarian to industrial has also contributed to new social structures when large populations moved to the urban areas.

The sense of propriety permeates some of the most basic things, such as eating. Guests are honored, the host is self-deprecating. "Enter my humble home. There is not enough food." The author explains some details of traditions, such as the placement of chopsticks. For example, placing chopsticks on the table indicates you are finished eating, and chopsticks placed on the bowl or plate indicates a pause. Chopsticks must never be stuck the food or rice, and the host must hold his chopsticks until the last of the guests has laid theirs down.

Generally, food must not be touched without utensils. The Western custom of holding some things with hands, such as bread, may be disconcerting for a Korean guest. Koreans may feel superior to cultures that routinely eat with their fingers.

Other patterns that persist include public behavior and etiquette. The cardinal rule is to give deference to elders and guests. Korean men and women will offer a handshake to westerners as an extension of their understanding and acceptance of foreign manners. Thus, propriety is maintained in deferring to the guest's understanding of good manners. Introductions are preferably performed indirectly through friends or associates in business. It is still customary to leave shoes at the door before entering a Korean home, especially among older Koreans who sit, eat, and sleep on the floor.

In some situations, however, all manners get thrown out the window. People push and shove in post office lines and cram themselves into trains and busses. This is the price to pay for crowded, urban living.

As modern as Korea becomes, many old ways are deeply embedded in the society's structure. Crane, as a western trained physician, points to the age old practice of *hanyak* or traditional medicine. *Hanyak* is steeped in Confucianism, myths, philosophy of yin and yang, superstitions and herbal medicines. The westerner gets a hint of *hanyak* in the form of *insam* or Korean ginseng, popularized around the world with its legitimate medicinal values.

The influences of the west, Korean War, the occupations by Russians, Chinese, Japanese, and U.S. and UN forces have all influenced the Korean patterns, for good for bad. The same can be said for Christianity. Technology and wealth has created a new breed of Koreans, well-informed, well-traveled, and more in tune with other cultures. In turn, Koreans have embraced global modernity, by being Koreans at home, and western during business hours, or by picking and choosing patterns, cafeteria-style, selecting the virtues of each culture. But the patterns of behavior over centuries, more often than not, prevail.

Korean Patterns is an entertaining little book, profuse with Korean terms. Crane, a westerner, grew up in Korea as the son of missionaries. He returned to Korea in 1947 as a missionary physician and later served as director of the Presbyterian Medical Center at Chonju (Jeonju) in the north Cholla province. Crane marvels at Koreans and their behavior, so rooted in centuries old Confucian practices and native traditions. Understanding these behavioral traits is to understand Koreans. This book also features an informative appendix (in English and Korean), which features Korean proverbs, the Lunar calendar and the 60-year human cycle, Korean holidays, a complete list of terms for family relationships, and curious list of medicinal herbs.

COLOR COMPLICATIONS

Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity and Adoption
By Randall Kennedy
Pantheon
NYC, 2003
ISBN# 0-37540-255-1

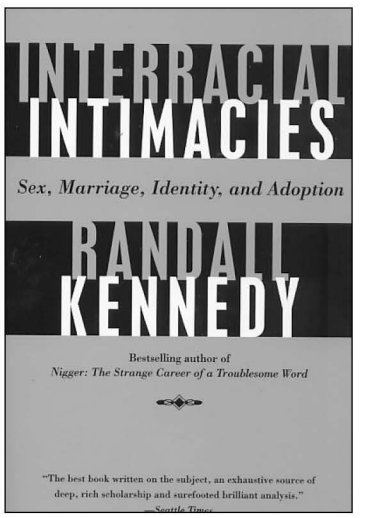
Review by Taya Rotering

The topic of interracial intimacy is fraught with a variety of intricacies, and its examination can unearth a deep reservoir of some of mankind's most base fears and drives. It seems a cruel yet unyielding trait of human nature that we are driven to be fearful of other human beings who are different from us, to the point that our fear can evolve into hate, rivalries, and war. At the same turn, in our nature there exists a wondrously hopeful force that causes us to call for increased acceptance and love for one another, begetting amazing acts of charity and altruism. This book examines both compelling instincts and their manifestation and subjugation in relationships of interracial dating, sex, marriage, rape, adoption, and parenting.

