

Korean American Historical Society

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

VOL. 4, 1998-99

ORAL HISTORIES:
A CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN CUDDY

The Eldest Daughter of Korean Independence Leader Ahn Ch'ang-Ho

SPECIAL SECTION ON KOREAN ADOPTIONS

A Profile of Culture Camp Participants

Raising Young Americans in Korean Skin

International and Private Adoption: One Family's Story

The Voices of Some Adult Adoptees in Minnesota

COMMUNITY REPORTS

Korean Boxers in the U.S., 1926-1945

The Lives of Korean Skilled and
Family Reunion Immigrants in Australia

The Role of Korean American Organizations
in Influencing U.S. Policy

BOOK REVIEWS

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Occasional Papers

Vol. 4, 1998-99

Editor's Note *iii*

KAHS Oral Histories

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy..... *1*

Special Section on Korean Adoptions

Korean Identity Development Society:
A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants
KAHS Research *63*

Raising Young Americans in Korean Skin
Louise Holder *85*

International and Private Adoption: One Family's Story
Claire Hagen Dole *89*

Sometimes Love Isn't Enough:
The Voices of Some Adult Korean Adoptees in Minnesota
Willie J. Johnson and Meelyn Kim-Johnson *99*

Community Reports

"Fighting Spirit": Korean Boxers in the United States,
1926-1945
Joseph S. Swinth *111*

From Professional to Manual Workers:
The Lives of Korean Skilled and
Family Reunion Immigrants in Australia
Gil Soo Han *133*

The Role of Korean American Organizations
in Influencing U.S. Policy
Bruce E. Bechtol Jr. *159*

Reviews

- A Nation of the Diasporic, Narratives of Survival
Passages to Paradise: Early Korean Immigrant Narratives from Hawai'i,
by Daisy Chun Rhodes
Gary Pak 175
- Identity Politics and the Transformation
of Korean Identities in Japan
North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology, and Identity,
by Sonia Ryang
Erin Aeran Chung 181
- A Story of Subversive Obedience
Doing What Had to be Done: The Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim,
by Soo-Young Chin
Sonia S. Sunoo 191

Call for Papers 195

About
Korean American Historical Society 196

Editor's Note

It has been almost two years since we published our third volume of *Occasional Papers*. There have been a number of events that have prevented us from publishing the present issue earlier; however, the delay has made us work harder and more carefully to bring out more interesting and useful articles. The present volume has seven contributions with three book reviews.

In keeping with our policy to publish at least one oral history, we are proud to present the following interview with Susan Ahn Cuddy about her life story. For those readers who are not aware of Mrs. Cuddy's background, she is the oldest daughter of Korea's independence patriot, "Tosan" Ahn, Ch'ang-ho, who died in March 1938 as a Japanese prisoner. Over the course of two years, she has provided us with the opportunity to look into the close family relations between her father and the rest of her family members. Special thanks to **Anna Charr Kim** and her husband, **Andrew Kim** for their role in conducting this interview.

The next four articles comprise our special section on Korean adoptions. Beginning with our profile of Korean Culture Camp participants, followed by two essays by adoptive parents by **Louise Holder** and **Claire Hagen Dole**, and lastly a qualitative study of adult adoptees by **Willie Johnson** and **Meelyn Kim-Johnson**, we delve into an area that has been largely ignored the field of Korean American studies. This particular area of research may have not received scholarly attention, not because researchers have not been interested in the topic, but because they have not been able to have access to the people willing to cooperate with them. The area of study is sensitive, and the method of research requires extreme care. We greatly appreciate the Holder family and the Dole family for sharing their experiences with us. The people who presented their studies and stories here have provided us with their perspective on what is needed to improve our understanding of Koreans adopted into American families.

For our Community Reports, we begin with an original article by a local sports researcher, **Joseph Svinth**, who has managed to dig up some fascinating information in the unheard of arena of Korean boxing history. We look forward to a follow-up article by him. Also in keeping with our interest in overseas Koreans, we present the article on Korean immigrants in Australia. **Gill Soo Han** has done a remarkable job of reporting on various problems facing Korean immigrants there, with emphasis on the difficulty of Korean male immigrants. Next, we have a very interesting article on the growing influence that Korean American community organizations are coming to play in the formation of U.S. policy, courtesy of Korean studies graduate and Defense Department analyst **Bruce Bechtol**.

Lastly, we are happy to present review articles of three books, two of which are oral histories. Author and longtime Hawai'i resident **Gary Pak** has reviewed new author Daisy Chun Rhodes' collection of oral histories of Hawai'i's second generation Korean

Americans. We look forward to her writing more. Next, Northwestern University graduate student **Erin Chung** reviews Sonia Ryang's work on Koreans living in Japan—an under-researched field. Finally, we are thankful to **Sonia Sunoo** for her review of Soo-Young Chin's ground-breaking oral history of the daughter of one of the first immigrant families to the American mainland, Dora Yum Kim, a community-minded and very special individual. A contemporary of Dora Kim, Dr. Sunoo has been a pioneer in collecting oral histories of Korean Americans since the 1970s. She wrote this review while recovering from a stroke she had in early 1998. We are especially thankful for her contribution, and our wishes are with her for a full recovery.

In addition to this volume, we also have established a website and e-mail newslister for discussing topics pertaining to Korean American studies. We would like to invite you to join our newslister and to send in your comments and suggested articles on the present volume.

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ERRATA: In Vol. 2's section entitled Koreans in the Former Soviet Union, Valeriy Sergeevich Khan's article on "Paradigm and Problems of Nationalist Movements: a Social-Philosophical Analysis," was originally published in Russian in Songmoo Kho's (ed.) *News on Korean Studies in Kazakstan and Central Asia*, Vol. 1 (Almaty-Helsinki, 1993). In addition, there are some essential errors in the translated text. For example, in some places, the word *sotsialny* ("social") was translated as *socialist* ("sotcialistichesky"), thereby giving the respective sentences an ideological and political meaning. Our thanks to Dr. Khan for bringing this to our attention.

KAHS Oral Histories



ANNAC.KIM

Susan Cuddy, March 1999

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

Introduction

Susan (Soo San) Ahn Cuddy, 84, is the eldest daughter of renowned independence leader Ch'ang-Ho Ahn (born Ch'i-sam Ahn on November 9, 1878), and Helen Lee (Hye-ryeon Yi, born in 1884). Shortly after they married, they emigrated to the United States in September 1902. They initially settled in San Francisco before moving to Riverside, California, in 1904. They had five children, Philip (1905), Philson (1912), Susan (1915), Soorah (1917) and Ralph (Pilyong, 1926).

Tosan (Ch'ang-Ho Ahn's *nom de plume* means "island-mountain"), a strong believer in the need for Koreans to educate themselves and live morally upright lives, dedicated his life to Korean independence. According to Tosan, "nationalism arouses the spirit of independence, education strengthens self-confidence, organization puts the spirit and plan into action, and industrialism [industriousness] builds self-sufficiency."¹ In addition to

Interviewed by YOOSUN PARK, ICK-WHAN LEE, QWIHEE LEE, ANNA CHARR and ANDREW KIM, and PHILIP CHARR. Transcribed by JEAN BAE, JINA KIM and CURTIS GARTENMANN.

serving on the Korean Provisional Government and being instrumental in the formation of the *Kukminhoe* (Korean National Association), he established a number of organizations, most notably the *Ch'inmokhoe* (Friendship or Fellowship Society), *Sinminhoe* (New People's Association) and the *Heungsadan* (Young Korean Academy), which is active to this day. His family paid for his frequent absences, however. For his activities, he was repeatedly jailed by the Japanese. He died of tuberculosis in a Korean hospital while out on bail on March 10, 1938.

Of Ch'ang-ho and Helen Ahn's children, Philip is the most well-known for his acting career, which included roles in such films as "Anything Goes," "The Good Earth" and "Daughter of Shanghai," and in such television shows as "Hawaii 5-O," "Kung Fu," and "M*A*S*H," as well as others. During World War II, he served briefly in the U.S. Army, was cast in anti-Japanese propaganda films and became known for playing Chinese and Japanese roles.² Philip died childless, never having married, in 1978. Philson graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in chemistry, and became the chief chemist for Kinney Aluminum Foundry until 1944 when he joined Hughes Aircraft. He became the chief process engineer in 1949, and General Superintendent of pre-production, test equipment and tool manufacturing in 1954. Ralph played football in high school and at Los Angeles Community College (first-string center), and served in the Navy during World War II. Philson and Ralph also have acted. Soorah graduated from U.S.C. with a degree in sociology in 1947, and worked at the National Chemical Laboratory during World War II. With her brother Philip's help, she later opened a Chinese restaurant called Phil Ahn's Moongate in Panorama City, near Los Angeles, which became very popular.

Susan Ahn was born in Los Angeles on January 16, 1915, and graduated from San Diego State College in 1940 with a degree in Sociology. She then joined the U.S. Navy in 1942, and served until 1946. She was the first Korean to serve in the WAVES, and because she was the first female gunnery officer, her story was covered in such newspapers as the *Washington Post*, the *Atlanta Post*, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, the *Erie Dispatch Herald*, the *Pensacola News-Journal* and the *St. Louis Star-Times*. After retiring from the Navy as a Naval Intelligence Officer, she worked for the National Security Agency (NSA). She married Francis Xavier Cuddy in 1947, and had two children, Christine and Philip. Following a government graduate fellowship at USC from 1956 to 1957 where she earned a masters' degree, she retired from the NSA in 1959, and joined her family to work at Phil Ahn's Moongate restaurant. Christine, a graduate of Stanford Law School, is an entertainment attorney with Kleinberg, Lopez, Lange, Brisbin & Cuddy. Philip, a graduate of UC Santa Barbara, lectures about his grandfather and Korean and Korean American history.

We had the privilege of meeting and speaking with Susan Cuddy November 20-22, 1996, and March 27-29, 1999. At the time of her last interview, she was recovering from a 1998 hip surgery, but was still as spry and energetic as ever. She spoke with us about her parents; about growing up with her siblings under the banner of the independence movement, yet as an Asian minority which experienced prejudice; her experience in the Navy; her family; and her thoughts about the Korean community and for the future gen-

eration. The following conversation is a composite of these two interviews, which have been edited for mechanics (italics, where they appear, are for Korean words, as well as when the speakers added emphasis). We are very thankful to Mrs. Cuddy for sharing her thoughts and photographs with us.

A Picture on the Wall

Question: I was talking to our minister about coming out to interview you and I was telling him about your son and your grandson, how interested they are in Tosan. And he said, "That's how it is. The second generation is not interested in what their parents did, but the third generation becomes interested." I think it's a trend to find your roots. I think that what we are doing here is very important and critical so that the new generations of Korean Americans can know about their past.

Susan Cuddy: Yeah, where they came from.

Q: Yes, and what happened. Especially the history of early Korean immigrants in America. They had a lot of hardships and were an extreme minority in terms of their numbers and how they coped and survived.

SC: The best description of that pioneer generation from 1903 is that they didn't know that they were going to be faced with this problem of losing their country. But without those people who were in the United States, Mexico, Russia and Cuba, there could be no Korea today. It was those people I know in America and Mexico with their funding who supported the *Imsijungbu*.³

They had their 80th anniversary in Korea this April, and they invited one of us and *none* of us can go. Philson's too old to travel, and Ralph is going to cancer treatment and my sister, Soorah, just broke her kneecap, and I can hardly walk around. But anyway, I thought, "Well, I'll take one step." I returned the call and I asked, "Would you accept my son?" I thought, first of all, we were really wary about it because he is *oesonja*—the maternal grandson—and he's half-Korean—but they accepted him, and so he went.

But the young man that I talked to, who sent me the fax in the first place, spoke perfect English, so I asked him, "Where were you educated?" and he said, "In the United Kingdom." Then I asked, "How old are you?" And he said, "Thirty-six." I noticed that the last time I went in November, 1998, that all of our, so-called "big people," like Kang, Young Hoon; Suh, Young Hoon; Ahn, Kyung Ho—they're like advisers, and the core of the group are all under fifty and they are another dynamic force, and they're willing to

accept my son.⁴ But you know, the other generation just cannot accept a half-Korean, and besides that, *oesonja*, but these people, down there [in Taegu], they're all *Heungsadan*. They're all under fifty, and the man who's the secretary general there is forty-three. And you know the energy that they generate is so different from the era that I grew up with. The era that I grew up with was okay, but my present era is not as vital. I think that you people are really so progressive. You know, I'm just thrilled to see it.

Q: *So, tell us about your life.*

SC: My life story? I don't know whether it's interesting or not. My only interesting facet is the fact that I joined the Navy. That's the highlight of my life.

Q: *You were born in 19*

SC: 1915. In Los Angeles.

Q: *Was it in a hospital? Or was it at home? Do you know?*

SC: No, we didn't go to a hospital. I think Ralph is the only one that was born in a hospital. He was born in 1926, so it made a great deal of difference.

Q: *I thought that it was 1926 when your father left for the last time. And that's when Ralph was born.*

SC: And that's why Ralph never saw his father. 'Cause he left in 1926 and Ralph was born afterwards. One time somebody told me that Ralph had told him that his father was just a picture on the wall and so I said to him, I said, "Did you really say that?" "Yes, I said it," he said, "I never saw him smile, I never saw him do anything, you know, so he's just a picture on the wall—flat picture." And all of a sudden, it just dawned on me, you know, how true it is. Never dawned on me before, that'd be the emotion that he was left with—a picture on the wall.

Q: *I didn't understand why Ralph didn't have much to say about his dad until I finished Hyung-chan Kim's book about Ahn, Ch'ang-ho, and then I felt so bad for him. But Ralph wasn't affected by your father's absence?*

SC: No. He claims that mother's whole philosophy just never made him miss it.

Q: *I heard you say several times that he was very close to his mom. Was he more close than the other kids?*

SC: Oh, absolutely. First of all, the stoicism of the Orientals had sort of melted with her long residency—see, there's ten years between

Ralph and myself—that’s a lot of years, you know.⁵

Q: *And also maybe she felt badly ‘cause Ralph had never seen his dad.*

SC: Oh yeah, right. But she never dwelled on that. It was kind of interesting: the *Heungsadan* had a memorial for my father’s death day in March, and they asked Ralph to say a few words, and he got up and he said, “Well, that was the saddest day.” March 10—one of the saddest days of his life. And he told how Mom got the message that his father had died, and how she had taken him and hugged him and said, “You’ll never see your father,” and was really weeping. And he told that story and I was surprised.

I think as he goes on in his life, he’ll recall different things. But he claims that he never really felt the absence of father. He just thought—as he says—that this was the way to live. But you know, he had so many older siblings, and he had Philip, who was like a father figure, so consequently, it just worked out. I think he’s pretty well adjusted to life.

Q: *When I heard about him growing up without a father, I just felt so bad for him. I just couldn’t imagine it.*

SC: Oh, he’s luckier than most boys, because there’s lots written about his father, and he’s alive in many people’s minds. It’s not like a complete absence.

Q: *Right, I mean, a lot of children go through divorces or deaths or whatever, so this is very unique—that his father knew of him, but he never knew his father. Even the families that are intact, these stories are not passed on—that’s one generation. But there is so much written about Tosan because of his place in history—that your family, and your generation, after, there’s a story about your father. So how old were you when he left for the last time?*

SC: When he left? Eleven.

Q: *That’s young. So if you were eleven then, you had to sort of learn about your father afterwards, or did you grow up with it all when you were eleven?*

SC: Grew up? No, we just—from the time, I can remember—we were always told, “He’s not your father. He’s the country’s father.” That’s what you grew up with. He may have been an important figure, but, you know, my mother was so natural with it all that it really didn’t give us any aura of being important, or that we were the children of this great man. So what do I know about my father? Nothing, but then . . .

KAHS Oral Histories

Q: *Live with some legend.*

SC: Exactly. One time he wrote a letter to me from prison and he said to me, “Don’t let your little brother trample on the plants” [*laughs*]. And I thought to myself, “Gee, What a nerve!” telling me not to let Ralph trample on the plants. He didn’t want him to mess up his flowers.

But my father was a *great* gardener. He was crazy about his garden, he loved to landscape, he had a lot of rock gardens—I mean, in the short time that he was with us. And it’s just strange that I should marry an Irishman who’s crazy about rocks, you know, all the rocks in the garden [*gestures to the garden at her house and laughs*].

We didn’t see much of Mother and father fighting, but their fights were over his garden—his rose garden and his flower garden vs. her corn patch. She always wanted to plant corn and squash in the front yard and Dad always wanted to plant roses, *Mugung’bwa*, and chrysanthemums.⁶ So in some pictures we have her by her corn patch, and he by his roses.

Q: *So do you think he was a very practical person? You read history often, and you know these sort of great historical figures don’t take care of practical things, like domestic matters or*

SC: Oh, no. He was very concerned, especially about raising the kids. And then we all turned out all right so in that sense, he was practical.

Q: *How long did your father live in this country—actually stably?*

SC: Well, he came in 1902 and he left in 1907. And then he came back in 1911 and went back in 1919 and then came back in 1925 [and then left again]. So you add it up [*laughs*].

Q: *About fifteen years.*

SC: But got five kids. What’s so amazing to me as I look back on it as an adult, though, is that they could have a child the last time he was here. You know, they were not young—I don’t know—physically, he must have been okay.

Q: *While he was here, did he do anything to support your family?*

SC: No. Oh, I shouldn’t say that because in the early years, he *did* work in the orange groves before we were born. But after we were born, I can’t remember him doing anything as a breadwinner. He was always doing something for good causes. Good causes and his family [*laughs*].

Q: *How did you feel about that?*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

SC: Well, I don't know. We grew up with that understanding. There's no resentment. Another thing is that all five of us turned out to be pretty good. We were successful in whatever we did, and I think we were reasonably happy. My Mother wasn't happy when I married an Irishman but

Q: *Typical Korean mother.*

SC: Oh, my, yes.

Q: *How do you remember your father as a person, aside from his being a Korean patriot, educator, man of high morals, etc., as commonly depicted in public? How would you characterize him as a person, his private personal traits?*

SC: While he stayed home with family, I remembered him as a good father, always understanding and respecting his children's wishes and hopes. He had a melodious voice and spoke caringly and lovingly to us. He was a good husband, cared for gardens, and did house chores. But looking back, I can say that he was an admirable person. He was straight, tall and good looking, an excellent orator. He stood out among the multitude. He traveled a lot across the world, and he always took pictures wherever he visited. And in those pictures, you see him always standing at the center, tall, standing out and looking good.⁷ But when I was in Korea once, they asked me if I could name one fault about my father, because they had researched his life and they never found any fault. And so, I said "Yeah, he was a bad father."

Q: *I like that you are so honest. He sacrificed his family. Right. Now, your father founded this high school in P'yeongyang?*

SC: Oh, Taeseong.⁸

Q: *Right, Taeseong. That's where Ch'oe, Man Sik had taught.*

SC: Oh, that must have been Taeseong. 1907.

Q: *Yeah, Taeseong, and you know Yun, Ch'i-ho was the principal.*

SC: Yi, Kwang-su wrote the first biography on Dad. And what they have done is reprinted it.⁹

Q: *One book is by Chang, Ri-yuk. I think he went to Northwestern University.¹⁰*

SC: Right, and he got a doctorate from Columbia. Then he became the president of Seoul National University. And then he was the first Ambassador to the United States.

Q: *The book about Abn, Ch'ang-Ho that was printed in English said that he*

went to a town in South Bend Indiana, which was incorrect. Northwestern is in Evanston, Illinois, not

SC: He went to two or three universities. I don't know why he would.