The exploration of interracial interaction is truly an immeasurable journey. On an individual level and as a greater community, a myriad of emotion, knowledge and items of record arise for research. It would be daunting to locate an exhaustive work on the topic, and yet this book comes extraordinarily close regarding primarily black and white race relations from the slave era to modern day. The intellectual level of this book, its comprehensive research and range of topics is not for the faint of heart — it is wonderfully well researched and Kennedy's tone and style is brisk and extremely intelligent.

Our world is arguably not color blind, and the results for many who have crossed the color lines have been disastrous and tragic. The author examines these crossings in relation to such topics as interracial sex and relationships, sexual coercion, antimiscegenation laws, racial "passing", and race matching adoption policies. Kennedy's inspection utilizes some examples from film and books/memoirs of different eras, laws existing and enacted in various time frames, and relies heavily on court cases that were tried and judged in different periods to reflect the collective attitude towards interracial association.

There is scant mention of Korean adoption research in regards to interracial intimacy, although there is a



thorough inspection of black and white cross-racial adoption issues and Native American and white cross-racial adoption. The author looks at the difficulties or ease with which cross-racial adoption is allowed, the attitude and motivation of the parents for choosing such an adoption, the challenges and naiveté of the parents in raising their child in prejudiced environments, the experiences of the adoptee and their identification and confusion about their race label, and the assessment of the parents once their child is grown.

The introduction of the book actually begins with a captivating story of Jacqueline, an orphan born in the 1950s in Louisiana to a white mother who died two years later. Jacqueline was cared for by her white aunt but as her features matured, it became apparent that she was in some part black. The community reacted negatively to this development and the aunt put Jacqueline up for adoption. An ideal black couple found Jacqueline and wished to adopt her, but at that time in Louisiana, only race matching was allowed. The ensuing court struggle and decisions of those involved as to what environment would be best for the young girl as she grew, and even an attempt to change her racial status on her birth certificate from white to black is fascinating and significant. It is a beautiful beginning to the book and astonishing to consider the many different influences and considerations for a cross-racial relationship as seemingly simple as loving a child. Kennedy's deft and textured look at this first example sets the stage for what can only be considered an powerful book tackling a complex subject.

I highly recommend ***Interracial Intimacies*** for the educated background it will provide the reader regarding relations for people of color. It is surely a fundamental read and provides a broad, yet scrupulous discussion of the race issue in our most personal connections.

THROUGH THE GOLDEN GATE

America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature (1893-1945)
By Colleen Lye
Princeton University Press
Princeton (NJ), 2005
ISBN# 0-69111-418-8

Review by Bill Drucker

In ***America's Asia***, Colleen Lye describes how literary images can sublimate into the larger social structure and influence policies. Her focus is on the Asians in California around the first half of the 20th century.

From the 1900s to the democratic New Deal 1940s, California was a pivotal social and political flashpoint. The state's ethnic concern was over the rising count of Asians, first Chinese, and then Japanese. Other ethnic groups, such as Mexicans and Filipinos were also of concern. As with blacks in the South, Asians could not be absorbed into white America. This fact proved to be a useful tool for both conservatives and liberals, for capitalists and politicians.

Because Asians (at least initially) spoke little English, lived isolated in camps or towns, and were willing to or could be conscripted to work cheaply (hence the term coolie), Asians as early as the 1860s railroad construction period became an important labor force. At the same time, they were discounted as citizens. Prejudices and stereotypes grew. What was written on paper became the images in American minds.

Asians were depicted in turn as coolies, as the yellow peril, and as the invading Mongol horde. As Colleen Lye puts its, even the term "model minority" is just as deprecating an image as a likeness of Fu Manchu or Charlie Chan.

Some American writers, such as Jack London and Frank Norris, were influential, although never purposefully, concerning America's Asian policies. Asian images were reinterpreted as stereotypes by capitalists and politicians. Images were twisted into darker and more sinister stereotypes in the high periods of American xenophobia and war. The simple statement of "they do not look like us" relegated them to the America's sub-class.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, California legislation had the opportunity to legislate a permanent Asian exclusion law. This never material-

ized, but war with Japan kept the images of the yellow peril fresh in the minds of white Americans. Pulp fiction, movies, and government propaganda perpetuated the images.