Q: *I think he went to Dubuque University [in Iowa]. Then he went to Northwestern, but here they say that they met him at the*

SC: This man is not really completely accurate, but it is the first thing in English, and it's actually a good reference book. He got some of the dates right.¹¹

Q: *It was kind of fascinating reading that your father went to Yucatan, Mexico, to meet some Koreans there. Yi, Kwang-su was described as the official biographer of your father, but how did that come about?*

SC: Because they were together in Shanghai when the book was written, and he makes reference to my mother, but didn't know her. But Ralph's comment is, "How could they say that when they didn't even interview her?" Yi, Kwang-su never

Q: *I think Yi Kwang-su never came to America. I think he was one of those early Korean intellectuals that went to Japan to go to school.¹²*

SC: Right. He was not worldly—he didn't even go anywhere (travel overseas). But he was in Shanghai and he was with my father, and that's how come he—I guess he was a *Heungsadan* member, too.

Q: *How did you hear that your father died?*

SC: Telephone. The *Heungsadan*. The YKA, the Young Korean Academy, they got the message, and they called the house. Mother never cries, you know; she's very strong. But the *minute* the phone rang, she knew who it was. She knew what the message was, and she went into Korean, "*Aigo, Aigo.*"

Q: *So you think she was expecting it in some way?*

SC: I think so. I mean, she was always prepared for the worst, that poor lady. If she saved \$300 he'd take it to help somebody else [*laughs*].

The big story was that one of his compatriots out of Vladivostock was trying to come to United States and he couldn't get off the boat because he was (I forget what the disease was), so they sent him back, but father wrote that he needed \$300 for him. So I don't know where she had money saved, but she sent him the \$300. That meant that we didn't eat for a couple weeks, but she was very clever, though.

Sometimes, when we didn't have enough to eat, she could go out to

the field and pick up some kind of a green, like dandelions, you know, to make *namool* [Korean salad]. I'd pick poison, you know, but not her. I mean, she'd find something, you know, that'd be edible. I think when my father—Dad—planted, he planted a lot of things, you know. Bushes and things that were edible, which we didn't pay too much attention to. I know one bush—he told us that if you ate it, it'd be good for your eyes.

Personally, my mother made a bigger sacrifice. It had nothing to do with country or love of country, but to have the necessity to live. You know she and Ada

Choy's mother were very good friends. They lived together in Riverside. They were such strong women.

Q: *Do you think that your mother and father had an unusual relationship for Koreans, that generation?*

SC: I think it'd be unusual no matter whether it's Koreans or non-Koreans.

Q: *How so?*

SC: Well, they were faithful to each other. In spite of the fact—oh, my father was so faithful, you know. He was righteous. He was very ethically right, so—but I think they trusted each other implicitly and they *understood* each other. She never complained about her plight in life—which was terrible, you know, really. But she was always happy. She didn't mope and grope and feel sorry for herself.

And the other aspect of her was that in the early days, all the newcomers, the picture brides and the ladies that came to United States, they all came to my mother for advice—consoling. In those days, a lot of women were beaten up, and they would come and she would console them.¹³ I remember the house. It was always full of



SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Soorah (left) and Susan Ahn (center), with friends Helen Lee, and Vada and Anna Chung (1922)

people coming for help. But she was the one who gave them the help, and then she tried to teach them how to take care of their babies.

Q: *Did she ever tell them to stand up to their husbands?*

SC: Never. The husbands were too strong, you know, physically strong. And when you live in a society that puts women on a lower level and that's all you know, you are not going to be like my mother and stand up to them—not unless you are Ada's mother.

Q: *Ada Choy's mother was your mother's sister? Your auntie, right?*

SC: She was my father's sister-in-law. She was a *strong* woman. Look what she did. Father's older brother [Ahn Ch'i-yong] was married to [Ada's mother]. He died, and so this lady became a widow. So my father asked her to come to United States, and she came. It must have been 1903 or 1904, and she came to Riverside. But we always treated her like she was our aunt, and she married somebody who was one of the first presidents of the *Kukminhoe*, the KNA [Korean National Association].¹⁴ My father fixed it up, too, but the man ran off and left her with three kids. Sad story. But she didn't cry about it. She went to work and supported them. She was unusual. She was not just an ordinary woman.

Q: *How did your mother manage to support such a large family by herself all those years?*

SC: Well, the thing that is unique about her is that she *believed* in him. She believed in what he was doing, I mean, but then she had the concept of what he was trying to save—the country and—but she believed in that. You know in 1953, when everyone was getting their American citizenship naturalization to become American citizens, my mother did not. It was very unusual, she would not take that. In 1963, when Park, Chung-Hee invited her to come out to get father's medal, she went out on a Korean passport. That indicates to me that she was *really* a Korean, no matter what. But when voting time came, she would kick all of us out to go vote. You know, the American way. She was very appreciative of American life, but she didn't want to give up her Koreanness. It's a strange feeling when you have no place to go. Neither of your parents could really go back. You know, after living here until 1945, when you could go back, you are so much indebted here that then you feel kind of good that you didn't go back because they don't treat you really well there when you go back.

Q: *What did she do?*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- SC: Wash clothes, sew handkerchiefs, go out and clean houses. I'll tell you a story about her. Well, after we got little older, we all worked, but up until the time, we could help her. She used to take washing and she used to wash all these clothes, *paek-in's* [white people's] clothes, so my brother Philson, who's two years older than me, he and I used to have to deliver it. So one day, we were walking uphill to deliver with this clean bunch of clothes and playfully he pushed my face—dirty, dirty face into the clean laundry, we had to take it back get it washed. Mother was upset.
- Q: *Wow. And your mother worked outside the home mostly, or did she bring work at home?*
- SC: Well, she worked outside the home doing housework, then she took in sewing. What do they call—"Sak"—sewing. *Sak banuejil*.⁵ She did all kinds of things like that.
- Q: *So did you have to do the housework and stuff because she would be busy earning a living?*
- SC: Yeah, she used to do housework, too. She used to take us sometime—take me sometimes to help her. And we would also sort walnuts. She would get a *big* bag of walnuts and we'd have to sort them into "A" grade, "B" grade, "C" grade, you know.
- Q: *Where would she get the walnuts?*
- SC: Somebody would bring them to the house. I didn't know whether it was a Korean or somebody
- Q: *In the shell, you mean with the shell on?*
- SC: No, the shell would be cracked off, but they would have the walnuts in different—I guess they had a machine to crack them or something, and they would just bring the meats, and we'd have to sort those.
- Q: *So did your mother—how did she feel about being the breadwinner and that? Was it okay with her, or did she resent it at all?*
- SC: You know how my younger brother tells about how he wasn't affected by the fact that father was absent. Because mother did everything, you know. He just thought that life was supposed to be that way [*laughs*]. She *never* complained. Another thing is that she knew what she was doing 'cause before she came to the United States, my father said to her, "Why don't you wait ten years for me and I'll come back." She said, "No way!" She came with him knowing full well what was gonna happen, and she saved all his paraphernalia—memorabilia from 1902 from the time she came aboard, you know,

whatever he brought with him aboard ship, she saved all that. So when we donated them to the Korean Independence Hall, there were about 4,000 pieces.

Q: *Oh, my goodness. That's very rare.*

SC: That's meaningful because in those days Japanese came in and took everything.¹⁶ Oh, she was as patriotic as he was and understood the love of country.

Q: *Nothing gets beyond that. You're preserving something that long, it's not just because you love—a lot of people loved the country but didn't preserve it. Do you think she did that because she realized sort of his potential?*

SC: Oh, I think so. Yeah, she was wonderful, but she never complained. Now in Yi, Kwang Su's book, it says that somebody says that my father and Mother did not get along. And I was reading a little clip the other day—I guess some letters of my father's were being printed someplace—and he was reviewing some of the letters, and he made the comment that it is stated that somebody said about Mom, that they didn't get along, but he said these letters don't indicate that. So I'm really happy about that. But there were people who were jealous of her position with Dad because they wanted to be the closest to Dad. And, of course, they were male chauvinists. We had so many male chauvinists in the early days. Oh, they were ugly.

Q: *Did your mother write back to your father when she was here?*

SC: Yeah. The only one that's left in this whole collection is the day before he died, or the day before she got the notice that he died. She had written a letter to him about being sorry that he was sick. That letter never got mailed, but I think it's in the collection that I gave to Dr. [Hyung Chan] Kim.

Q: *Your mother was born in North Korea, right? Did she have sisters and brothers?*

SC: Yes, she had one sister and one brother.¹⁷ The brother came to the United States, and the sister did also, so they were all together for a while. Then they went back to Shanghai, and they lived in Shanghai while my father was there, and my father used to use their home as their address to keep his things. One of the sons was telling me that the day Father was arrested, he came to the house to get father's papers. The other thing he told me was that he remembers my father doing exercises with swords. I couldn't figure it out—I couldn't picture my father with a sword. So I asked this man who

was father's secretary, and he said yes, Father used to do *taekwondo* and *keomdo* put together. So when you get to *keomdo* you use the sword. What is the purpose of that *keomdo*? Is it to balance your mind or something?

Q: *Well, it is, kind of. Keomdo [Kendo] is a Japanese martial art.*

SC: What? Is it effective for muscle?

Q: *And also concentration. So how old was your mother when she married?*

SC: Eighteen.

Q: *There was quite an age difference between your father and mother, right? Was it an arranged marriage?¹⁸*

SC: Absolutely not. It was not arranged; it was free choice. I don't know [the details], but her father [Yi, Ch'i-hwan] told her that Father was a very good man, but he would never make any money. She also told us a story about how handsome he was when he was young, so that when he walked down the street, these ladies who used to carry water jars on their heads, would turn around to look at him and water jars would fall. [Laughs]

My father used to go to her home to learn classics of some sort. And so she had an eye on him from then. And the story goes that he asked her to wait ten years, before he—when he would come back from the United States, they would get married. And she said, “No way. Now or never, I am going with you.” First of all, his objections were that she was not a Christian (because he had converted), and then because she was not educated. So her family became—I guess her family was Confucian or Buddhist—but the whole family became Christian—and so when it came time to get engaged and get married, my father said, “You have to get an education.” So he took his sister [Sin-Ho] and my mother and put them in a school called *Cheongshin* High School.¹⁹ And put them through there because he did not want to have an uneducated wife, I guess. But she was pretty stubborn about marrying him or being with him. I mean, she wasn't going to let him go. I don't know why. I mean, I wish I talked to her more before. So the rest of the story is Shin-Ho, his sister, became the vice chairman of the socialist party, the Women's Socialist Party in North Korea 'cause she stayed there.²⁰

Q: *So it was in 1890?*

SC: Oh, Cheongshin? Yeah, right. I think so.

Q: *That's in Seoul. That's a missionary school.*

KAHS Oral Histories

- SC: Right, and that's where she was qualified to marry him after that.
- Q: *You've had no contact with the grandparents?*
- SC: You mean my grandparents? You mean in Korea? No.
- Q: *In North Korea? You say your father's home is still there.*
- SC: Oh, yeah, he built this—we don't know if it's still there. Now, who knows! The last—I heard this years ago—that some military group had taken it over for offices or something. But he built this himself, with one carpenter, and he designed this home. He designed it to make it easier for the women in the kitchen. And he closed the, you know in Korean houses where they have a square with a big hole in the middle [the courtyard]. Well, he closed that off, so it was more useful.
- Q: *He was kind of like Thomas Jefferson: He designed homes; he was a man of all seasons. It's very enlightening.*
- SC: Well, he believed in equal rights, and he was gonna get all his women folk to have equal rights.
- Q: *Where do you think he got those kind of enlightened ideas about women?*
- SC: Well, I don't know, but the Western ideas came from the missionaries, although one of the stories is that the missionaries were glad to get rid of him because he was not too Christian.
- Q: *I read that they actually paid part of his fare or something like that to get him out of there.²¹*
- SC: Yeah, I heard that story, too.
- Q: *There were so many people who learned from the missionary schools then. Some were influenced, some remained Confucian and others thought differently, so it all depended on the individual. But even the American missionaries weren't all that enlightened.*
- SC: You know, the missionaries there were the—I don't know whether it was good or bad, but it was the enlightenment period. I mean, I don't know 'cause all of these Korean Christians—look how many there are. You wonder—it's like a plague—not a real science, but anyway, I kind of believe the story that they wanted to get rid of him.
- We used to watch him meditate. Some kind of meditation—I don't know whether it was Buddhist, but we figure now that he was not 100-percent Christian. Some Confucianism and Buddhism all mixed up in him.

My sister and I used to peek in while he was meditating. Then if he turned around, we'd run. But I don't think that he was a 100-percent Christian.²² There's a translation about him in one of the Buddhist stories, and he went to see somebody and this man was telling him how great he was and he, my father, told this priest, "What I do is a small thing compared to what you do." And so then immediately after that, the Japanese came in and questioned the Buddhist monk, and so I guess the monk was harassed from that time on. So my father had a hard time, even to people that meant something to him. He couldn't really talk to, or—the Japanese were *really* vicious.

Somebody had written a story about the last days of his life. It was very interesting because the doctor said that when he went to visit Father in prison (because he was a doctor, he was allowed to go in). At that time, my mother had sent Father some cookies and some oranges, I guess from California, and so he told this doctor to take the fruit and cookies and enjoy them, and this doctor's comment was that even during father's last days, the American method of offering was in his psyche. This doctor also said that there were several, maybe thirty people outside (the Japanese wouldn't let anybody in) who were singing Hymn No. 285, "When All my Work is Done," and so I thought it was very touching. But this doctor was very nice.²³

Q: *I still remember Tosan wrote a letter to your mother from his prison. It's a long letter, handwritten in brush and so enlightened, you know. It was written to his own wife, about two generations ago, right? And so respectable as an individual. Was it translated?*

SC: There's only one that's been translated, and I don't know which one that is, but I'll send it to you. Try to get copies because it does portray a man who is trying to balance out his absence from home. But you know one amazing thing, from some of the letters he wrote, he remembered the names and places of things that, that you know [at the time], you didn't really think he'd remember. But here he was, sitting in prison with all these memories.

Q: *What was he like as a father? Was he very strict or was he really affectionate?*

SC: No, I wouldn't say he was strict. No, he was very kind, very gentle, very sweet. He wanted you to do things "just like," "no half-way", "have to be good."

Mother used to make everybody bring in their own stick, you know, Korean style. "Go get a stick: everybody line up!"

- Q: *Do you think that when you were a child, were you more in awe of him do you think, or did you like to play with him and things like that? Or was he just serious?*
- SC: Yeah, he was good at telling stories and doing little things, I mean if he had been at home. I could remember this stuff. He had a great sense of humor, actually. I wish that someone would sit me down sometime and really tell me what he said at *Kwoejaejung*.²⁴ He made a speech at *Kwae Jae Jung* which was, at that time, during the Yi dynasty, and he made a reformation speech. And that was his first public speech and it's very famous now, I guess.²⁵ But I haven't ever sat down with somebody to get the real gist of it—whether it was recorded or not, I don't know. But, yeah, everybody alludes to it that it was one of his most famous speeches.
- Q: *When the missionaries went to Korea, they perceived Koreans to be lazy. They work on the farm, and after harvest is done, there's a long winter and there is nothing to do, so the farmers drink and smoke. So this concept of, "If you're Christian, you shouldn't smoke or drink"—there are very strict rules imposed on them. But here, of course, the teaching is "don't overdo it." But when the missionaries went to Korea, that was an absolute no-no: no drinking, no smoking. And I think there is something running similar to your father—you have to bring them up morally.*
- SC: Yeah. Well, I think that he learned a lot in the missionary school, and that is where he got his inspiration. I was just reading this. This *Osan*—I had a copy of—somebody had a grammar school version of *Osan*, and I picked out a spot where he talks about—he heard my father speak, and this is 1907, I believe. Somewhere along the line it reads what my father made this great speech.²⁶ You could read it to us.
- Q: *"Even though we don't have the guns and cannons, but there's just one way we can survive in this world is to throw away all bad habits. And customs, we have to throw all those away and we have to become one and improve ourselves—get education. That's the only way."*
- SC: And that's the speech?
- Q: *Yeah.*
- SC: Well, anyway, the man gets inspired so he opens a school, called *Osan*. This is another story, I'll give you a copy of it. It tells about the "Aegukka" [the Korean national anthem]. There's this controversy over who wrote the "Aegukka"—We all took it for granted that my father wrote it, but now somebody said that somebody else wrote it.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- Q: *Well, it's not sure, okay. There's some story that Yun, Chi-ho and your father wrote it together, but they're not sure.*
- SC: But the story about the "Aegukka," it is always a question, and no one can prove it. So I thought it's a good thing to ask the daughter of this aunt. I said to Ada long before this controversy came up, "Who wrote the 'Aegukka,?'" She said, "Your father." I said, "How do you know?" She said, "My mother told me" [*laughs*].
- Q: *Oh, okay. Ahn, Eak Tai composed the music.*
- SC: This article tells how he came to San Francisco in 1937, and he was so happy when he went to this church and saw the Korean flag flying. And then he went in and he heard the "Aegukka" being sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," like the old one, he felt bad that it was to another tune, so he went and he originated a tune for it, and that's how come we have it today.
- My son, who I guess for the first time heard it in the "Auld Lang Syne" version the other day, we were at—my cousin had died and we went to her memorial service and I gave the eulogy—but the minister who conducted it was even younger than Ralph (so I don't know what generation you'd call him). He got up and said, "We're going to sing the 'Aegukka,' but to the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne.'" He was so emotionally attached to that version. And my son, when we got through with it, came home and said, "I think it's just a little better than with the new version." And that's one of the issues. Who else would put words to a Scottish tune in those days, other than my father? There's a group here that tries to establish the fact that my father wrote it, but I don't know whether they have or not. I gave them all kinds of materials and whatever, but anyway, it's a good project.
- SC: I gave Matthew Benuska a copy of this research that Dr. Byong Moon Kim did of it. It's interesting. He established the fact why he thinks that Tosan wrote the words to the "Aegukka."²⁷
- Q: *Why did they say he wrote it?*
- SC: Well, he was supposed to have written in 1907, when he set up the Taeseong Academy.
- Q: *So he met Ahn Eak Tai who composed the melody subsequently. Not when he wrote it, though.*
- SC: Yeah, somewhere. No, I don't, I don't really know this little thing Dr. Kim wrote. It kinda explains how it happened though. But the other thing is that Father *did* write poems. In fact, while he was at

Taeseong Academy, he wrote a poem about baseball: “In order to play baseball, you have to have the independence movement in your mind.”

Q: *I remember him saying to one of the Korean farm workers in California, “You pick this thing as if that’s yours.”*

SC: Sometimes you think that he’s nuts. Yeah, everything had to be

Q: —Just so. I think that your father was such a unique figure in our history. There are so many famous independence movement leaders and fighters, but then later on, you find all kinds of blemishes, like Syngman Rhee. But Tosan has such a clean record—as far as the record goes. But he was not just a patriot, but also a kind of philosopher.

SC: Well, I think his main thrust was to teach the Korean people to become better people so that their country would be a better place.

Q: *So it must have been hard for you to live up to your father’s name all the time.*

SC: But we didn’t. I mean, we kind of went our own way.

Another story that I can repeat to you is that when he was making speeches around the country (in California), after one speech, a young man came up to him and said, “Until now,” he said, “I have not done anything. I’m a no-gooder. Now that I heard your speech, I’m inspired to work for the independence movement.”

But he had a power of oration, I guess. It’s too bad that we never listened to it [*laughs*]. Now I wish we had paid attention. When he used to give these big speeches in 1925, a bunch of us kids would just sit in the balcony and throw spitballs. Now, I wish that I’d listened, but it’s too late.