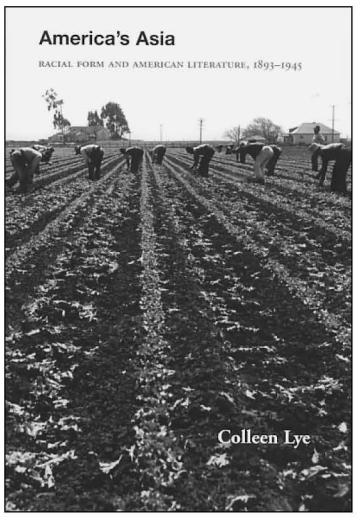
The Asian concern in California and the Pacific coast was closely linked to the Asian activities in the Far East. The Russo-Japanese and the Sino-Japanese wars had the full attention of Teddy Roosevelt, George Kennan, and others in Washington DC, and they precipitated subsequent U.S. involvement. American political pundits were smart enough to see and to use the growing strengths of both expansionist Russia and imperialistic Japan. Kennan, in his pro-Japanese views of organization, modernity, and even expansionism, indirectly pointed to Japan's impending advances — first Korea, then Manchuria and China. U.S. cut deals in turn with Japan and with Russia, right into the second half of the 20th century.

At home, American versus Asian in the 1900s became the "meat versus rice" equations. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) leader, Samuel Gompers perpetuated this formula for the 1902 Asian Exclusion Act. American labor/manhood versus Asiatic coolieism could be reduced to something as simplistic as what you ate. Pamphlets with this propaganda was distributed with a drawing of America as a Gulliver tied down by the Chinese Lilliputians. It was very successful campaign. The use of minorities (Asians, blacks, native Americans, and Mexicans) as scapegoats persisted.

In the 1930s, more liberal and humanistic ideas were brought to the forefront by other authors, such as John Steinbeck and, more importantly, by Pearl S. Buck in her novel, ***The Good Earth***. These were the social-conscience writers. Buck's novel of Chinese farmers struck a chord among the Depression era farmers and laborers.

Steinbeck's writing hardly addressed the Asian issues; however, his importance was in bringing about a new Californian liberalism. ***The Grapes of Wrath*** was all about the white dust bowl farmers, also called Okies. California became the utopian mixing bowl for all groups of people. In reality, this was hardly the case. Okies were mistreated and unwanted as much as or more than Mexicans or Asians. Laws were passed to keep other state's indigents from being a burden on California resources.

In 1938, California's newly-appointed charge for the welfare of migrants Carey McWilliams produced an



insightful indictment of California's "farm fascism" with Factories in the Field. Most astute was his understanding that "exclusion of aliens did not banish the Race problem," or what it stood for. In a very short time, America's involvement in World War II would address fascism, race, and American politics and economics on a whole new plane.

If WW II was only with Japan, it could have been interpreted as a war of racial superiority, the battle of the Anglo-Saxon race against the yellow horde. This was not the case. There were the unexpected alliances of countries. China and the Philippines allied with America. Japan allied with Germany. Much more was happening on political fronts besides just racial struggles. It was the ideologies of democracy against fascism.

Post-war California would see other factors shift racial perceptions. Agrarian capitalism gave way to industrial capitalism. Asian Americans moved in along with other ethnic groups, became entrenched, and moved up. They took their share in the American system. It was slow, first as Jim Crows and minority tokens, then fully into the mainstream. There is a little story about a farmer who refused to sell his land in Anaheim to the Disney Corporation. Disneyland was built around the farm. The farm was owned by a Japanese American.

Colleen Lye's ***America's Asia*** is a well-researched and well-written book. She successfully pulls together numerous complex ideas, such as Asian immigration and labor, California's turn-of-the-century agrarian based capitalistic monopolies, state and federal politics, influential literature of the time, and white America's xenophobia against unassimilated ethnic groups. In showing the interactions of these interests, she composes an understandable political, economic and racial/ethnic snapshot of those times.

COST OF SUBMISSION

Challenged Identities: North American Missionaries in Korea, 1884-1934
By Elizabeth Underwood
Royal Asiatic Society/Korea
Seoul, Korea
ISBN# 89-954424-0-9-02200

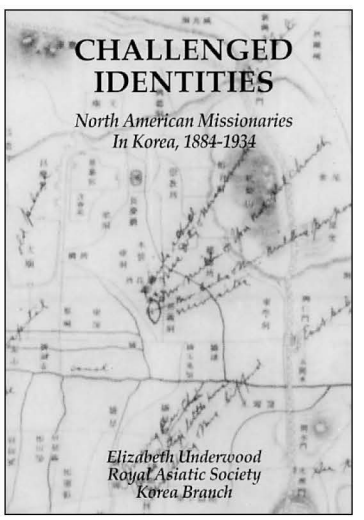
Review by Shirley A. Dorow

"Challenged Identities"! The title piqued my curiosity. Whose identities? How challenged? After following Dr. Elizabeth Underwood's able unfolding of Presbyterian missionaries' cultural give and take in Korea from 1884-1943, I've concluded the title is perfect.

The missionaries felt a calling to serve God in the mission field. They exuded fervency and idealism. And they had the good sense to allow themselves to be "challenged" and guided by the needs of the Koreans with whom they worked… to greater or lesser degrees. Documenting the degree of change to their basic North American upbringings comprises the rest of this story

Underwood loads the book's title even further by documenting how the Koreans, as well as the Western missionaries, were "challenged" as they welcomed, helped and encouraged but also sometimes disagreed with the foreigners from the west. The term "culture clash" is not used. Rather, the author works to help us see how healthy cross-cultural encounters will, of course, produce all sorts of challenges. How those challenges are met will engage the reader from beginning to end of this tale of the first 50 years of Presbyterian mission work in Korea, which also ran concurrently with the first 50 years that Korea, the former Hermit Kingdom, was legally open to the west.

The "how" becomes the grist which gives the book substance. Underwood quotes widely from missionaries' personal letters and diaries, as well as from published articles and speeches. One journal, published monthly in Seoul, ***The Korea Mission Field***, served as a sort of open forum for Presbyterians and Methodists and their Korean counterparts, to address the challenges of the day. This periodical provides rich material for the book. The first quote of this book comes from



one of these Koreans, Sang-choi Yi, a respected Korean Christian, whose words to newly arrived missionaries in Korea were recorded in ***The Korea Mission Field*** in December of 1923. His advice as to how they might work effectively in Korea was, "The first thing to do is to forget that you are American… and be fully persuaded that we are all from the same homeland… as Christians we are one."

The missionaries could accept that advice, I imagine, because they were dedicated to following the apostle Paul's example of "becoming all things to all people." They were fired up, ready to step out in love and faith and share the Good News of Christ.

But idealism must meet, join and complement reality as days become months and months become years of living in another culture and earnestly trying to become one with the people of the land. Concerning these early missionaries' experiences in Korea Underwood writes:

When viewed in their entirety these narratives reveal an ongoing process of negotiation and interplay among three often-conflicting forces: First, the ideologies of "progress," "civilization"" and "Christianization" central to missionary identities; second, the institutional and personal activities and policies of missionaries; and third, the identifications made between missionaries and Koreans through their daily interactions and friendships. Intertwined with these is a narrative of the emergence of "Christian Korea" — both in the minds of missionaries and in the activities and structures of Korean Christians.

The narratives are unraveled chapter by chapter. Chapter One explores the national and religious (American, Presbyterian Christians) identities of these men and women. Chapter Two looks at the "stage" (Korea from 1884-1934) where the interactions play out. Just what did Koreans expect from these newly arrived American, Christian guests in their land? How did the politics and social change of those years impact mission goals?

In Chapter Three Underwood lays out the ideals of Christian mission at that time in Korea. The missionaries thought deeply about how they might best identify with the Korean culture, and their encounters "on the field" fostered — or thwarted — the ideal of acculturation.

Chapters Four and Five give details of specific life experiences "on the field" of the mission workers — married, with or without children, single, male, female, medical workers, educators and evangelists. Stories telling how these varieties of status helped to build bridges or to erect barriers fascinate the reader.

Then in Chapter Six, Underwood summarizes "the ways in which the changing conditions of the encounters in Korea altered the landscape of missionary identification." "Changing conditions" included the arrival of Japanese colonialism, the development of a strong church in the north which was not always in tune with the more liberal church in Seoul, mission board controversies and on-field differences of opinion between missionaries and between mission goals and Korean leaders' goals.

One strong difference of opinion arose over whether or not the missionary ought to live in the Korean style, i.e. "go native." William McKenzie, from Nova Scotia, chose to adopt Korean lifestyle fully and he expressed his wish that "my dust mingle with theirs." McKenzie went to work in Sorai, the town where some of the earliest baptisms took place in Korea. There McKenzie worked closely with Kyong-jo So, a dedicated, highly respected Korean worker. So recalled that "what was mine was his, and what was his was mine."