Q: *No, but could you hear the voice?*

SC: Oh, no. They don’t have hardly any writings. He didn’t write too much, you know—he always spoke, but in those days, there was no recording.

Q: *That’s too bad. There must be something, you’d think.*

Getting Old in America

Q: *Now, I’ve got your siblings—it was Philip and Philson. Philip was born in 1905 and then Philson*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- SC: 1912.
- Q: *A big gap there—seven years. Your dad was probably traveling, right?*
- SC: Oh, you can tell when my father was home [laughs].
- Q: *And then you come after Philson?*
- SC: *Yeah, 1915.*
- Q: *That's you, and then Soorah is 1917.*
- SC: 1917.
- Q: *So, were all the kids born in Los Angeles?*
- SC: No. Phil—I think my old brother was also born in Los Angeles, and my second brother [Philson], who's two years older than myself, was born in Riverside. And then the rest of us were born in Los Angeles.
- Q: *Now how did that happen? They went to Riverside first, and then came to Los Angeles?*
- SC: Yeah, they went to Riverside and lived in Riverside for, I guess, many years.
- Q: *But Philip was born in Los Angeles?*
- SC: Los Angeles, and we don't know how that happened. He was born in a place called Highland Park, which is around here. But we've never been able to figure out whether he was born in somebody's home, a hospital or what. Don't have the story.
- Q: *What elementary school did you go to?*
- SC: I went to a school called Freemont Avenue. Then I went to a junior high school called Central Junior High School.
- Q: *Where did you go to high school?*
- SC: Here, in Belmont.
- Q: *Belmont High School. Okay. And you went to San Diego State College. You said that you got some tuition money from your friend.*
- SC: That was the friend that lived in the back of the grocery store. This other friend is Sylvia Yellen, another non-Korean. She and I went to junior college together.
- Q: *Where was that?*
- SC: Los Angeles Junior College.
- Q: *So did you grow up—you grew up on the suburbs, then?*

SC: No, right in the *middle* of the city—growing up in the city. In fact, where the old house we had was, now the place called the “Dorothy Chandler Pavilion,” sits right there on the property.

Q: *So were there a lot of Koreans living in Los Angeles at that time when you were growing up?*

SC: No. When we were growing up, we were the only Korean family in the Los Angeles area. There were families in the outskirts and the counties like Willows, Wrigley, Dinuba, but as far as the city was concerned, we were the only Koreans. Then in 1926, the rice crops failed, so all the Koreans started to come into the Los Angeles area, and then that’s when the community started to build up.

Q: *What did they do for living?*

SC: Oh, they had—a little after the failure of the rice crops, they came down and opened the grocery stores, little market-type things. They had cleaning shops—similar to what they are doing now, yeah.

The first Korean community was in Riverside. I’m trying to think how many families there were in Riverside. Maybe five families that we knew, but the rest were students. A lot of single students. But they had church, they had *Kukmin hakkyo* [elementary schools] and Riverside was where the *Shinminhoe*, which was the secret society that he took to Korea in 1907, I guess, developed.²⁸

Father had a lot of pictures of young people, young students whom he inspired to become dedicated to the Independence Club. So when they started the *Heungsadan*, that was his idea—you take all the young minds and make them, develop them to be future leaders. He always thought that’s what we’ll have, you know, a free Korea.

But for people like—what’s his name, George Paik? He was the president of Yonsei University. And Chang, Ri Uk *Paksa*, when he was—well, besides being the first ambassador in the United States, he was a president of Seoul National University, and there was Choi, Hee Sung who was a [National Assemblyman]. there were people like that, that he had developed through the *Heungsadan*.²⁹ This is in contrast to the *Kukminhoe*, the Korean National Association. The Korean National Association was for everybody, you know. It didn’t matter whether you could make a living or not, or you were a pro or not a pro. You could belong to the Korean National Association.

Q: *Did you go to church here when you were young?*

SC: Oh, when we were young, we all went to church with my mother,



SUSAN CUDDY COLLECTION

A Heungsadan Picnic in the Los Angeles Area, 1924~1926

Top Row (l-r): Powell Lee, Helen Lim, **Susan Ahn**, Marcella Lim, Emma Lee, Nark Kim and Yin Kim.

Second Row (l-r): May Lee, David Kim and Earl Kim. Third Row (l-r): **Soorah Ahn**, Betty Kim, Marguerite Cho, Dick Lim, McCune Kim and Jimmie Kim. Bottom Row (l-r): Soon-Tak and Roon-Tak Kyung.

but now I go to a Korean church. I don't understand half the sermon, but I go. I think I would probably be more comfortable in American church, but somehow this Korean church keeps drawing me, so I go to the Korean church.

Q: *That was here in Los Angeles?*

SC: Oh, yeah. To the Methodist church. My father was Presbyterian. We all were Presbyterian, but politically they split—it had nothing to do with religion. It had to do with politics. So the Methodist split off from the Presbyterian.³⁰

Q: *So was there a Presbyterian church?*

SC: Yes, and then, I forget what year it was, but they split off and they started the Methodist church. I just got a notice that they're celebrating the 95th anniversary of the Methodist church.

Q: *What was it like? What was Los Angeles like back then when you were a teen-ager?*

KAHS Oral Histories

SC: It was good for us because we had our own group, all the second generation. A handful, you know, but it was so comfortable because we all knew each other, so we could trust each other. We used to go on picnics and we were bad. The girls were bad because the boys were okay. One time, we asked these boys to go on a picnic, and we packed the box and we wrapped bricks and dirt with paper and the sandwiches, and made them carry it to the park, and—God, we were so bad [*laughing*]. But we had a close relationship, just like brothers and sisters. You know my mother accepted all nationalities into the house. But we used to have a lot of mixture friends. I used to bring them at home all the time.

Q: *So were your friends mostly second-generation Koreans?*

SC: They were all second-generation Koreans, but we all grew up under the same

Q: *How big was the second-generation group?*

SC: If you could have found fifty you were lucky.

Q: *Then you were closely associated in the group?*

SC: Yeah, we were just like brothers and sisters, actually. But what we did was we organized what they called the Young Korean National Association and formed that as a basis of our whole life, I mean, [socially and politically]. And even in those days, all the Korean youngsters really were achievers. They made, I don't know, the "phoebians"—whatever you call those—scholastic honors?³¹ But in any kind of scholastic honors, the Koreans would make and become the president of their student [body], you know, like a lot of young people do today. Something in the strain of the Korean blood. There was no one that I could say didn't make the grade. Most of them were dentists, or dental technicians or doctors.

Q: *All overachievers.*

SC: Among them they have many doctors. They have, well, a businessman, they have government workers. I mean, yeah, I would call them achievers. They make a good living. Oh, yeah, they have dentists!

Q: *Well, you certainly were an achiever.*

SC: Well, yeah, I was an achiever, but I didn't really have an established profession, like a lawyer. In our day, I didn't really know we were overachieving. The most important thing in our lives was the independence movement. *Everything* was built around the independence movement, and it's strange that it didn't do anything bad to

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

us. It sort of just made us closer. We were intense. Well, you can't help it because you knew that if your parents were making a dollar in an hour, fifty cents of it was going to the independence movement. I mean, you knew who they were, and it was a 100-percent effort. There was nobody left out.

Q: *But wasn't it hard to make a living just . . .*

SC: *Sure, yeah. Some were only making a dollar an hour, but fifty cents of that went to the independence movement.*

Q: *That's amazing.*

SC: Well, I think that if you get so imbued with losing your country and trying to find it back, you have a different attitude, you know. You know that you have to do something to help, or else you don't have a country.

Q: *But didn't you feel like you were American and not so much Korean, or was that not an issue?*

SC: No, I'm not really sure how I felt, but I do think that we felt American. In the sense that my father, all he said, "Appreciate the fact that you live in America." But, of course, we didn't have a country, so you know that might not be a valid statement. But he liked the spirit of freedom, the freedom to choose, you know. He *liked* that idea. That's why he came.

Q: *When you were so involved in this independence movement, what did everyone else think around you, the non-Koreans?*

SC: Oh, it was, you know, with your own group, with your Korean group.

Q: *But did the non-Koreans around you know anything about Koreans?*

SC: Oh, no. They didn't know what a Korean was, because if you went to school, maybe there were only one or two Koreans and so, you know, you just went on your way being a student.

Q: *With your Caucasian friends, you wouldn't interact at all. They wouldn't know anything about that part of your life?*

SC: Well, I wouldn't say that because my friend that loaned me fifty dollars to go to college still turns over items and sees that if they're not made in Japan[*laughs*]. We laugh because she just still turns them over. And this is fifty years later. Those that we were friendly with kind of understood the plight that Koreans were in, but most of them, no. If they knew you, you know, they could relate to you so . . .

KAHS Oral Histories

- Q: So was your life then mostly surrounded by Koreans, or did you have sort of separate lives?
- SC: No, it was half and half. It was the same for all the Korean kids. When we got together for our group meetings, that was fine, and we all got along with each other very well. But if you went to school, you were all on your own. At each school, there was only one or two Koreans, you know. It was not like any kind of a mob scene.
- Q: *So you would just have sort of two parts of your life.*
- SC: Two parts, yeah.
- Just the other day, I went to visit a friend, and she is a very interesting person. When we lived at 106 N. Figueroa St., there was a little grocery store back of the hill of our house, and sometimes we were so poor, we didn't have any money. We used to go up there and charge our food, and the poor man would wait six months, eight months for us to pay so we used to go up there and borrow car fare if we had to go on a interview or something and didn't have money at the time. His daughter and I went to school together. We were just talking, and so she was talking about my mother—she has a really good memory. But here we are, friends for seventy years or something like that.
- Q: *What is her name?*
- SC: Ruth Hill.
- Q: *Oh she is paek-in [White]?*
- SC: Yes. She is Jewish. In those days, we didn't have any Korean friends. We were the only Korean family in the area.
- Q: *She is still alive, and she is 80-something?*
- SC: She is alive, and the other day when I broke my hip, I came home and she brought me three loaves of egg bread. Jewish egg bread. She's 84. Maybe 83.
- Q: *And does she live around here still?*
- SC: She lives not too far. She lives a little bit farther than the Airport Plaza. She was very close to my mother. She used to drive her around.
- Q: *Talking about the second-generation Japanese, for example, you didn't associate with them?*
- SC: Oh, no. Well, we kind of ignored each other. I mean, there were some occasions where you could bring friends, but in the situation

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

we were in, you didn't *dare* bring a Japanese home, so

Q: How did the Japanese kids feel toward Koreans?

SC: Oh, they didn't care. They had no ax to grind, and besides that, they didn't lose their country. It was a different psychology.

Q: *But I was wondering if they had any, sort of—feelings of superiority, you know. Their sense of being Japanese American, maybe because they were older immigrants, the bonds with their old country might be weaker.*

SC: No. But see, there was no *necessity* to bond with the Koreans, you know. We had to bond or else. I don't know, what do you do when you don't have a country and everyone's fighting for independence and you sort of have to follow it along? We used to think it was so patriotic, too [*laughs*].

Q: *During that time, did you ever think that you would be going back to Korea?*

SC: Um! [*affirmatively*] That was one of the things that my father *always* dreamed about, always talked about, that someday we'd all be together in Korea. But I always had a statement made that "he died in prison and we all got old in America." So it never happened. And I think, in those days, you know, you just had the dream that you forgot. And another thing he asked us to do was to educate yourself in some profession that you could be used in Korea. We all kind of had an idea that we had to do something to contribute, yeah.

Q: *Now, when growing up, did you speak English between, among yourselves?*

SC: The second generation? No, English only. That was a mistake, too, because most of their parents did not speak English. And if we had—if someone just had guided us and said, you know, "Keep up your Korean," it would have been good. In my age group, we all spoke Korean pretty well, but down to Ralph's age group, which is ten years younger—forget it [*laughs*].

Q: *Ralph is of that generation that never learned to speak Korean. Whereas your age group did.*

SC: Well, the reason for that is probably the same reason for this. It is easier to speak—well, he did understand Korean, and he did speak Korean because my mother, that is all she spoke. But what she used to do was bawl him out in Korean. And then she thought, "Well, he doesn't understand what I am saying," and she would bawl him out in English. And so consequently in 1969 when she died, that was the end of our Korean. It just didn't trickle down. It's funny. I'm only

one of very few left in my age group, with him, who's ten years younger, and they get together every so often, you know.

The one good thing about his group was that—when we were grown, we all stuck together according to whether we were *Kukminhoe* or *Tong jihoe*—we stayed in separate pockets.

But with his group, it didn't matter. Complete dilution—it was respect for each other. But it was funny—his friend's father was a very strong *Tong jihoe* man, but he and Ralph were very good friends. It's nice it happened that way, I think. This young man and his wife went to Korea to take a tour and—you know, if you are an American-born and don't speak Korean over there, then forget it. Anyway, this friend of Ralph's was on a bus and some guy got upset with him because he was Korean and couldn't speak Korean, and so the guy ranted and raved on the bus about Ralph's friend not being able to speak Korean. And so pretty soon, he told somebody he was a friend of Ahn, Ch'ang-Ho's son, and the man came up and apologized [*laughs*].

If you're American-born, and you don't speak Korean, but you have a Korean face, it's really tough. When I go, I'm always protected so I'm all right. If you can't speak Korean very well, it's too bad because somebody's always around you. You're a non—what do you call that?

Q: *Biaegukja. It means "non-patriot."*

SC: I think that's a *terrible* attitude, though. I think a lot of the youngsters go there without any thought of being rejected. They think that since they're Korean, they can go to Korea and it would be great, but the man on the street—wow.

Q: *Yeah, whenever I go to Korea, I become infuriated within the space of three days and just wonder why I'm there. I always thought that when I was growing up here, if I went to Korea, somehow I'd find home, because here you don't find it either. And when you go back to Korea, I think that people—my generation—really find that Korea isn't home at all because people there don't accept you either. I would be wearing all Korean-bought clothes that I just bought down the street or something like that, and I would walk down the street and somebody would say, "LA?" I remember being on a bus and the bus driver actually—because he spoke some sort of satoori, some sort of Southern dialect. He said something really fast and I didn't catch him. And he started yelling at me. He said, "Are you stupid? Don't you speak?" or "Didn't you go to grade school?" And I said to him, "In fact, I didn't go to grade school in Korea. I don't*

know what you're talking about." But it was really traumatic in some way to go back there, and I always want to leave as soon as I get there because I think this is the rudest country I've ever been in and I can't believe it.

SC: Well, besides making fun of you, they kind of *criticize* you. They just have no concept of what it is living outside of Korea. But one time when I was there, the cab driver said to me, "You get a pension from the government?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Why?" I said, "Because I'm an American citizen. They won't give us anything." He was shocked. Now that everybody's getting pensions, I guess they think that Dosan's family all get pensions. You have to be [a Korean citizen] before you can get it.

Q: *But your mother was Korean. She never became American, right? So why couldn't she have a pension?*

SC: Of course, there was, and there is, a movement in Korea to help and support the families and the descendants of the patriots. Well, I shouldn't complain because now I am near death so it doesn't matter, but the Korean government is opening up. I'm associated with the American Korean Adoptee's Association [AKA]. And the Korean government is beginning to bring them in groups to Korea and things like that—but that is Kim, Dae-jung's wife.

Q: *The bonds that were issued by the Imsijeongbu in the 1920s are being honored now, so if you had a \$500 face value bond, then that is worth about \$50,000–60,000 now. So if you happen to have some of those bonds*

SC: Oh really? No, no, no. But the *Heungsadan* was given \$220,000 in American money, I guess, and the \$220,000 is a result of bonds that my father bought. And he bought them—like Ralph says, some of it is ours [laughs]—but he bought them in the name of the *Heungsadan*, and we don't know whether there are names of individuals who were on that buying program. My daughter, who's a lawyer says, "Hmmm, hmmm." So the children of the people who gave money for the purchase of the bonds should be the [beneficiaries]. I don't think there is any second generation. I don't think you would do it or I would do it or anybody else would do it. Can't depend on the government.

Q: *What about your mother? Did she want to go back to Korea and live there at some point?*

SC: Well, I don't think it was a strong desire because the Japanese were in there. She couldn't dream of going back, actually. There was no

place to go—nothing to go back to. And, of course, when Dad was in prison, you couldn't go back then. The Japanese were still there and so—but she went back in 1963 to get his medal.

Q: *Was that the first time she had been back?*

SC: First time, first time in 61 years or something.

Q: *How long did she live?*

SC: 'Til she was 86. And she was lucky—she just went to sleep. It was funny because she didn't feel well, and so she was at my brother's house and someone called me and said that my mother wasn't feeling well. So I went down there and she said that she wasn't feeling well so we immediately called the doctor. And all the kids came down, and so this is after a party at the restaurant. I don't know—it was a birthday or something—but it was some sort of celebration for her. We figured that maybe she had overeaten or something, and so we all sat around and wondered what we were gonna do, and the doctor said, "Bring her down." Then, we sat there and said, "Should we call an ambulance, or should we take her down ourselves?" I went in to check with her and she said, "I feel better," and so when we told the doctor, he said, "Well, just leave her then, if she feels better. Bring her down tomorrow."

But the next day, my sister was there to drive her to the hospital and she got up and fixed my sister's breakfast and everything, and then we took her down to the hospital and we all went down to see her and she had a cheerful word for all of us. That night, she just turned over and went to sleep. But that was an easy way to go. All her kids were there around her, which was blessing to her. But she was a *strong* woman. I used to love to see her. She used to ride my youngest brother's bike around [*laughs*].

Q: *Just for exercise?*

SC: No, she'd do that just to show off! She used to ride a bike in Riverside in which would be 1905, 1906, in that era. But it was not until the 1940s, and she took Ralph's bike and rode it.

She was also a good American cook because she knew how to make dumplings so all the young kids—they were younger than me—used to come around and ask her to teach them how to make dumplings, and she could speak English. Yeah, so she had the rapport with the young kids.

Q: *And the students, you said there were a lot of students. Where did they go to school? In the UC system?*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy



SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces
Susan Ahn with her brothers Ralph and Philip, December 1943

- SC: A lot of them went to Claremont [McKenna College], Pomona. In those days, a girl didn't go to college. It was the boys that went. So everybody helped my brother go—Philson. That's a story in itself. He wanted to be an architect. He was very artistic, but our Confucianist bosses said, "No, you have to take chemistry so you can go to Korea and teach chemistry so they can make bombs." So, you know, being a very nice, obedient child, he did take chemistry and graduate. But it was okay because he was successful in his field. And his artistic sense just left somewhere else.
- Q: *You mean your father forced him to study chemistry?*
- SC: No, my father didn't force him to do anything. The *Heungsadan* told Philson because they were going to give him fifty dollars or something like that. My father wasn't even here.
- Q: *So that's a myth. I couldn't imagine your dad doing that. He was a pacifist, I mean, really, wasn't he?*
- SC: Well, he wasn't a pacifist, but he thought that we weren't ready for anything to go to war with Japan. I mean, people were saying—you know, like Pak, Yong Man, they all wanted to go to war.³² You know, but we weren't strong enough.

Q: *I think that that was a basic difference—I think that Tosan was saying that you have to be ready, so I think that he wanted to raise the standards—ethics, and everything—to be ready to be an independent country. Whereas Pak, Yong-man and those people were radical.*

SC: Yeah, macho. But it was quite obvious we didn't have the strength to do anything like that.

Life as a Minority

Q: *Did you have any defining moment in your life here, thinking about you growing up as a minority? A couple of high points and a couple of low points?*

SC: Well, you know, talking about racism, my son says that I'm in denial, but when they turned me down to be an officer, I just thought that it's no skin off my nose. It really didn't bother me. And he thinks that's just denial—not facing the facts. And when I went to college, I was one of the first women in our community to leave home and go away to college because that wasn't done.