In 1895 the Christians in Sorai decided to erect a church building, which they also fully funded by themselves. McKenzie was thrilled to see this strong indigenous church grow. However,

after only 18 months in Korea (11 of them in Sorai), McKenzie, suffering from sunstroke, took his own life. His Korean friends were devastated and expressed great love for him.

His death became the most "dramatic advertisement" in favor of limiting efforts at full physical identification with Korean lifestyle. McKenzie even recognized this would be the case when he made his last diary entry, after a week of severe illness. It says "Hope it is not death, for sake of Korea and the many who will say it was my manner of living like Koreans. It was imprudence, on my part, traveling under hot sun and sitting out at night till cold." Western missionaries considered his death a warning against over-enthusiastic identification with the Korean culture.

The spreading of the gospel was primary. How did lifestyle and health issues impact this goal? The degree of identification remained a hot topic of serious debate for years to come. Most lived in a western style but made adjustments when traveling among the villages for an extended period. One exception was Lillian Ross, a single woman, who lived in a Korean house, dressed in Korean clothes, ate Korean food, had close friendships with her female Korean co-workers and lived a long and fruitful life, even in retirement which she took in Korea. She served in Korea from 1926-1983.

One surprise was the extent to which the individual missionary's level of satisfaction was shaped by the "type of work in which they engaged on a daily basis." The evangelists who itinerated, thus meeting many Koreans, built good language skills and seemed most positive about their work. Some of the early educators felt they were being "used," and many of the doctors and nurses simply wore out from the heavy burden of trying to care for very sick patients, often without the basic equipment and medicines. Female missionaries who were married and had households to run and families to care for along with many new-to-the-country missionary guests needing temporary or long term housing, felt frustrated. Would they ever get to concentrate on language study? Would they ever get to "work" with the Korean women in a direct way?

All that said, however, the average length of service in Korea for all Presbyterian missionaries appointed between 1884 and 1934 was just over 22 years, ranging from less than one year to almost fifty years. Many came expecting to serve for a lifetime. The 108 ordained ministers in Korea served on average of 28 years compared with 16 years for medical doctors.

I was struck by Underwood's analysis of evangelistic work in Korea:

Evangelism was the branch of missions work most clearly associated with the ideal of identification. The desire to communicate Christianity effectively necessitated both language skills and cultural awareness. Moreover, an open attitude and a willingness to enter into loving relationships with Koreans were seen by Moffett and others as essential elements in mission evangelism. Of all missionaries, evangelists had the most opportunities for identification. Not only did most evangelists travel extensively, often for weeks or months at a time, but they were the mentors, pastors and co-workers of Korean Christians. Most distinctly, unlike any other branch of missions, evangelistic work forced missionaries to grapple with the relationship between culture and Christianity.

Elizabeth Underwood has re-told the oft-told tale of Korean missions in new, fresh, articulate, well-organized, sociological terms. One must read the book to savor the use of appropriate "real missionary life" quotes to hammer home her points. An appendix, chapter notes, precious old photos and 18 pages of bibliography further authenticate her work.

If anything is missing, it is a sketch of the author herself. This reader would like to have seen her photo and some pertinent data on the dust cover. But the frontispiece photo of the author's mother, a very young Carol Lutz, taken with Korean neighborhood children in Pyongyang in 1932, helps a little. In Carol's face I recognized some of the same features as those of her daughter, author Elizabeth Underwood. (*My husband, children and I knew Dr. Underwood in Korea as "Beth" when she was a student at Seoul Foreign School (class of 1979).*)

The capstone to this book lies in the author's very personal, intimate, family relationship to many about whom she is writing. Her great grandparents, grandparents and parents — all missionaries to Korea — came alive for her in a new way as she delved into the magnificent mission to which they submitted their lives for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. A fourth generation Underwood, the author draws a lesson for her life and for all of us. She says of her great-grandmother: "She, and many missionaries like her, allowed her experiences in Korea to challenge her own identity and that of her home culture." That willingness to be challenged may be the nugget of truth each reader will carry away as well. May we "avoid complacency in our own cultural identities and interactions today."

In that spirit, says Elizabeth Underwood, she offers us her book. ●

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