Q: *Where did you go?*

SC: I went to San Diego State. I remember going to college, I had this very good—I had friends everywhere I went—but this one gal loaned me fifty dollars so I could go to San Diego State, you know, to put in my tuition and stuff. We're still friends today, but she and I used to go run around together all the time.

People used to come and say, "What nationality are you?" I used to be mean and say, "Take a guess." They would guess "Japanese," "Chinese," "Samoan," "Eskimo." Everything but "Korean." They didn't know what a Korean was. They don't know the word "Korean," you know.

But we had preparations for three of us to room together. By the time we got down to college, one of young ladies said that she couldn't room with me because her mother and Father objected. I said, "Fine." It didn't hurt my feelings or anything, you know. I said, "I'll go find something else," so I went down and I found another separate room for myself. The irony of this is she later became the executive director of the Girl Scouts. She was okay, but her parents couldn't tolerate the fact that she was gonna room with an Oriental. But I didn't let that bother me. There once again, my son said, "You're in denial."

Q: *I've interviewed other people from your generation, and they've said*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

similar things, “Oh, racism never really bothered me.” I don’t think it’s denial is much as now, we are so aware of defining it as racism: “this is what racism is,” “this is how you should feel about it,” and “this is how you recognize it.” So that I think that sort of vocabulary is there for us to say “this is what it is,” but back then, for you, there was no term, so it wouldn’t be a part of your consciousness to even think about it that way.

SC: Yeah, but it’s very interesting, too. When we were growing up, the only thing I recall about the early years is going to school. The thing I couldn’t stand was Thanksgiving. Sometimes, they served that pumpkin pie. I couldn’t eat it, you know. We had never had it at home. We didn’t even know what it was.

Q: *Did you eat Korean food at home?*

SC: Oh, absolutely. Yep. That’s all my mother cooked. Well, I shouldn’t say that because she was a good American cook, too. But when we were growing up, we ate mostly Korean food, and as we got older, my big brother brought in all kinds of American things.

You know, growing up as a minority just meant nothing. It was not an issue at all. First of all, Philip—the oldest brother—could walk through *any* line; he was accepted into society just 100 percent, and



SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Susan and her brother Philip, 1943

he passed it down to the rest of us. He was really wonderful to us because he would teach us how to set the table and how to behave, you know, when you go someplace, and be ladylike.

He did all of that for us, so by the time I went into the Navy, I knew what to do with my fork, and I knew how to set a table. I knew all of those American things, and what a grateful thing that was for me. Thank goodness for that because when I was in the Navy, if you reported from one station to another, you'd have to go to the captain of the station with white gloves and present your calling card on a platter and report yourself into the station. I often thought if my brother hadn't helped us out with these social niceties, I could have made a couple of mistakes and I would have had a hard time. But I was comfortable. And whatever social life—because as a Navy person, I was really sought after to speak and to do things like that—it is my brother that I give all the credit to, because if you go out into this pure white world, it's really an issue. But I didn't realize that until I came out and I thought about it. But it was little things like that—meaningless things—which meant a lot in everyday living. And it was my brother who set the standards for us.

Q: *And wasn't that what your father was doing for the Korean people? And Phil was doing it to you.*

SC: Well, he was, in a way. He was “a striving for success” individual. And he was—well, I guess he just naturally became Americanized because he went to American churches, American Sunday school, and he had oh-so-many American friends. He just was kind of enveloped into that kind of society. It made it easy for me because even in the Navy, it would have been bad if I didn't know which fork to pick up first—ask for chopsticks?

Q: *So in a way, you're saying that Korean Americans should try to become acculturated into the American mainstream.*

SC: Well, I think that they should try to come a little more into American society, be a little more Americanized. They keep trying to be Koreanized. We have all these organizations

Q: *Well, it's this whole new generation. They all want to split off into their different ethnic groups.*

SC: The problem is your color, your face, is *never* gonna change. So you have to do something to make yourself happy or satisfied or something with *yourself*.

Q: *Have you ever felt that had you been a member of the majority, whites, you could have gotten maybe a little farther? Maybe higher?*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- SC: No, because everything I did, I achieved. I mean, I never had faced doubt because I was Oriental.
- Q: *Well, as great as your brother was—Philip Ahn—his role was somewhat limited to just certain stereotypes: the Japanese generals and what not. But had he been a Caucasian actor . . .*
- SC: He might have made a bigger name for himself? I don't . . .
- Q: *And his role was kind of limited. He'd present the entire race of Asians.*
- SC: [Laughs] Yeah, any Asian. But ever watch "Kung Fu"? He was the master in the temple. The one that told David Carradine to take the stone out of his hand.
- Q: *That was later. But when he was younger, he played all kinds of Asians.*
- SC: Especially spies—Japanese. Yeah, some of the press releases said, "The most hated Oriental in the movies." But he did *very well*. Just—I mean he—whereas the difference between the present-day actors and himself is that he's included in all these reference books, you know, like character actors, and he's in a lot of those books.
- Q: *Well, he's done so many Asian actors.*
- SC: Oh, yeah. But he also has a lot of letters in his files which are very interesting, like Jack Lord, from "Hawaii Five-O". I guess he did a couple of scenes with him, but Jack Lord wrote him a note and thanked him for his good work, you know. He's got letters like that *all* through his files, which I think is very good. I mean, when you think about it, he always identified himself as a Korean, you know, and so it just gave the Koreans a pretty good—you know.
- Q: *Well, that's true today. Asian actors are put into stereotypical roles—"Kung Fu," and that type of thing. This is a really weird thing, but there's a movie called—it's a really bad movie; it came out in the 1970s probably—"Kentucky Fried Movie." It's a comedy, and it was one of those Kung fu movies where the evil Asian Kung fu lord is gonna take over the world. I was sitting around watching it with my friends and the Kung fu master, the evil genius, he's got all these soldiers out and stuff like that, and so he was giving a speech to his minions. He was supposed to be Chinese, but he spoke Korean. I nearly jumped out of my chair.*
- In the speech he was giving, he was supposed to be saying, "We need to fight, and we need to do this" but what he really says is, "I'm sorry for playing such a stupid role. But this is the only kind of role that I can get, and I'm apologizing to my people for doing this shameful thing," and stuff like that. The speech that he was giving had nothing to do with*

what he was supposed to be saying. It was an apology to people who could understand these things, "I'm sorry for playing such a caricature."

SC: I don't know how you would overcome that. You can't see a great Korean Romeo [*laughs*].

Q: *Well, that's what they'd like.*

SC: I think Koreans have a long ways to go to become acclimated to America. They try so hard, you know. They try so hard.

Proud to be a WAVE

Q: *When you graduated from San Diego State, you got a degree in—?*

SC: Oh, they called it social economics, but I think it's sociology, isn't it?

Q: *Now, after you graduated, where did you work?*

SC: I worked at the San Diego State College's dormitory. I was a counselor. Then I left home in December 1942 to join the Navy.

Q: *So you were about twenty-four or twenty-five?*

SC: Twenty-seven.

Q: *What made you join?*

SC: To fight the Japanese. That was my prime purpose. Since we were at war with Japan, at least I could do something for Korea. It was an opportunity. All of my life I'd been living under the pressure of working for the independence movement. Anyway, I swore into the Navy before I told my mother and brother because I knew that they would not go for it—that's not very feminine.

Q: *Did you have special training to join the Navy? Or they recruited?*

SC: Well, I have to tell you a story about me joining the Navy. The information came out that they [the Navy board] were accepting women to become Navy officers. I had just graduated from college, and I was just working down there for a year. So I applied, and when I went down to make the application, they turned me down—they didn't accept me. But, you know, that would have been no skin off my nose. Prejudice, or discrimination just didn't mean anything to me. It did not hurt me. I could just go on and do whatever I needed to do. My life is easy. I don't have problems with people not liking my skin color.

I asked them why I was turned down, and they said that the reason was that I didn't have enough experience. And I knew that couldn't

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

be true because there were some other youngsters that went with me, you know, and I had worked a year and they had just gotten out of college. But I had a friend at the USC Dean of Women's office, and she was a little bit upset, and she said, "Let me find out why." So she went down to the board and found out that it was because I was Korean.

We were *unusual* in those days, and we looked like the enemy. So anyway, they didn't accept me, which was okay—I didn't care. But a month later, they wrote me and said that I could enlist. And you know, there's big discrimination between officers and enlisted. So I went down to the board, and I said, "I was refused to become an officer. What's my situation?" And they said, "Oh, you can work your way up to be a chief petty officer." I said, "Fine," and so I joined.

Q: *At what level?*

SC: Seaman. One good thing about at that time was that I was in the first class of enlisted women, so they were going to be really careful in how you were trained and what you did. Six months later, an officer from California recommended me for officers' training, so I went up to Smith College [in Massachusetts]. And it was amazing. I mean, I was accepted into that program, and I was well-treated. But everywhere I went, reporters asked for an interview because I was Korean.

Q: *They must have been surprised to see you, weren't they?*

SC: Oh, one time in Richmond, Virginia (in those days, there were no Orientals anywhere), I was walking in my uniform on a street, and there was a cafeteria with a window [laughs]. As I was walking by, these people actually stopped with their forks in the air when they



SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Seaman Susan Ahn, U.S. Navy
Atlantic City, 1942

saw me. First of all, they might have thought I was Japanese. But you know they didn't know what a Korean was, absolutely.

Q: *So did you actually see battle?*

SC: No, I was just on the fringe of the time when they were sending women overseas.

Q: *So how many women do you think were in the Navy at that time? Not very many altogether.*

SC: Not very many, when I was—because I was in the absolutely first class.

Last month, there was a reunion of the Smith College graduates in Los Angeles, and a lot of Koreans were there; four or five Korean women. And so I sat there and we had the best time, although I was not an actual student—being from the Navy program, I was what you called a “ninety-day wonder” (we trained for ninety days and became officers). But, then again, the press was so good to me after I became an officer—like that article through the INS [International News Service]. So I felt like I did something for Koreans. I was treated exceptionally well, and as soon as they found out that I was Korean, they gave me absolutely—in Atlanta, Georgia, *The Atlanta Journal* gave me the front page—being a Korean daughter of Ahn Ch'ang-Ho.³³

Q: *I forgot to bring that newspaper article—1944.*

SC: Yes, 1944. That one I sent because it said that I was the first woman gunnery officer in the Navy ever—white, black or yellow—and I thought that was a pretty good achievement.³⁴ But you know I was treated very well in the Navy. I got all my promotions and all my considerations with no problem, and then when I stayed with the government, it was the same thing. I had no racial problems at all. But, of course, I went on the throes of my father, I guess—I told my grandson, who was eight years old, “I'm going to ride in the Korean parade,” and he looked at me and said, “That's because of your father” [*laughs*].³⁵

Q: *The first woman ever! And you did not tell your mother about your being in the Navy?*

SC: Oh, joining the Navy? No, my brother, *or* my mother. My brother, you know, was kind of our guardian, and he was good, I must say. My father had said to him when he left in 1926 for China, “In the eyes of God, I'm a sinner, but I'm leaving you the responsibility of the family,” And Philip was twenty-one, I think, but he *really* took

good care of us, tried to keep us on the straight and narrow.

Q: So when did your mother first know about your joining?

SC: She was wonderful. She was never in the position to just give us outright permission, you know. I think I explained to you before we had all these Confucianist male chauvinists around, and so she was not much to try to defend herself in that aspect. So if I had gone to her and asked permission, she would have been criticized. But since I joined the Navy, and then told her, she was fine. She was wonderful—she did the same thing when we went to college. I was one of the first [Korean] women to leave home to go college in those days.

But I did everything on my own. I had friends who helped me get tuition and all that, so that my family—we were poor, so it didn't work out. But she never complained of the fact that I didn't discuss it with her. She was proud that I had gone away to college. My mother had a very hard role. Everybody was so afraid we were gonna disgrace our father. They were after us all the time. If we looked cross-eyed, they would get us, and it was kind of bad because I was very rough. I was a tomboy. And that didn't set



Constitution Staff Photo—Ray Galt.
FIRST DAUGHTER OF AHN CHANG HO—Daughter of a Korean hero, who spent his life fighting the Japs, American-born Susan Ahn feels that "father would be proud" because she is a WAVE. She graduates today from the Navy's Link Trainer School here, and will teach America's airmen.

Kin of Korean Hero Proud To Be WAVE

By JANE NOLAND.
"In our family we have always tried to live up to the spirit of our father. Though he spent his entire life trying to wrest Korea from Japanese domination, he believed in America—so much so that he came here in 1903 to learn the ways of American democracy to take back to his people—and I honor him in wearing this uniform."
Thus spoke Ahn Soozun, "first daughter of Ahn Chang Ho," who today, as Susan Ahn, petty officer third specialist 7, is receiving a diploma with 74 other WAVES, in the Link Trainer School here.
"Though he died in a Japanese prison camp in 1937, his spirit lives on—in Korea, where they hold services in his memory each year, and in our family," she went on.
Hopeless Cause.
"When we were little we were given more books on American citizenship than any average American child. On election day our mother, who was the first Korean woman to come to this country, has always impressed upon us the importance of going out to vote, the privilege"—she passed, gestured with her beautiful Oriental hands—"it's hard to explain, this feeling."
"For so long father's cause was so hopeless—for 27 years he worked, as a member of the Korean provisional government in Shanghai, trying to educate Koreans in the way of democracy, to explain to them that, though their only weapon was faith and belief in their country, they must go on fighting and hoping."
"He was not what you'd call a revolutionist—he didn't believe in violence—but he believed so thoroughly in education and freedom of thought that he died for it, and, what I'm sure must have been harder for him, left his wife and children here in America while he fought for his ideals."
Conditions in Korea.
"You can't imagine what a task he had until you realize the conditions in Korea," she went on. "Korea has been under Jap domination since 1904. The people must speak Japanese on the streets, in the shops, in the schools—everywhere except in the privacy of their homes. The Korean flag may not be shown, the Korean anthem is not allowed to be sung—in fact, women have had their arms cut off for waving a Korean flag—it makes no difference to the Japs, they are completely cruel, and maim and kill women, children, anyone."
"And there is no weapon for Koreans to fight back with—even knives, in Korea, are regulated to certain, non-dangerous types, to prevent uprisings."
"Father was arrested again and again, but he was very clever, and they never had a charge to hold him on until 1932. That year some Koreans threw bombs at Japanese officials in Shanghai, and the Japs put all the Koreans living in the city in prison, my father included. He stayed there for three years, then was out on probation for two years, with three Japanese guards to follow him—all day long."
"They had tried bribing him—in fact, Prince Ito himself once
Continued on Page 6, Column 3.

SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Front Page of *The Atlanta Constitution*

right with these Confucianist male-chauvinist people. You know, my mother never objected, though.

Q: *How were you a tomboy?*

SC: I went out to play ball.

Q: *Oh, really? Baseball?*

SC: Any kind of ball. In college, I made every first team in sports. I was the best at hockey, though—field hockey. It's a bigger sport on the East Coast than up the West Coast, but we did play field hockey.

Q: *You just did something for women, too. That's amazing. So after Officers' Training, you went to gunnery school?*

SC: No. First I was in what they call "link training."³⁶ Link training is when you put people under a hood and have instruments in front of you which give you information on how to fly—you know, what direction you're flying, and all that. Somebody's writing a biography on me, and so we were asking all kinds of people—my friends you know—but this one was in the Navy with me, and we were together. She writes that there were about 80 of us in this link training program, and I don't remember that many. Anyway, we graduated from that link training school and then we got sent to different stations. And she and I were sent to a place called Okalaka, which was in Florida.

Somehow or other, they separated me after a while and put me into this thing they called a Gun Air 'structor, and that was a new development where you'd get under a big tunnel and have these planes flying in the air and you would put your antiaircraft set up. But I was teaching the fliers how to put their aim on the flying jets.³⁷ From there, the officer in charge was in California, and he recommended me to Officers' Training School, so I went and was there for three months. And because I had this gunnery experience, they wanted to test the women out to see if they could become gunnery officers on the stations and they could send their men all out to sea. So that was the reason I was the first woman gunnery officer in the U.S. Navy.

And I did graduate and I did pretty well. The fifty-caliber machine gun was the biggest problem I had. I was stepping on it, and everything else. I had a picture of that. The Navy took a picture of me behind this machine gun, and I can't find it anywhere. I think my mother must have thrown it out after she got mad at me for marrying a *paek-in*. Gosh, she was really upset with me.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

Anyway, I graduated (from Pensacola gunnery school), and they sent me to Atlantic City, and I stayed there a long time. I'll tell you a story about one incident. I was the gunnery officer on the Atlantic City Naval Air Base, and these fighter pilots would just come back for refreshers and so they'd come to my class. There was one tall, good-looking, three-stripe commander and he said to me, "I'm not shooting until I see the whites of those Japs' eyes." And I said, "I don't care what you do up there; here you do what I tell you" [*laughs*]. I didn't have any problem, you know.

Then somebody looked at my jacket and saw that I was Korean and I could speak a little Korean, so they sent me to Washington, D.C. to Naval Intelligence. And as soon as I came aboard the station, they put an alert out. I mean, here is this Oriental face. And you know, they were *so* worried about me, they didn't—wouldn't show me anything for six months—I just filed. Here I was, an officer, and I was sitting with the enlisted men because they just didn't know what to do with me, which was okay.

Q: *So you were posted in San Diego?*

SC: No. Posted mainly on the East Coast, New Jersey (Atlantic City). And then Naval Intelligence is in Washington, D.C. But I really did a good job for Naval Intelligence because everything was secret and undercover. Finally, to get rid of me, they sent me to the Library of Congress, because that was source material, and we needed a lot of source material in that work. From that point, I was able to establish a liaison between the Library of Congress and Naval Intelligence, not interfering with any security, and I did that for a long time. And then, it was time for me to get out of the Navy, 'cause my time had

Q: How long did you serve?

SC: Three-and-a-half years. It was at a time—I've forgotten the date, but you have permission to leave the service if you wanted, and you could get out. So I was ready to get out and come home, and they asked me if I would stay just another year, and the reason for that was that I had established so many systems, and they had no one that was capable to take over that system. So, I stayed a year in the service, and then because I was so clever, I guess [*laughs*], I went to the agency that's now called the National Security Agency, and I went to work with the civilians.

Q: *What rank were you?*

SC: I came out with two stripes, so I was a lieutenant.

- Q: *You mentioned that during the Navy, you had many friends. Were any of these Koreans?*
- SC: *Paek-in.* There were *no* Koreans.
- Q: *All Jewish?*
- SC: Well, they're my best friends.
- Q: *So what were you doing during the Korean War?*
- SC: Nothing. Well, I shouldn't say that. I was at the National Security Agency. The Korean War was not too meaningful to me. I was just working in the National Security Agency; I wasn't fighting anything. In World War II, it was the Japanese, and I was fighting the Japanese. But you know in 1945, the V-J Day? It was a strange feeling for me because everybody was out screaming and yelling, and so happy, but I just couldn't get up that steam. I just felt, "Oh, at last!" And then, of course, my father never saw the day, and to me it was kind of a letdown. Letdown Day. Instead of an "Oh, my goodness."
- Q: *Now, when the Korean War started—that was in June of 1950. The early Korean students here were recruited by OSS [precursor to the CIA], and they were sent to Monterey, California for the language school to teach Korean. Were you called for special assignment?*
- SC: No, because I was well-established in the National Security Agency, and I was not looked at as a Korean; I was looked at as just an American. I had a position, and they never—that was another experience there: We were in all kinds of top secret things, and they used to send to us all these really bright guys from Harvard because we just needed bright guys and stuff like that. And so we would have a meeting, and we would talk about—I don't know, but we would get into personal things about prejudice. I would say, "What's the difference?" And they would always tell me, "Well, you're different." But I guess if you get into a mass of white people, you just sort of "melt in." Your identity gets lost. And so, several had these different sayings like, "Well, you're different!" I had one guy tell me, "I have never worked for a woman; you're the only one that I would work for!"³⁸
- Q: *Well, that's a compliment.*
- SC: It's a compliment, but it was not because I was Asian or anything like that. It was because I was a woman. And in those days, there was prejudice, like you could only go high in Operations, and you couldn't go into Staff because you were a woman. But it was all right with me, I think.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

Q: *How did you meet your husband?*

SC: In the Navy.³⁹ Yeah, and I was way, way . . . First of all, there was nobody in our community that I could be romantic with because we all grew up like brothers and sisters. And I never had a European for any of the boys. So I go join the Navy and, I didn't meet this man on purpose or anything, but some gal told me that she knew someone that was interested in a Korean girl—in Hawai'i—and he'd never seen a Korean before in his life.

Q: *Why was he interested?*

SC: Well, I don't know. He just sort of—you know, a lot of American men are interested in Orientals, so I think he was of that nature, but I'm not sure. But anyway, they had a party and they invited me. So we met and I thought he was a drip. He was in the Navy. He had short hair. The only asset he had was that he was tall, and I liked tall men, yeah. So anyway, I didn't see him for six months after that, and then he invited me to a football game—Georgetown and somebody (I forgot who it was). I told him, "No, I can't go. My brother's in town" (Philip was coming up). So he said, "Well, invite your brother, too." By then, I was tired of excuses so I said, "Okay." So my brother, and he and I, went to the Georgetown football game. Well, my brother was not too impressed with him [*laughs*] because he was kind of retiring. Kind of shy, you know, not talkative. But I thought he was *really* nice, and so from then on, we became friends.

Q: *After that, what happened?*

SC: My mother didn't speak to me for five years after I married an American white man.

Q: *Really? But it's not like you had such a big pool of Korean boys to choose from.*

SC: You're absolutely right. You'd have seen me be an old maid than to do that.

Q: *Did you get married and then tell your mother?*

SC: *Of course!*

Q: *So you eloped?*

SC: No, I was living away from home in Washington so . . . And it's not as bad as it sounds because my brothers and sister kept in touch with me. My mother was the only one who wasn't speaking to me. The rest of my family was okay.

Q: *But she knew what was going on with you and the whole thing.*

SC: Because the family all knew.

Q: *So what was it like to tell her? Did you call her up and tell her?*

SC: No, I called my brother, Philip, and he knew who the guy was and he didn't think too much of it. Then my second brother, Philson, called and said, "Well, I hear he's not too good." I was already married [*laughs*]. But he was not flashy. He was just a tall Irishman, and he was nobody elegant, but he—well, I have two wonderful children so I can't complain.

Q: *That kind of stuff is still going on. A lot of families have very, very strong feelings against marrying non-Koreans.*

SC: Yeah, in the Korean community down in Los Angeles, there are just so many young women that don't find eligible men, and they don't go out of their race. I have a lot of young lady friends. All of them are professional women, they all have nice jobs, but they are already thirty-five, thirty-six, and there's just no market. I tried to match them up, but it didn't work because they were too young, or too old, you know.

After I got married, I came out on a fellowship from the government in 1956, I guess, and I lived with my mother and sister. And it was so nice—it was lucky for me. My husband was overseas in Japan, so I didn't have to bring him with me when I came to my mother's house (she probably would have not accepted me). I came and brought the two kids with me. My mother's home was very big, and so I lived there a year while going to school.

Although she objected to my marriage and after, she forgave me because my daughter was acceptable—fortunately she had black hair and brown eyes, you know (if she was blond, I'd have been . . .). So she had already kind of forgiven me. And so when my son was born, she came to Washington to look after him for two weeks, or whatever a mother does.

My mother became very fond of my son, who was a year old, and she was very permissive with him. He was a very active boy. They knew that, so they put up a chain-link fence in the backyard to corral him. The first day, he was up and over the fence and across the street. That's how active he was. But my mother thought he was great; she just liked his activity. So that bond stayed, and Mother was very funny. She came to care for him, and she really spirited him into being a Korean, and so now, he lectures on Tosan in Korean history to college kids on his own.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- Q: *Okay, and you were attending school?*
- SC: Right. I was going to USC as a graduate. It was on a fellowship from the government for one year. And it was very ironic, because this was 1956, and my field of study was Vietnam. So it was pretty interesting.
- Q: *About your two children*
- SC: *I have a daughter, and I have a son. My daughter, Christine, is an entertainment lawyer (her latest client was Mick Jagger). She went to Harvard when there were no Koreans there.*
- Q: *Now, your son's name is what?*
- SC: Philip [*laughs*]. My son has long hair. Oh, I can't *stand* it! But anyway, he goes around and makes speeches to college groups on Tosan and the way it relates to Korean history. He knows a lot. You can't mess him up by his facts or anything. So here he is with that long hair. Drives me *nuts*.
- Q: *And he is going to school in San Francisco?*
- SC: Yeah, he's going to the Intercultural Institute of California. They give master's degrees [in Korean studies] out of that program.
- Q: *So where did he get his bachelor's?*
- SC: UC Santa Barbara, so that he could surf [*laughs*]!
- Q: *What did he major in?*
- SC: Anthropology. He does a good job. He lectures to the young people about history and about Ahn, Ch'ang-Ho. He just sort of generates this interest in his grandfather's story, and I hope someday he does something with it. And he knows *a lot* about Korean history. I get there, something I don't know, so I ask him, and he's already got it. And he's gonna put things on the Internet. Do you have the Internet? I think he does already. I don't understand computers—forget it. My grandkids come over to use VCR and I make them clean that all up before they leave so I can put the TV on. Anyway, he's all going to put the story of his uncle, Philip, on the Internet.⁴⁰ And it's really interesting the way he's approached it. It tells how much he's accomplished and how much he's done for the Korean community and for Korea and for his own career in the movies. It's kind of an interesting aspect, the way he's got it. But he's gonna put that on, and he's gonna put a story on Tosan on Internet.
- Q: *Does he have a set material that he delivers?*

KAHS Oral Histories

- SC: Yeah. It is an hour, then he uses slides. He has this set that he uses for the March first movement.
- Q: *Does he have any regular job?*
- SC: No, he quit his job when we went to Korea in November last year. He was a salesman for funky clothes, T-shirts and things like that.
- Q: *He's lucky. He has a rich mother [laughs]!*
- SC: Rich mother? His mother lives on Social Security. Luckily I have him, because I can't drive; I can't go anywhere. But one thing about him, he is really into his grandfather's history. And I think he writes better about his grandfather—interprets his grandfather. And he knows all about the provisional government. He can tell you what my father was and other stuff. He knows all about the *Shinminboe*. He knows more than I do. My son's been [to Korea] thirty-five times. He goes any chance he gets. He's a real roamer. He's a surfer. He went Fiji Island; he went to New Zealand. When he went to New Zealand, it was very interesting because there was a person I had trained in the United States. He was with the Royal Air Force, and he was in one of our classes. And we trained them in aerial gunnery or something, and anyway, he was living there, so my son stayed with him, and this is fifty years later [laughs].
- Q: *And how does Philip pay for that then?*
- SC: That's why he doesn't have any money. Every time he has a little bit of money, he goes to Korea.
- Q: *Even the families that are intact, these stories are not passed on—that's one generation. But there is so much written about Tosan because of his place in history—that your family, and your generation, after—there's a story about your father.*
- SC: Even my grandson carries on the story about his great-grandfather. So when Martin Luther King Week comes up in school he gets up to talk about his great-grandfather. Not too long ago they had asked him to write an article about news events in school, so he wrote about the Vietnamese demonstration that they had against that man, Ho, Chi-minh, and so the teacher asked him how come he wrote about that, so he said, "Because Ho, Chi-minh looks like my great-grandfather" [laughs].
- Q: *Not everyone has a patriot for an ancestor.*
- SC: Well, he's only one-quarter Korean, but he really thinks he's Korean. His father's Jewish, but the father has no family, so they don't have gatherings. Every gathering there is, is on our side.

Q: *How old is he?*

SC: He's eleven. He started this business about his great-grandfather when he was nine.

Bearing the Flag

Q: *So how many children does Philson have?*

SC: He has two: one daughter and one son. They're not very Korean, though—not full-blooded Korean, but

Q: So is he married to the same woman or—didn't you say his first wife died?

SC: No, he was first married to Gladys. They had one son, who is Robert. He lives in Hawai'i, and he runs one of the big recreational outfits on the island. He's very successful, I would say. He's a very nice young man. Then Philson remarried, and he married Luceil, and she's full-blooded Korean, so that he's the only one who has full-blooded Korean children.

Q: *Do they have kids? Does he have children from Luceil?*

SC: Yeah, he has two from the second marriage. Robert is from the first marriage.

Q: *Was he asked to send his son to this 80th anniversary of the Imsijungbu?*

SC: Oh, no, no. He wouldn't go anyway. They're busy with their own professions, own lives.

Q: *So you are the flag-bearer in you family?*

SC: Well, you know, it's so strange because Philip was actually the flag-bearer, and I never thought that it would fall into my lap. But that's what happened. Philson—he was too involved with his work at Hughes Aircraft, I guess. I win, and I can't speak Korean, and my son's half-Korean and half-English. And Soorah has been sort of reclusive, and so she And Ralph was too involved with athletic programs in the school systems.

Q: *Now Soorah, who did she marry?*

SC: She married a Caucasian. He was a filmmaker and a film-writer, and it was in the early radio days. So it was interesting, but they never had any children.

Q: *Soorah lived in Chicago for a while, didn't she?*

SC: She did, she did. She worked for this guy there. That's an interesting

KAHS Oral Histories

story because my mother used to take care of him when he was a boy in Riverside.

Q: *Is that right?*

SC: Yeah, that's how the connection came. He needed somebody honest to handle his money, and so he asked my sister to come.

Q: *Yeah, they had a big hearing in Chicago, and that's how I heard his name.⁴¹ He went to Korea and then had to leave.*

SC: And then he went to Japan. He was a feisty guy. But I don't know, she worked there for a year, I guess. I visited there on the way home, when I came with my daughter—she was two-and-a-half years old—and we stopped in Chicago. We went to Soorah's little apartment, and we had to go up the back stairs or something, and my daughter told her aunt, "Oh, this is so beautiful."

Q: *So then she kind of came out to Hollywood, maybe? And met her husband?*

SC: No, she came out and started the Moongate restaurant in 1954.

Q: *Oh, Soorah and her husband?*

SC: No, she was not married yet. Soorah and a Chinese friend opened the restaurant, and then my mother kind of persuaded her to make it a family business. Of course, when the restaurant began, Philip



SUSAN AHN CUDDY COLLECTION

Philip Ahn's 70th Birthday Party

Standing (l-r): Francis and Christine Cuddy, Luceil and Wesley Ahn (Philson's wife and son), Sari and Sue (Ralph's daughters) and Ralph Ahn. Seated (l-r): Anna Ahn (Ralph's wife), Susan Cuddy, Philip Ahn and Philson Ahn. Not shown: Philip Cuddy and Pamela Ahn (Philson's daughter).

was the guiding light. And that's why they called it Philip Ahn's Moongate. It was very famous.

Q: *Is it still there now?*

SC: No, oh, the building is still there, but it's a Mexican nightclub. The whole area deteriorated; there was "white flight." It was in Panorama City. It was a very famous restaurant, Ahn, Byung just said the other day that somebody had told him that he had visited the Moongate. And it was the only Korean place, although it was Chinese food, that was in the area. I mean, there were no Korean restaurants! 'Cause they opened in 1954.

In 1959, they asked me to come out to help them. So fortunately I needed to leave; I had developed migraine headaches. My doctor said, "You'd better take a vacation." So I told my husband, "I think I'll go home," 'cause they had been asking me to go. So I resigned from the National Security Agency and came out and worked seven days a week! I did all the books, all the bank slips. It was a big moneymaker in the early days, but toward the end we were just breaking even because the area had gone down. It used to be the prime, plush place, you know, like all the Americans, all the movie actors and everybody It was a big place. The area just deteriorated. It's all Latin now. We sold it in 1990.

Q: *When did the Korean government actually contact you as the children of Ahn, Ch'ang-Ho and accept you? When did you feel like you were*

SC: *Part of their history?*

Q: *When you were recognized by the Korean government. When was that?*

SC: I think it was funny because it really didn't matter to us. I mean, we were not

Q: *Right, right.*

SC: —but in 1973, Park, Chung Hee built an eight-acre park in Seoul, called Tosan Park, and at that time, my big brother, Philip, had all kinds of negotiations with Park, Chung Hee himself, and Kim, Jong Pil and Chu, Yo-han and all of those people trying to develop this park. Up to that time, we didn't think too much about the position of my father—he was just a father—and we didn't care whether they recognized him or not. Now, there's more on him because, of course, when Syngman Rhee was in power, he suppressed Tosan's democratic ideas. Then when the military people came in, they didn't like his democratic ideas, and so—but Kim, Young Sam is better. Now, I'm with all—even you [*laughs*].

Q: *So basically, the government's first recognition in some kind of form was in . . .*

SC: 1973. Oh, I shouldn't say that because my mother was given a founder's medal for my father in 1963. But Park, Chung Hee was actually the man that promoted my father, it looks like. He invited my mother to come to Korea, and she stayed there a month. He was the one that started the Tosan movement, I would say, or gave people permission.

Like the *Heungsadan* was so buried, I mean, especially with Syngman Rhee—he wouldn't let the *Heungsadan* . . . He was worse than the Japanese. And they [the *Tong jihoe*] still think to this day that he's a great man. I guess that they don't read his life story. I guess he had some good qualities, but he did so many bad things. I mean, I don't know. He did a lot of bad things with money that was given to him. Anyway, he called my father a communist and that made it very difficult for my father. He made blanket statements so that my father had a hard time getting into the United States.

Q: *That's very unfortunate.*

SC: Well, I don't know. He did some good things, but I guess he did some bad things, too. I gave a dedication speech for the Tosan Museum. And I thought it was a really good speech. I apologized in Korean, and said that I didn't speak Korean very well. I went on to explain that my father wanted all of us to come to Korea to live, but that time never came because he died in 1938 and then the rest of us grew old in the United States. I said all this in Korean. And then I said, "You know, that time never came. And so there we were." But I then I looked up to the sky—got dramatic at this point and said, "Father, Mother, big brother, if you look down on this edifice, it's going to endure history," blah, blah, blah. But the other thing I added was that it would be a great thing for Korea, but it *should* be a great thing for the world. Korea is *so* insulated. You know there is no such thing as—who knows about Korea? Even today, you don't have anybody who is really knowledgeable about Korea except for the Peace Corps guys. There are several big name Peace Corps people, and they learned about Korea and now they are big professors.

Q: *Well, the Korea Society, those are all Peace Corps people in New York. But its surprising that there are Koreans all over the world now. If you go to Greece, there are Koreans. If you go to South America, Brazil, Paraguay, Egypt—you name it—there are Koreans, and so now it is becoming more and more, and the world is getting smaller and smaller, so it is becoming a global community and Koreans are members of it.*

SC: Well, what good does it do if you know, and you are still living in the United States, and still hardly anyone knows anything about Korea?

Q: *Except for the veterans. Nobody knew about Korea until the war.*

SC: But for me, the veterans' viewpoint really doesn't give a good history, or show the real, true Korea. I have a dream that Korea should be like France—well, even Germany, as split as they were, you read about it. What do you read about Korea? Nothing.

Q: *Except that this is a Western-dominated country. America is mostly populated by Westerners. So as time goes on, I'm very sure that our next generations will maybe show more about Koreans to the American people here. There are quite a few Koreans that are making names for themselves.*

SC: But that is not what I am talking about. The people that make names for themselves—there are lots of Koreans, very famous Koreans. But when you get to the mass part of the American people, what do they know about Korean history? Nothing. You know, everyone knows about France and the Bastille. Nobody knows about March 1. To me, that's someplace where we missed a point in history. I am not talking about individual achievements. Achievements are something else because you have many successful, famous Koreans.

In fact, you know when I broke my hip, they put in a metal replacement in. It was a Korean man who invented the replacement, and he lives in the United States, and he studied at Harvard, and he is very wealthy. He is very rich. But you know, I go to Korea, and they use the replacement. My story is about the concept of Korea as a whole—not the success of individual people, because I think the Koreans *per se* are highly intellectual. You don't see a Korean that is dumb. You see a Korean that is an achiever. Look at the number of Koreans in colleges. I don't know how many there are, but they are really, really brilliant. Look at the SATs, the top SATs.

I belong to the *Samil Yosong Dongjihoe*, and the purpose of that organization is to keep the March 1 theme alive, and I think it is very purposeful. But none of them speak English.⁴²

Q: *Oh is that right? They don't speak English?*

SC: Oh, I shouldn't say that. There is one person who speaks English and she is Chu, Yo-seop's wife. You know Chu, Yo-han?⁴³ His brother, Chu, Yo-seop was a very famous novelist. He graduated from Stanford, etc., and then he went on to the University of Peking to teach. And his wife is an unusual woman. She was one of the

first lady reporters in Korea for the *Dong-a Ilbo*. And she told me she used to go around in rickshaws to get her stories. But since she is Chu, Yo-seop's wife again, her story is not well known, and so I'm trying to get someone to do her story. Everywhere I go I say, "This is Chu, Yo-seop's wife, and she is one of the first women reporters." She is—what, I think she is 88. Chu, Yo-han was a biographer of my father also. Chu, Yo-han was in Shanghai with Dad at the same time as Yi, Kwang-su. They all came back to Korea. I don't know if he was still living. I think he was still living in the 1970s, when we were trying to establish Father's national park.

I'll tell you another quick story. There is a man, Koo, Ik-Kyun, who is still living that used to be a secretary to my father in Shanghai in the *Imsijeongbu*, and he was at this dedication.⁴⁴ He's 94, but he goes back and forth, and is still very strong. He lives here, but he was in Korea for the dedication, and they had a front row seat for him. Kim, Jong-pil was the main speaker (he was the prime minister, but he was also the main speaker). This man [Koo, Ik-Kyun] was so upset that he was going to get up and leave. He didn't want to sit there and listen to him. But Suh, Young-hoon pounced on him and put him back in his seat. The story goes that Kim, Jong-pil was the one that arrested them for socialism or something like that. I don't know, maybe it's not socialism, but it was deemed to be something that was anti-government, and that was such a funny story. There was a blank seat there and then they made him go back to sit down.

Q: *That's the last time you were there.*

SC: Yes, last time—1998. The Tosan Museum was opened in November on my father's birthday, at Tosan Park.

Q: *So this man, of course, is first generation.*

SC: Of course. The first generation that doesn't speak English. He is *traveled*, though: he goes to New York; he goes to Korea. I mean that's uncanny, though, at his age. I won't even start going to all those places without some help, you know. But he goes by himself.

Q: *And does he have children?*

SC: He has children. He has grandchildren. He is an unusual man. He would be a great man to interview.

Korean Americans

Q: *I have to say that I told my mother that I was going to meet you, and she was very excited. And then I told one of my friends who grew up in*

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

Korea, but who came here after she was almost done with high school, so she knew who your father was. She was like, "Oh, my goodness"—this kind of thing, but I talked to several of my friends who grew up here, and they have no idea who he was, so I think it's really important to get information out there.

SC: But in Korea, if you're old enough to have gone through junior high school, then you know a little bit. In fact, there's a group of young people called the Global Korean Network. They are all forty or under, and they are all professionals. It's a great group. They came out one day to do something (they're always doing something), and then I pulled out one of the school textbooks. It was a junior high school book out of Korea, and I showed it to the young men and they went crazy—it was the same book they used in junior high school.

I don't know if you know too much about this, but the first time that I had contact with them, they had a conference, I think [in 1995], and they contacted all the adoptees, Korean adoptees in Europe, Japan, China, and Canada, and they had a big conference. And to me, it was really touching for them to reach out to these adoptees because they are all looking for identity. They were maybe raised by Dutch families, or whatever, and they're looking for their Koreanness. So it was very interesting to me to see this conference go on, but that's the kind of thing they do. They try to be world-wide. These young men were really impressive.

Q: *Where is the organization based?*

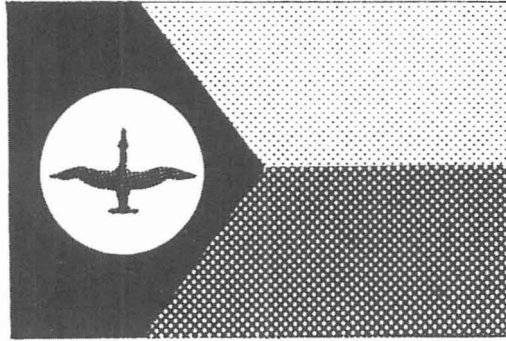
SC: Los Angeles. But they had delegates come from Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Canada—there's lots of them from Canada. You're right close to Canada. There must be some.

Q: *It's just amazing, you know, working with those parents, community parents trying to teach their adopted kids an identity which is foreign to them. I really admire them.*

SC: I don't know how they can do it. Another interesting story was told to me not too long ago. A friend of mine went to an art exhibit in Leiden, Netherlands, and she said there was a picture of a painting of Tosan.

Q: *Oh, really?*

SC: Yeah, it was all brown tones, but it had Dosan's face, and then it had a Korean flag and the *Heungsadan* flag. And I wish that if she had taken a picture, you know, but I thought it was quite interesting that she should find that in the Netherlands. But I do think that,



The Heungsadan Flag

now, with democracy coming more and more into the picture, that his works would be a little more talked about than before.

Q: *Do you find the difference growing between your first generation and the first generation of later Koreans?*

SC: Not really. In fact, my brother, Philip, was sort of in-between, but he just could envelope the community, and there was no problem as long as he was living. Well, once he died, it kind of fell upon me, and I'm not strong, and I'm not that much of a leader. I'm not a male, you know, so it made a difference, and I didn't speak Korean that well. So while he was living, the community was very well *jelled*, shall I say, and he was invited to everything. And it still looked like one community. But as more people came in, it just got too varied, and pretty soon, you didn't know what was going on. And right now, there are so many organizations that you don't know what's going or what's coming. And so it's kind of difficult, but I try to stay with the community and as many aspects as I can, but it's impossible to be one-community-minded anymore. I think you are lucky up here because you still have some sense of core.

Q: *We in Seattle feel that we are too big already [laughing].*

SC: Yeah, right. You know what it is like in Los Angeles, whenever you turn around, there's a new organization.

Q: *How do you perceive the newcomers? Did you find they're different?*

SC: You mean from my growing up there?

Q: *Your point of view that there's some gaps between the group you grew up with and the new generation [the third and fourth waves].*

SC: Well, the new generation's an entirely different set of people. When we were growing up, we only had one golden line: the independence of Korea. You know, that makes a *great* deal of difference in how

you think and how you grow up. As people started to come in, well, when was it, 1940, the big batch? And then 1970 was the biggest. That wasn't so bad because you could still see the community and separate them into whatever organizations you want. But *now*, it's impossible. There are *so* many organizations and so many companies. You just don't know what's going on. Well, of course, you also have the problem of dishonest people.

We started a concept of a Korean American Museum [KAM], and we had visions of having all the immigrants' histories. You've heard about the Japanese American National Museum? It is *tremendous*. Absolutely the exactly the thing I was dreaming about, but I wasn't the one with the original idea. Now that place [KAM] is full of USC and UCLA Ph.D.s, and they turned the museum idea into a sort of a cultural thing having art shows and *kimchi* exhibits. They had a *kimchi* exhibit, and so now all of our original ideas of immigrant history You know, like the Japanese-American National Museum (JANM)? They had a picture on one of their walls—it was full of suitcases that these people took to Manzanar. They collected all the suitcases and put them on the wall, and it was heartbreaking.

Q: *Kind of like the Holocaust Museum. All those shoes.*

SC: Exactly. JANM collected all the equipment they used in the farms, and that was my vision of the Korean American Museum when we first started. Well, they eased me out. They didn't have a meeting and fire me, but they just stopped sending me any materials.

Q: *It's the new trend of education. You know, this multiculturalism, ethnicity and bringing in all the culture.*

SC: I kind of have to wake up all this. I'm so used to being Korean-minded and growing up like we did. So my whole philosophy of life is so different, and then I come to these individual people who are out to make a name for themselves or something like that.

Q: *When you compare that to what your dad did and your mom did—never taking a penny and contributing your lives for Korea independence.*

SC: —Because now we have places that we can send these things. The Tosan Museum itself, when it was conceived in 1973, had its vision of, and had an actual model drawing of, the regular Korean pagoda style, and it was so beautiful, and now it's a square box. They were going to have a three-story building, and the city put a kibosh on it so they had to put two stories under and so they'd have two basement stories. And what happened was the area developed, and a lot of rich apartments were around there, and they didn't want some-

thing sticking out over their property. Anyway, to me it's like a box, but it's sturdy. My son says to me, "Oh, its okay."

Then they have, you know Ahn, Byoung-uk, the foremost philosopher of Korea in some field. He's written a lot of things. He called me couple of days ago. He was so excited and so enthusiastic because he's giving ten lectures there. He was also telling me that they had named the lecture hall Cheomjin Hall (that was one of Dad's school's names; *Osan* has something to do with it). He was so excited that he was going to give ten lectures. He was telling me that he was going to have students, and he was so excited about the number of students coming.

You know, at the museum, they did one interesting thing. They have a floor map of the world, and they spot wherever my father went. But my son, who does deep study on his grandfather, said at that time there was no one else who traveled the world like my father. But it was interesting.

This Dr. Byong Moon Kim I was telling you about from Minnesota? He wants to write a biography of my mother. Really. Then he came out last year, I guess it was. And stayed at the house for a week trying to pick up information. But this man himself is very interesting. You remember the story about trying to save the church in San Francisco? There was a Methodist church there that claimed that my father started the congregation, and now it's the first church built in San Francisco.⁴⁵ The first Korean-built church in United States, I guess. And so they wanted to save it as a landmark. Well, anyway, he got interested in the project, and he did a lot of research on it. And he came out to testify for it. And this man is so scarred, and he said that he was going in for operations—skin grafting stuff—and so he would be another six months or something when he was talking to me before I would have this. It sounded really terrible but he told me, "I get my strength from your father." But he worked hard on this Hiroshima—the comfort women issue—yeah, he's a big activist for that program. But he's an unusual man, and he works so hard. I'd like for him to do a story on my mother. He stayed here for a week and went through a lot of it. But she didn't have anything that was written.

There is also this one woman who is doing her doctoral thesis. She is doing a very interesting thing, reading my father's letters to my mother, and she can read so much into them. It's an unusual approach. She interprets them in a very different light, from a woman's perspective.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

- Q: *And you say someone is writing your biography? Who is that?*
- SC: His name is John Cha—San Francisco. Do you know John Cha?
- Q: *No, but you had told me that he's writing your biography.*
- SC: You know Theresa Cha—she wrote *Dictée*? John's her brother. The *Samil Yōsong Dong jihoe* has commissioned him to write it.
- Q: *So, how's that coming?*
- SC: Well, I don't know; they want it done by August 15 [1999]. I'm pretty slow at giving enough information.
- Q: *Is he a writer? What's his background?*
- SC: Well, he is a writer, but he was an engineer first. So I guess his methods are very methodical [*laughs*].
- Q: *He's first generation?*
- SC: No, second. He's married to a *paek-in*. He was born in Manchuria, and he was educated and raised in Seoul.

The Two Koreas

- Q: *Everything's related to patriotism.*
- SC: Yeah, everything.
- Q: *Maybe that's Koreanness.*
- SC: Now, we have this big problem with North Korea and South Korea. I think that's a bigger problem than the Japanese, really. I have to tell you about this Tosan International conference that went on in Japan on December 1, 1996. I got this invitation. I couldn't read it, because the program was in Japanese, and the invitation was all *Hanmun* and *Han'gul*, and in *Han'gul*, I could make that out and guess at it, but with this *Hanmun*, just forget it. I thought, well, the director of the cultural center is a friend of mine; I'll go there and ask him. So I went there and asked him to read it and he looked at it, and he told me what it said. And he asked, "Can I just keep it? I want it checked with [the Korean] consul's office." A couple of days later, he called up and he said, "You'd better not go," And so I thought, "Well, I won't go," And then somebody else saw it and said, "You *have* to go, and Kang, Young Hoon (you know his name?) is the keynote of speaker for this conference."⁴⁶ But I noticed that on the No. five—I had somebody read the Japanese for me—on the No. 5 item, there was something about North Korea, and the

consul's office and all the departments said, "Forget it." I guess they have problems with the Korean-Japanese and with their communication with North Korea or something—I don't know. But anyway, they told me to buy my own passage and they would reimburse me when I got there, and so I told them, "I don't have that kind of money—\$3,000?" I told them I won't go—I think they were so disappointed, but too bad. But they're setting up with the *Tosan Ki Nyom Sa-Hyeop Hoe* in Japan but the man⁴⁷

Q: *It was sponsored by North Korea? Sponsored by whom?*

SC: I don't know, Japanese-Koreans, Korean-Japanese, whatever you call them, but the one man that contacted me had translated Yi, Kwang-Su's book into Japanese, but it's a puzzle to me. I guess the Japanese there are in the same boat as we are. They don't speak Korean; they speak Japanese.

Q: *The second and third generations, yeah. But the Korean residents in Japan tend to keep their Korean language longer—much longer. They're more isolated from the mainstream society.*

SC: Yeah, right. They have to interact with each other. The North Koreans for years have been trying to get me to go there. It was never by the government; it was always by a private group. Last time I talked to a person from that organization, I just said—and this was when Kim, Il-sung was living—that when I get an official invitation from him I will go.

Q: *Who did these people say they were? That they would invite you?*

SC: No. It was no invitation at all. It was just like "Let's go to North Korea in a group," like a travel group, and this was ten years ago, maybe. It's different today. When I travel now, I always travel with that "Ahn, Ch'ang-ho halo," so it's not the same.

Although another interesting story is there was an occasion here—maybe three or four years ago—where a mother wanted to go to see her son before she died. She was living here, and she died before she got that wish. So they had the son come to the United States for her funeral, which was a big deal. They were very cordial to me. They came up, and they visited me, and they were very—yeah, because I was Ahn Ch'ang-Ho's daughter. It was a very nice thing.

Not too long after that, one of our great, rich individuals who made it a success in his life as an electrical engineer or something like that—very wealthy—went to Korea with a U.S. mission of some kind of scientific people, but he went as one of the electrical representatives. But he's a *Heungsadan* member, and when he came back,

he told me that one of the people there had asked him about Tosan because he was an admirer of Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho and would he send them some books on Tosan? This was about three years ago. He went to the *Heungsadan* in Seoul and sent a lot of books. And do you know who this man was? He was the famous defector Hwang, Jang Yup, the man who defected at the highest rank. When this visit was made he was still in North Korea, and he was the one who asked us for books on Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho.

Q: *The engineer's name was Paik? Do you know his first name?*

SC: Young. Young Jun Paik. He sent Hwang, Jang Yup some books, and then the man defected.

But another thing I have to tell the story on—that I went to Taegu, and I went to a seminar, and it was on this subject of collecting names of collaborators. I thought to myself, “Why are they doing this?” But I guess it's like the comfort women issue—the same. And, so far this man has 180 names, and he's going to put it into book form.

Q: *You mean, collaborators with Japan?*

SC: Japan, during the Pacific War [WW II]. I wonder if this young man is going to have Yi, Kwang-su on his list.

Q: *I kind of doubt it because I think he was kidnapped during the Korean War to North Korea.*

SC: Right, of course.

Thoughts for the Future

Q: *How do you absorb all this generational change? What's your perspective?*

SC: Well, since I live with one that's changing the generations [*laughs*], I guess I get a full sense. But he's very vocal about his feelings. There are a lot of things you say that he says the same way, but it's a *positive* criticism. I have a philosophy, “Life has to be lived the way it goes.”

Q: *I'm involved in a number of projects: the Korean American Historical Society, the United Seattle/Bellevue Korean School. I've been always close to things Korean, and yet I've also questioned what is this thing, being Korean? What are you going to teach your kids about being Korean?*

SC: You know, the way I feel about being Korean is that I'm very happy that I'm Korean. I mean, I think it's great thing to be Korean, and

I think that young people have to come to some recognition of their heritage, because without your heritage or ethic—and you’re gonna go along with this kind of a face no matter where you go, who you marry, or what, you know. So in order to be happy within yourself, you have to accept certain things that fate has given to you, and one is being Korean. You can’t go along and say, “Well, you know, I’m not Korean,” because there’s no way you can erase your face.

Q: *But in terms of Korean traditional values, what matters?*

SC: Well, another thing is that we’re gonna live here, and you’re never going back, you know. So you have to develop sort of an attitude, and maybe some youngsters have a problem of being that they’re not accepted. I think that some way, somehow, you have to overthrow that. It’s within yourself that this has got to take place. Then it takes people like your historical society to give some sort of a feeling that being Korean isn’t so bad. First of all, Korea has a great history and has great parts—great everything. Everything about Korea is good. Tell me one thing about Korea that’s not good (except the lifestyle at the moment, but that has nothing to do with heredity).

I don’t think that everybody needs to find their heritage—just some people. The problem is that some of the Koreans never get out of their shell and never find themselves, and they need help—even some of the professionals. That’s all right. They can make their money, but if they can’t be happy because somehow or other, they’re Korean, then I think there’s a problem. I made one observation with this GKN group. They’re very interested in computer science, and I think there’s this leveling off. They’re all professional, and they’re all bilingual and they need something to balance off their life.

But if you take Dosan’s philosophy, it’s not only his patriotic feats, but also his teachings, and so I think that we sort of have to develop a philosophical avenue to the professional. Something that balances off their success so that they can give back to the community—not [necessarily] in the way, you know, of taking money from them, but something else. But the thing is, you know, you don’t want to have a bad relationship with your children because of something they do that’s different, you know.

Q: *For a final question, at the beginning, you said that the Americans don’t know about Korea. They don’t know about the March 1 Movement, whereas they know Bastille Day and about Germany and France and*

their traditions and history, and so forth and so on. I was just wondering whether that would be too much of an expectation for people to know about Korea because we are such small part of the world, especially in America. It is kind of recent that we have become a large community—what, a million Koreans, now? But we used to be a very small part, right? When you were growing up, I don't know how many Koreans were there.

SC: When I was growing up, maybe 300.

Q: *Maybe 300,000 now, maybe. That's a small number to try to have an impact, or influence, in this big country, America.⁴⁸ I was just wondering if your expectations were too high.*

SC: No. My thought does not come from that end. My thought is about Korea itself. Korea itself is so insulated that they don't—well, *now* they travel out to different areas and they have consuls in all the world, but up to now there was no such thing as any students coming from Germany to Korea—the exchange. What is making a difference is the IMF.⁴⁹ You should see when you go to Seoul. Eighty percent are foreigners. White. Twenty percent you see on the streets are Korean.

Q: *What? Twenty percent are Koreans?*

SC: That was my observation, but I was at a hotel. But when I went in November 1998, I found an entirely different feeling. I went to *Taegu*, and I was so happy that I went there because when you go to Seoul, it's an international city, and then you go to *Taegu* and it's Korean-Korean and kind of interesting to see Korea as *Korea*.

Q: *Korea has come a long way—a long, long way. During the Korean War, the devastation, the bombardment, it was just terrible.*

SC: Absolutely. They are clever. They are very resourceful. How many times have they been knocked down and then have come up? Where are you from? Seoul?

Q: *Well, I was born in Cbeju. I had enrolled at Seoul National University, and only two weeks after I entered, the Korean War broke out. So I came here to further my education.*

SC: I see. Did you like it here?

Q: *Yes.*

SC: Well, some Koreans never get satisfied staying here. They have always got to go back.

Q: *I think that is human nature. Never satisfied.*

SC: Always wanting something you don't have. I don't know. For the American mind, I mean, Korea-Korea is very difficult. But as they say, it's getting better. Even in my lifetime, I see. But I was so happy to see this flush of young people under fifty starting to take control of things, and their minds are so different, but their worship of Ahn, Ch'ang-ho is still the same. When you come to think of it, there isn't anybody, any other patriarch or any other national figure that you can really look up to. Everybody else has some problem.

Notes:

Regarding Korean names: Normally, the family surname is first, followed by the given name (e.g., "last name, first name"). Although the normal practice of this journal is to present names using the western convention of "first name, last name," in this article, the names are given as spoken by Susan Cuddy (the last name is separated from the first name by a comma).

1. Paraphrased by Kingsley Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945 (Part I: 1900-1919)" *Amerasia Journal* 4:1 (1977), 64.
2. Philip Ahn Cuddy, "Philip Ahn, Born in America." website essay, 1996.
3. The *Imsijungbu*, or *Sangbae Imsijungbu* (for its location in Shanghai) is better known as the Korean Provisional Government (KPG), which was established following the March 1, 1919, Korean Declaration of Independence.
4. Kang, Young Hoon is the chairman of the Tosan Memorial Foundation and Sejong Foundation, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea; Suh, Young Hoon is the former hear of KBS and chair of the Association for Research on Tosan's Thought.
5. She means that by the time Ralph was born, her mother was more accustomed to revealing her emotions—either publicly or to her children.
6. Korea's national flower.
7. Ick-Whan Lee's recollection, not necessarily Susan Cuddy's exact words.
8. Ch'ang-ho Ahn founded Taeseong Middle School in P'yeongyang in 1907, "to teach youth those personal qualities that were considered necessary for their work toward restoring Korea's independence . . . as a model for others to follow . . . [and] as a testing ground for his philosophy of *Musil yeokbaeng*." Ch'i-ho Yun was the first principal (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho*, 59-61).
9. Kwang-su Yi, a famous writer, was a protege of Tosan (Ibid., 19). Susan Cuddy is referring to his book *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho* (Seoul: Taesong Munhwasa, 1959).
10. Ri-yuk Chang was a *Heungsadan* member (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho*, 95).
11. Susan Cuddy is referring to Hyung-Chan Kim's book on Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho.
12. According to Hyung-Chan Kim, Kwang-su Yi attended Waseda University.
13. According to Susan Cuddy, her mother did this from 1902 to 1969.
14. According to Hyung-chan Kim, her husband, Jeong-ik Ch'oe (his name in the US likely was spelled "Choy") served as president of the North America Regional Conference of the Korean National Association (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho*, 14). The name of Ada Choy's mother remains a mystery.

A Conversation with Susan Cuddy

15. Literally, “sewing for earning.”
16. She means that the Japanese censored everything in Korea.
17. Hye-ryan Yi’s younger sister was named Seong-sil, and her brother was named Doo Sung.
18. According to Hyung-chan Kim, the marriage was arranged by Ch’ang-ho Ahn’s grandfather (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch’ang-Ho*, 21-22).
19. Cheongshin Girls’ High School was opened by the Presbyterian Mission in 1887, in connection with the Kyungsin Boys’ School (Allen D. Clark, *History of the Korean Church*. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 67).
20. According to Hyung-chan Kim, Sin-ho Ahn, “served as vice-chairwoman of the League of Korean Women under Kim Il-seong” (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch’ang-Ho*, 14).
21. According to Hyung-chan Kim, “[Ch’ang-ho Ahn] was rather critical of American missionaries in Korea who taught their Korean followers to be concerned more with ‘going to heaven,’ rather than with the daily life problems facing Koreans . . . [He] became a [sic] such a strong critic of the church’s work in the P’yongyang area that a Methodist minister provided Tosan with part of the fare that enabled Tosan to go to America” (Ibid., 26).
22. According to Hyung-chan Kim, when Ch’ang-ho Ahn first contemplated attending the Jesus Doctrine School (the *Yesu Kyo Haktang*) run by F.S. Miller, who had invited him to attend for free, “Because he did not have any other means to support or educate himself, however, Tosan promised himself that he would pretend to believe in Christianity, but continue to maintain the teachings of Confucius.” He attended from 1894 to 1896 (Ibid., 10, 21).
23. Chong Hui Choon, the physician to whom Susan is referring, writes, “One day Tosan asked the two attending physicians and myself to come to his room. There were dishes of fruits and cookies on a table in one corner of the room. Tosan pointed at them saying that they came from America, and asked us to take them as a token of his appreciation for our services. We were surprised of this gesture. I was surprised to hear him presenting us with a gift in American style telling us how good it was, not in the Korean tradition of presenting it with a humble gesture” (“Last Moments of Tosan and His Clinical Conditions,” *Sharing a Doctor’s Bedside Stories* (typescript), Seoul Medical Publishing House, 15 July 1994); Chong-Hui Chun, *Uich’ang Yabwa (Anecdotes Gleaned from Medical Practice)* (Seoul: Uihakchulpansa, 1994).
24. In P’yongyang.
25. He gave this speech in July 1898, criticizing the Korean government and made suggestions for improvement (Byung-il Kim, *Korean American Pioneer Tosan: A Biography of Tosan Chang-ho Ahn* (trans. and ed. by the Pacific Institute for Peacemaking). Cerritos, CA: Pacific Institute for Peacemaking, 1995, 32).
26. According to Hyung-chan Kim, the founder, “Yi Seung-hun was so impressed with Tosan’s educational ideas that he returned to his home town of Osan and establish [sic] a famous school called Osan Middle School, which opened on December 14, 1907 (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch’ang-Ho*, 59).
27. While further research needs to be done, Byong Moon Kim states that he believes Ch’ang-Ho Ahn wrote the lyrics based on the following: his authorship is confirmed by the Rev. Sa Sun Whang and Eak Tai Ahn; Ch’ang-ho Ahn enjoyed composing songs; the content, pattern, and style of the lyrics to the “Aegukka” conform to other known poems and songs composed by Tosan (Byong Moon Kim, unpublished letter to Jacqui Pak, April 30, 1995).
28. The *Sinminhoe*, or New People’s Association, was a secret organization founded by Ch’ang-Ho

K AHS Oral Histories

Ahn around April 1907 in Riverside, California, to prepare Koreans to secure the independence of their country through education. Through the *Sinminboe*, more than fourteen schools were founded before it closed in 1911 (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho*, 54-59).

29. All of these people were *Heungsadan* members.
30. In 1924, the Korean Methodist Church of Los Angeles split off from the Korean Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, founded in 1906 (Hyung-chan Kim and Wayne Patterson, "History and Role of the Church in the Korean American Community" in Kim and Patterson's (eds), *The Koreans in America, 1882-1974: a Chronology and Fact Book*. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana, 1974).
31. "Ephedians"—a scholastic leadership honors group (no longer in existence).
32. Yong Man Pak is considered one of the leaders of the Korean independence movement. He immigrated to America and was a railroad worker before attending Hastings Military Academy in Nebraska in 1904. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1912 with a master's degree. He advocated the development of Korean military strength as a means for Korean independence and established a number of military academies, including ones in Hastings and Hawai'i. He also edited the Hawai'i Korean National Association's newspaper. He was assassinated in 1928 in Shanghai.
33. *The Atlanta Constitution*, 27 March 1943.
34. The *St. Louis Star-Times* (Wed, 5 Jan., 1944) reported that she was the first gunnery officer in the WAVES.
35. The Koreatown annual parade (1996).
36. According to *The Atlanta Constitution* (27 March 1943), she graduated from Link Training in Atlanta as a petty officer third specialist with 74 other WAVES.
37. That would have been in Pensacola, according to *The Pensacola News-Journal* (Nov 21, 1943).
38. It's more difficult to apply stereotypes to individuals with whom you work on a daily basis.
39. She thinks it was 1945, but is not sure.
40. It's called The Philip Ahn Admiration Society, (www.philipahn.com). Philip Cuddy had also established Dosan's Official Webpage (www.cdromnow.com/dosan/), but at the time of this issue, the site was down.
41. The Kefauver Commission, 1953.
42. The March First Women's Comrade Society.
43. Yo-han Chu wrote a biography of Ch'ang-ho Ahn, entitled, *Ahn Tosan Cheonseo [The Complete Works of Ahn Tosan]* (Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho*, 19). According to Hyung-chan Kim, he was a member of the *Heungsadan*, and "worked on the *Independent* [a newspaper] while attending Huchiang University in Shanghai (*Ibid.*, 231). He later worked in Korea for the *Dong-a Ilbo* in 1932, and was arrested with Kwang-su Yi and other members of an organization known as the *Tongubhoe* in 1937 (*Ibid.*, 249, 266).
44. According to Susan Cuddy, Ik-Kyun Koo is the chairman of The Center for the Promotion of Permanent Korean Neutrality (her translation).
45. San Francisco Methodist church.
46. Young Hoon Kang is president of the Tosan Memorial Foundation in Seoul, Korea.
47. The Tosan Memorial Foundation.
48. There are one to two million Korean Americans living in the United States.
49. This is in reference to Korea's financial crisis in late 1997.

Special Section on Korean Adoptions

Korean Identity Development Society: A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

Abstract

Because the issue of adoption in general, and transracial adoption in particular, cuts across the private lives of individuals and is very sensitive, quality studies of this subject are difficult to find in large numbers. With the cooperation of a local support group for parents of adopted Korean children, we surveyed 85 adult, 14 teen and 50 pre-teen Korean Culture Camp participants to profile their experiences regarding Korean language and culture, interaction with the Korean American community, racial identification and experience of discrimination. The purpose of our nonscientific survey was to profile the background and experiences of adult and children participants in Korean Identity Development Society's (KIDS) annual summer camp program. This is the first published survey of a transracial adoption support group in the Pacific Northwest. Hopefully, over time more studies of transracial adoption that explicitly focus on support groups can be valuable sources of information and education with regard to identity development.

Introduction

Adoptions of Korean Children

From 1948 to 1987, nearly 69,000 children were adopted by families in the United States during what is now considered the "Third" and "Fourth Waves" of Korean immigration to the United States (see chart).¹ Won Moo Hur observed that the immigrants who arrived during this period were "the most heterogeneous and the least studied."² From 1959 to 1971, Korean immigrants were overwhelmingly female because immigration favored war brides and war orphans.

"War brides" were women who married American servicemen. "war orphans" were children whose parents had died during the Korean War, or biracial children who had been fathered by American soldiers stationed in Korea. Because of the Korean emphasis on pure bloodlines, adoption practices in Korea were limited to instances where childless couples needed to continue the family line and adopted a son (normally the child of a blood relative). An additional consequence was that social services to care for un-

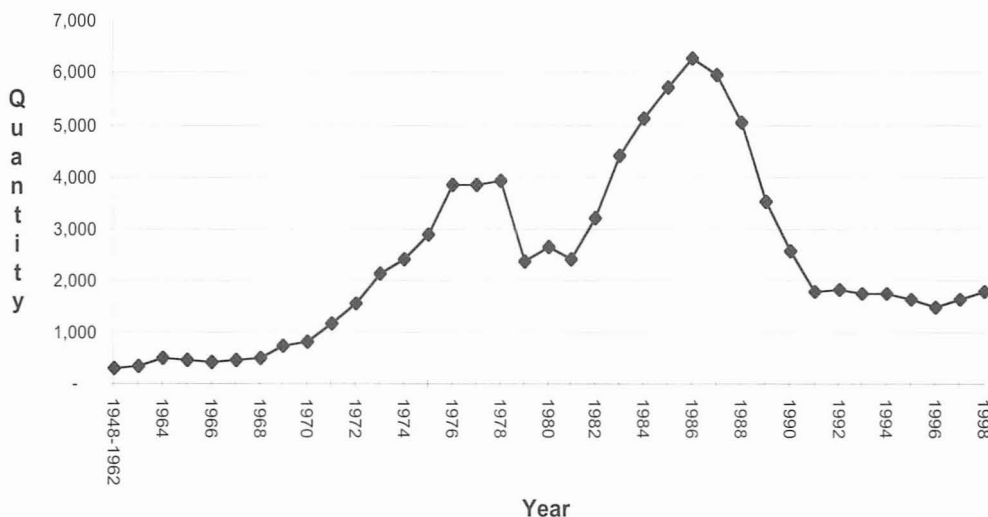
KAHS Research by JESSE CURTIS, MATTHEW BENUSKA, and DALE DINNELL, Ph.D.

wanted children were never established in Korea. The Korean War produced children who lost parents, as well as biracial children (of the soldiers from the 16 different countries stationed there) who were considered to have no place in Korean society and were abandoned by their mothers at foreign missions and military stations. These children became prime candidates for intercountry adoption.

Adoption of Korean war orphans through institutions began in earnest in 1955, when Harry and Bertha Holt, of Creswell, Oregon (near Eugene), learned of the plight of these children and adopted eight. At the time, most adoptions were based on humanitarian and Christian concerns, particularly out of concern for welfare of the biracial children.³ Adoption of Korean children was further facilitated during the 1960s and '70s, when the United States experienced a shortage of adoptable white children due to improved contraception practices and the acceptance of unwed mothers.⁴ Annual adoptions increased steadily until 1986 (at more than 6,000) and were already declining when the South Korean government, embarrassed by the issue, reduced the number of intercountry adoptions they allowed beginning in 1988.⁵

While researchers have begun studying the development of ethnic identity among Korean adoptees, only recently has any progress been made, and there is still much more to learn. The large numbers of children adopted during the 1970s and early '80s have recently begun to enter adulthood and grapple with the issue of their racial identity. Accompanying this trend, the 1990s have seen an upsurge in the formation of support groups for adult

ANNUAL KOREAN ADOPTIONS, 1948-1998



SOURCE: INS IR-3 AND IR-4 VISA DATA

A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

adoptees based on, and to help them cope with, their experience.

One of the greatest obstacles researchers have faced in studying the experiences of adoptees has been the difficulty in locating participants. Until the mid-1980s, adoption agencies had been the only organizations through which such studies had been possible, due to their maintenance of adoption records and contact with adoptive parents. However, because such records are usually covered by strong privacy guidelines and are only good for a limited period of time (people move, addresses are lost), it has been historically difficult to study large numbers of willing participants. Another consequence is that research has been necessarily limited through contact with the parents, rather than by contacting the adoptees themselves.

The advent of self-help and support groups for parents who have adopted children, as well as emerging groups for adult adoptees, may make it easier to contact potential participants. However, all of these sources are affected to some extent by what researchers term “selection bias”—that is, participants drawn from such groups may have certain characteristics that will dispose the results of such research toward one conclusion or another. For instance, studies based on adoptive parents who have organized support groups may likely find that adopted children have “no problems,” because of the characteristics of the parents that led them to organize and join these groups. Unfortunately, no study to date (including ours) has been able to completely avoid this effect.

While researchers have begun studying the development of ethnic identity among Korean adoptees, only recently has any progress been made.

KIDS and Our Survey

Formed in the early 1980s, Korean Identity Development Society (KIDS), a local nonprofit organization, was established to provide and encourage an understanding and appreciation of Korean heritage and culture through “educational programs, summer culture camps and traditional Korean holiday celebrations for Korean American families” for parents and children alike, in addition to “address[ing] the opportunities and challenges bicultural families face.”⁶ Year-round activities are for all family members, and include outings, Korean entertainment, seminars and an annual Lunar New Year festival.

KIDS also publishes community resource lists, a newsletter and organizes annual visits to Korea. A summer day camp, consisting of two one-week sessions, was begun in 1993 to expose adoptees and their siblings to Korean culture through educational curriculum, arts and crafts projects and music and language activities. The goals of KIDS’ Culture Camp are to foster the following experiences:

- Developing and maintaining friendships with other Korean-adopted children and their siblings;

- Reaffirming the value of the ethnic heritage the children have and thus promoting positive feelings about being Korean American; and
- Learning about Korean culture in ways that are engaging for children, teachers and other volunteers.⁷

Children attend classes on Korean language, culture, martial arts and music. Projects include making *kimch'i*, decorating and painting spirit poles (*changgwaeon*) and learning songs (for example, "Arirang"). This program attracts over 255 adoptees and their siblings (about 20 percent of participants), ages four to twelve. It was so popular among children that three years after its inception in 1993, an additional program was established for teens who had participated in earlier camps and wanted to continue their experience. The teen program includes tours of Korean American businesses and presentations by Korean American community leaders.

In 1996, we had the opportunity to survey the participants of a KIDS Culture Camp in order to profile and better understand the experiences of adoptive parents and children in the Seattle area. The survey consisted of questions regarding Korean language and culture, their interaction with the Korean American community, racial identification and experience of discrimination. We developed three survey questionnaires that were administered to three groups of respondents: 50 students aged 9–12 ("pre-teens"); 14 students aged 11–14 ("teens"); and lastly 85 parents.

Students were asked about their backgrounds, racial identification and experience of being racially different, whereas parents were asked about their background, experiences and interest in exposing their children to Korean culture, as well as their degree of interaction with the Korean community. The surveys were anonymous, and because we were looking at all camp participants, we did not attempt to distinguish between Koreans and non-Koreans, or adoptees and their siblings. Prior to our survey, one other survey had been conducted, but its results were not published.⁸

Following the survey, we conducted a literature review to place our survey in the context of other studies of identity development of transracial adoptees. Before presenting the review of the literature, we will define a few key terms. "Transracial adoption" often and most narrowly refers to the adoption of black children by white families. Here the term will be used in its broader definition: the adoption of children of one race by parents of a different race. "Transcultural" or "intercountry adoption" refers adoption of a child from one country by parents in another country. It is often used interchangeably with international adoption. "Racial identity" refers to a person's awareness of her racial heritage and the degree to which she views herself as a part of that heritage. "Ethnic" or "cultural identity" refers to a person's awareness of her ethnic heritage and the degree to which she sees herself as part of that heritage.

Literature Review

Adoption, whether intraracial or transracial, is a sensitive issue. In transracial adoption, moral, ethical and cultural questions complicate the standard social and legal difficulties. Since ethnic Korean families in the United States rarely adopt Korean children, any study of Korean adoptees must begin by looking at the issue of transracial adoption.

Since World War II, transracial adoption has been used to provide families for children who would otherwise spend their lives in orphanages, foster care or on the streets. In 1972, the discourse on transracial adoption dramatically changed with the National Association of Black Social Workers' (NABSW) condemnation of the practice as a form of "cultural genocide," and rejection of the practice as a solution for black children in need of adoption.⁹ Although the NABSW statement focused on black/white adoptions, Native American advocacy groups in the United States and several minority advocacy groups abroad quickly embraced their position.

This development set the tone for all subsequent discussion of transracial adoption in the United States and elsewhere.¹⁰ As a result, most research has focused on the adoption of black children by white families to the exclusion of intercountry adoptions, and has grappled with being labeled as taking either a "pro-" or "anti-" NABSW stance. Although most researchers of transracial adoption come from a social services or psychology background, their findings often infer that the NABSW position does not serve the best interests of the children. Researchers have generally taken the position that the best solution for children is placement through adoption by a loving, caring family, regardless of race. In the 25 years since the NABSW statement, transracial adoption has continued, and several studies on the effects of transracial adoption have been conducted. NABSW also has softened its position to consider transracial adoption as a last resort.¹¹

Most research has focused on the adoption of Black children by White families to the exclusion of intercountry adoptions

Racial Identity

The concept of identity formation originated in the 1950s with the writings of sociologist Erik Erikson; most tests in the field of identity formation refer to his work.¹² J.L. Hoopes', and J. Gary May's studies provide the most concise, clear summaries of Erikson's theories and their significance for transracial adoption.¹³ As O. Gill and B. Jackson point out, criticisms of transracial adoption fall into one of two broad categories.¹⁴ The first types of criticisms are based on discrimination and traditional bias against non-white communities in the United States. The second types are "criticisms based upon the anticipated experiences" of the adopted child—in other words,

problems expected to be caused by the child's confusion of his/her identity.¹⁵ Gerald Pepper observed that white adoptive parents suffer what he called a "role handicap."¹⁶ For children who are transracially adopted, the most difficult issue they clearly face is one of reconciling their two identities. They must be able to answer "Who am I?" in the context of having internalized the culture and values of one race while being confronted by a society that identifies and relates to them according to the external features of another.

While many books that discuss transracial adoption also include a chapter or section on racial identity or identity formation, they do not explore it in detail.¹⁷ Several sources focus on identity formation in terms of adoption. Among these, two sources stand out. Arnold Dashefsky explains ethnic identity and how it interacts with socialization to form an individual's identity.¹⁸ Part One explores topics of ethnicity, assimilation, pluralism and culture and how these items interact in society. Part Two discusses four different theories about how identity and ethnic identity are formed. Part Three explores how socialization affects identity formation, and Part Four discusses self-image and identity as functions of ethnic identity. Part Five is the weakest segment, with dated suggestions on political action, and policy planning and implementation.

Although David Brodzinsky et al.'s, *Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self* does not specifically address Korean or transracial adoption, this book does "map out what it is like to be adopted" by modeling what they consider to be normal psychological adjustment to adoption.¹⁹ Through research and clinical work with adoptees and their families, the authors seek to relate the developmental changes of life, the search for self and the search for individuality with the experiences of adoptees to help draw a model of growth and normal adjustment for adoptees. Researchers clearly agree that a person's identity develops over time. Consistent with this perspective, Sook Wilkinson suggests that adoptees progress through stages of reconciliation.²⁰

Interracial and Intercountry Adoption

John Triseliotis does an excellent job of evaluating various studies of transracial adoption and identifying their strengths and weaknesses.²¹ In the United States, the two most comprehensive studies are one by Rita Simon and Howard Altstein, and another by William Feigelman and Arnold Silverman.²² Both studies found that transracial adoptees had little or no difficulty adjusting to their new family environment, although each also found numbers of adoptees that had difficulties with their racial identity.

Among these studies, Simon and Altstein's work is the best known. In their longitudinal study from 1971 to 1984, researchers evaluated the attitudes and experiences of adoptive parents, their birth children and their adopted children, in more than 100 families across the country (a summary

of the study and its findings appears in Simon's chapter of Gaber and Aldridge²³). Simon reported "no white racial preferences amongst American black and white children." Furthermore, although there were "no consistent differences amongst the adopted and non-adopted children and amongst the black and other transracially adopted children," she did mention that 11 percent of the children interviewed "told us directly that they would prefer to be white."²⁴ While most of the adoptees were black, her sample did include some children of Korean heritage; children in the 1971 study were three to eight years old; those in the 1987 study would have been 19 to 24.

Similarly, Feigelman and Silverman examined the long-term adjustments of black, Korean, and Colombian transracial adoptees from the perspective of their adoptive parents (Koreans made up 43 percent). In their 1975 and 1981 surveys of adoptive parents found that there was no major cultural incompatibility among transracially adopted children ages 7 to 12.²⁵ They observed that 41 percent of parents reported that their Korean children had at some time felt "ashamed of their ethnic background," and greater percentages of adolescents (ages 13 to 21) were reported as having negative associations with their race than children (ages 6 to 12).²⁶

Interestingly, they found that fostering ethnic pride and identity in being Korean was more important to the Korean adolescents' self-esteem than for their group of black adolescent adoptees. As Feigelman and Silverman relate, "As parents positively emphasize their transracially adopted child's racial identification, they encourage their child to be proud of his or her Korean heritage. In so doing, they reduce the possibility of adjustment difficulties."²⁷ Because their findings were based upon the perceptions of the adoptive parents, a study that directly surveys children and adolescents would make a stronger case.

Researchers may be led to underestimate the effects of cultural and racial identity formation among transracial adoptees because their studies may artificially "separate 'adjustment' within the family, school, etc. from the issue of 'racial and ethnic identity.'"²⁸ John Triseliotis adds that "there is a dearth of studies exploring the views, attitudes, and perceptions of inter-country adopted teenagers and adults . . . possibly the only one available is Dalen and Saetersdal, who carried out intensive interviews with 41 adopted teens (mostly Vietnamese) and their parents" in Norway.²⁹

M. Dalen and B. Saetersdal found that the majority of the adoptees were socially well-adjusted, but the authors *did* observe that many had "strong traits of anxiety and insecurity . . . independent of the adoptees' intelligence and abilities, and of the economic and social standing of the adoptee's family."³⁰ This may turn out to be indicative of long-term effects on Korean adoptees in the United States as well. As of yet, no study has directly exam-

Interestingly, they found that fostering ethnic pride and identity in being Korean was more important to the Korean adolescents' self-esteem . . .

ined late-teen and early adult groups.

Several sources provide excellent discussions of identity formation, but like books on transracial adoption, they have some weaknesses. Stein and Hoopes' book on identity formation among adopted adolescents (ages 15 to 18) suggests that a child's age upon adoption seems to affect positive identity formation, also a topic in the studies of transracial adoption mentioned above. They found that the fact of adoption in and of itself does not affect self-identity formation. They speculated that identity formation occurs over a longer period of time than the range of their subjects.³¹ Interestingly, based on their findings, they suggest that women are "somewhat developmentally more advanced in identity formation," but were unable to account for it.³² Beyond this, their study is of limited use because of its focus on white, middle-class participants.

Ruth McRoy and Louis Zurcher devote two chapters to self-esteem and racial identity formation in their book on adolescent transracial and inracial adoptees.³³ Based upon responses to the Tennessee Self-Concept test, they

found "no difference in self-esteem or general self-concept between transracially and intraracially adopted children."³⁴ This finding of social "okay-ness" is consistent with Dalen and Saatersdal mentioned above, but McRoy and Zurcher do not speculate about the long-term ramifications for these adoptees. For the studies on transracial adoption as well as the various studies on identity formation, Triseliotis' general criticism that "there is a dearth of studies exploring the views, attitudes and perceptions of inter-country adopted teenagers and adults" applies.³⁵ Articles on identity formation are usually highly theoretical and often focus on only one or two specific aspects of the process.

Sotomayer's examination of the role of language in the formation of self-concept provides an example of this.³⁶

Perhaps the most surprising thing about all the literature on transracial adoption and identity formation is the general lack of published information about Korean adoptees, despite the large numbers of Korean children who have been adopted into the United States. Since 1963, Korea has been the leading country for transracially adopted children in the U.S., and has been the source for more than 50 percent of transracial adoptees since 1972.³⁷ Sources that examine Korean adoptees usually explore only the adjustment experiences of these children, rarely making comments on the child's degree of cultural awareness. Byung Hoon Chun attributes this to the virtual absence of Korean researchers in this field.³⁸ It has been only recently that detailed examinations of ethnic and cultural identity among Korean adoptees have begun to surface, and most have come from among researchers of Korean heritage.

Articles on identity formation are usually highly theoretical and often focus on only one or two specific aspects of the process.

Racial Identity Among Korean-heritage Adoptees

Evaluation of the few sources that specifically explore identity formation among Korean adoptees is doubly difficult because many of them remain unpublished.³⁹ The author of the earliest extant study on Korean adoptees is Dong Soo Kim. His 1976 dissertation sought “to assess the self-concept, during adolescence, of Korean children who had been adopted by American families.”⁴⁰ Although his main focus was on self-concept formation, Kim observed that Korean adoptees in the United States had “relatively little ‘Korean’ identity,” and in fact, he found that “Korean cultural factors appeared to be *negatively* related to self-concept and socialization patterns (our italics).”⁴¹

In another study conducted at about the same time, S. Peter Kim and his colleagues published “a preliminary report of a comprehensive, longitudinal study of adopted Korean children, exploring their patterns of adjustment and behavioral developments.”⁴² The report contains only general sample data on the families, their adopted children and the adoptees’ “behavioral symptoms,” however. While we could not locate any subsequent published information, references or follow-up reports on this study, the most interesting aspect of this 1979 article is their lament that

During the last decade interest in transracial adoption has mounted, and many sociologists and psychological studies have been published. Most have focused on adoption of black children by white families; only a few have concerned Oriental children brought to the U.S. to be adopted by Caucasian families. However, the few studies available were limited to demographic data on the adoptive family and the adjustment patterns of children in general, leaving out the specific behavioral aspects of their adjustment. The adopted Oriental children’s duality of cultural heritage and ethnic mores was ignored or only lightly touched upon in most instances.⁴³

Based upon the paucity of published research reviewed here, Kim’s comment appears to still be accurate.

More recently, Jill Cole, in her 1992 dissertation, studied the ethnic identity of 48 Korean adoptees, ages five to seven. She observed that self-help groups can play an influential role in helping parents to help their children cope with issues of race and identity. While she found no relationship between parental involvement in support groups and the child’s perception of his/her own ethnic identity, her most interesting finding was that the age of the child when interviewed was “critical” in terms of being able to evaluate ethnic identity, that “the perception of ethnic identity (‘identification’) increases with age.”⁴⁴ Cole reasoned that she found no relationship because her subjects were too young. A study that examines the experiences of older children (teens in particular), as well as their age of arrival in the United States, would be especially useful.

Finally, Mancini, in her 1995 study, attempted to measure the cultural identity and awareness levels of 64 Korean adoptees ages 13 to 33 among members of MAK (Minnesota Adopted Koreans), a Minnesota support group. Like Dalen and Saatersdal, and McRoy and Zurcher, Mancini's respondents were generally well adjusted; however, they experienced difficulties with respect to how others reacted to their adoptive status and/or racial/ethnic minority status.⁴⁵ She also observed that they had "a weak orientation to traditional Korean values."⁴⁶

... Transracial adoption of minorities by whites is controversial because ... minorities feel that such adoptions could result in a further dilution of their race ...

Her results, when compared to those of Kim's 1976 dissertation, suggest that the level of ethnic identity among Korean adoptees has not changed much in 20 years. Based upon the relationships she found, research efforts should be focused on adoptees' self-esteem in relation to "[their] attitude toward adoptive parents, how often [they] feel discrimination and [their] interest in Korea and Korean people."⁴⁷ In addition to profiling participants, our survey attempted to examine students' racial self-identification in comparison to how their friends identified them. Because no previous research has profiled Korean culture camp participants, the results of our survey will hopefully aid future studies of Korean adoptions.

In summary, the relevant issues seem to be that transracial adoption of minorities by whites is controversial because race may affect identity development, minorities feel that such adoptions could result in a further dilution of their race, and transracial adoptees may experience a denial of their ethnic and cultural heritage which they feel is already ignored by the white majority culture. Research studies have only recently begun to address the issue of ethnic and racial identity development as it is affected by transracial adoption. Furthermore, research complicated because the issue of ethnic identity development in and of itself is a relatively new field of study. Finally, for those who are interested in the identity development of Korean children adopted by non-Korean parents, there is still much more to learn.

Survey Results

Pre-Teens

The typical "pre-teen" student was ten years old, in fifth grade and female (66 percent). Most came to the United States in 1986 (43 percent), followed by 1985 (25 percent), suggesting that they were adopted at an early age (up to age two). Four (8 percent) were born in the United States, suggesting that they may have not been adopted.

While most (84 percent) identified themselves as Korean (the other re-

A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

sponses given suggest that the survey was not administered to children solely of Korean heritage), only 63 percent indicated that their friends would identify them as Korean—a difference of 21 percent. While 67 percent identified their friends at school as white, another 20 percent indicated that their friends were just as likely to be of any ethnicity (e.g., “black,” “Russian,” “Italian,” “Chinese,” “Japanese”). Regarding their friends at camp, 74 percent indicated that their closest friends were Korean.

Slightly more than half (52 percent) of respondents indicated that they could speak at least some Korean, although they mostly spoke English with their parents. Practically all of the students (96 percent) were at least somewhat, if not very interested in learning about Korean culture or language. Fully 77 percent had previously attended support group events at least once; 69 percent had not attended other culture camps, and 71 percent had not attended a Korean language class outside of the support group.

When asked about their experience of discrimination (“being treated different”) by Koreans, most (74 percent) indicated “No,” although two students reported being treated differently in a positive way (“they treat me special,” “they give me stuff”). Interestingly, 22 percent did not respond to this question. Regarding discrimination by non-Koreans on the other hand, 37 percent indicated that other kids made fun of the way they looked (e.g., mostly by references to their having “Chinese eyes”).

Teens

Because of the very small number of teens surveyed (14), readers should be very cautious in making inferences based on these results. Respondents were typically 13 years old, in eighth grade and mostly female (79 percent). Most came to the United States between 1982 and 1984 or later, suggesting that they were adopted at about the same age as the pre-teens (up to age two). Most had one brother or sister (40 percent); although some had 2 or 3 siblings (28 percent), the remainder had none (20 percent).

All identified themselves as being Korean; all but one reported that their friends at school would describe them as such. At school, most friends were reported to be white, while at camp, most friends were reported to be Korean (15 percent were reported being white). When asked about their dating preference, half did not respond (suggesting that either they didn’t date, or didn’t have a preference (4 respondents indicated so), although 43 percent preferred dating Whites. Only four teens (29 percent) spoke Korean (fairly or poorly); all spoke English with their parents.

When asked about their interest in Korean-oriented activities, half (7) indicated being moderately interested, and 36 percent (5) indicated that their interest was low. Most (8) did not participate in the local Korean community at all, although 5 appeared to occasionally. All but 3 teens had some previous

experience with support group events; one-third of teen students (4) had attended support group events five times before. Most (8 students; 60 percent) had not attended any culture camp before.

When asked questions regarding their experience of discrimination, most (6) students felt that other non-Koreans did accept them as their equal (an equal number did not respond, however, suggesting that respondents may have had some difficulty in responding to this question). When asked whether they had experienced discrimination from Koreans, only one student indicated so (6 students did not respond to this question either, possibly because this question inferred a connection between discrimination and the respondents' Korean heritage). Regarding their experience of prejudice or discrimination from non-Koreans, 6 students again did not respond, while 3 students reported being teased about the way they look (a fourth student identified being in the culture camp itself as a source of discrimination).

Parents

Since mothers usually drove their children to summer camp (85 percent of respondents), the responses here largely represented their point of view. Typically, the parents are between 42 and 43 years old, married and white. Both parents tended to be very well educated (76 percent of respondents and 78 percent of their spouses have college or graduate degrees), and the average annual household income was moderately high. Parents typically had adopted one (53 percent) or two (42 percent) Korean children, and had two (50 percent) or three (20 percent) children, or one (17 percent) child, total.

Most parents reported having some experience with support group events; more than half (53 percent) had attended 2 to 4 times, while 19 percent had attended events more than 4 times. Almost one-third (28 percent) reported being newcomers (they had either never attended or only once before). Only 11 percent of respondents reported having participated in similar camps within the last three years (the time when the summer camp was established). Slightly more (14 percent) enrolled their children in language classes during this same period. 24 percent reported being approached by Koreans to enroll their children in language classes.

Parents' reasons for having their children attend the culture camp can be categorized as progressing from informational only, to informational plus values, to informational plus values plus pride, as follows:

- Informational only—attendees learn about Korea, Korean language, arts and culture;
- Informational plus values—in addition, attendees begin to assimilate some Korean values; and
- Informational plus values plus pride—in addition, attendees de-

rive a sense of pride or positive self-worth from the experience (interrater reliability ratio (three raters) = .66).

Parents expressed a desire for their children to understand more about, and appreciate, Korean culture; “normalization” (the realization that there are other children and families with the same experiences), progressing to the goal of developing their children’s Korean identity and improving their self-esteem. Some examples included:

- Exposure to other children who share their life experience;
- Appreciation, understanding and pride in Korean culture;
- Take pride in who they are and to realize that they are not the only people with more than one culture;
- To understand the traditions and culture of Korea, and to make friends like themselves; and
- To have pride in being Korean American, and to feel comfortable with their adoption.

In response to why parents considered attending culture camp important, responses ranged from a desire to expose their child to Korean culture, to promoting self-esteem and identity formation, to developing positive family and social relationships. Some examples included:

- Korean culture is unique in our family, and it is not easy to be adopted and look different from other family members;
- Our child needs to have Korean-born friends to identify with and associate with and needs to learn about Korean culture;
- Child needs to know share he/she came from and know about his/her country of birth, and to know that he/she is a wonderful gift, and to be well-rounded and have strong self-identity, self-esteem and self-worth;
- Overall happiness is a function of identity and self-esteem;
- Children need to be exposed to other interracial families; and
- We all need to be proud of who we are.

We were struck by the importance parents placed on developing their child’s self-esteem through exposure to Korean heritage and culture, and through interaction with friends and families of similar backgrounds. As demonstrated by their responses, parents valued normalizing and integrating the heritage and experiences of their child(ren) into family life, and were sensitive to the needs of their child(ren).

When asked about their Korean language ability and use, 20 percent of parents indicated that either they or their spouse spoke Korean “poorly”; not

surprisingly, they primarily used English to communicate with their Korean children. Practically all parents expressed a high or moderate interest in exposing themselves (95 percent), or their children (97 percent) to Korean-oriented activities (i.e., Korean language and cultural activities). Most respondents (84 percent) had low to no participation in the local Korean community, however. While their participation was influenced by parents' desire to expose themselves or their children to Korean language and cultural activities (Pearson's correlation of .34 and .26 respectively), it was likely moderated by other influences as well.

While most respondents reported encountering prejudice or discrimination either occasionally or rarely, they most often reported experiencing prejudice from non-Koreans.

When asked about their experience of discrimination, about 17 percent of parents reported encountering prejudice or discrimination from members of the Korean community. According to respondents, discrimination took various forms, from ostracism and avoidance in restaurants and churches, to nonverbal disapproval (such as looks of anger and disgust), to being questioned about their motives for adopting an "unwanted child" and being verbally attacked.

On the other hand, 50 percent of parents reported encountering prejudice or discrimination from members of the non-Korean community. Experiences ranged from ostracism by family members or being stared at in public, to ignorant and rude remarks made by strangers or being questioned about their motives for adopting, to being verbally attacked (racial slurs). It was difficult to categorize/interpret their experiences because remarks often simultaneously referred to the fact of adoption, as well as to the racial differences between parents and children. Furthermore, inflection and tone of voice could easily have influenced the meaning. While most respondents reported encountering prejudice or discrimination either occasionally or rarely (from Koreans and non-Koreans alike), they most often reported experiencing prejudice from non-Koreans.

Discussion

While the results of our survey are helpful and illuminating, because the data from our study are basically descriptive, they often do not allow for conclusions. The basic question is whether these children have a well-developed sense of identity for their age. Without a comparison group, this question cannot be answered. There are a number of possible comparison groups, but none for which we have any data. For example, one comparison group would be Korean children who were adopted by Korean American parents. Another comparison group would be Korean children adopted by Caucasian American parents who never attended (and whose parents would not consider letting their children attend) KIDS camp or any other social event that had

A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

Korean culture as a focus. Since there is no such comparison group, it is difficult to conclude that the children who attended KIDS Culture Camp have a more stable identity and a resulting more positive self-concept.

The second issue focuses on the questions to which the children responded. Most of the questions focused on exposure to Korean cultural ideas and the level at which this exposure occurred. Certainly exposure to Korean culture at an early age is beneficial. However, exposure at certain ages may be confusing for a while. Young children do not seem to differentiate among the races until around puberty. At this point, children begin to separate into friendship groups that are increasingly divided among racial lines. In our data we do not see this differentiation. We reported that a majority of the participants had white friends at school but Korean friends at KIDS camp. This result is likely because the ratio of Korean students to white students at school is very small whereas the ratio of Korean attendees to white attendees at KIDS Culture Camp was much larger. Furthermore, many of the KIDS Culture Camp attendees were not at the developmental stage where racial differentiation seems to matter in terms of friendships or dating partners. Since the oldest children in the teen sample were only 14, the dating question probably did not have much relevance for them.

The basic question is whether these children have a well-developed sense of identity for their age.

Responses to the issue of discrimination seemed to focus primarily on physical features. Since the physical features of Korean and Caucasian children are different and noticeable, it is not unusual for children to make comments about the differences, which can be hurtful. In a situation where the majority of children are Caucasians, more of these comments will be directed toward the Korean children. In a situation where a majority of the children are Korean, more of these comments would likely be directed toward Caucasian children. Whereas comments of this nature may impact identity issues (and research indicates that it usually does not unless the comments occur on a prolonged basis from a lot of different sources), this issue is not because of the adoptive status of the Korean children.

Finally, we never gave a formal measure of cultural identity. Thus, we cannot say if the identity of these children was culturally Caucasian American, Korean American or Korean. According to Dr. Joseph Trimble, it is likely that many of these children will emerge with a bicultural identity as a result of their experiences.⁴⁸ However, the balance between the different cultural perspectives is a matter of many contextual issues such as the availability and frequency of exposure to Korean culture, parental support of exploring other cultural perspectives, peer/sibling support of cultural exploration, etc. Since we have no formal measures of cultural identity, it is difficult to conclude anything in this regard.

What seems apparent from the data is that the parents are supportive at

some level of their adopted Korean children being exposed to Korean culture. Of course, this is a biased sample of parents because they have encouraged their children to attend KIDS Culture Camp. We should expect supportive statements. What we do not know is how prevalent this attitude is among all Caucasian American parents who have adopted Korean children. Furthermore, the children themselves may not be at the age where they value these experiences (as evidenced by the teens' level of interest in participating in the local Korean community). In addition, for some Korean children, there may have been very little local Korean community available.

It is easy to see why they might abandon the need to speak the Korean language since their own skills are so poor:

From a language perspective, most of the children knew very little Korean, and almost all of them spoke English with their parents. Certainly if parents do not speak Korean, it is difficult to speak that language at home. Furthermore, most school systems do not offer Korean as a language option. If they do offer it, it is usually at the high school level. Perhaps if the whole family took a Korean language class, you would see more communication in Korean at home. However, we did not ask parents if they had the time, the interest or the opportunity to learn the Korean language. Certainly parents were willing to support some level of knowledge about Korean culture through KIDS Culture Camp, but how willing were they to learn about these things themselves so they could be discussed and practiced at home? Only 20 percent said they spoke the Korean language but most said they did so poorly. It is easy to see why they might abandon the need to speak the Korean language since their own skills are so poor. It may be an issue of what the priorities are and what the level of commitment is in meeting those priorities.

We are not certain if the “discrimination” experiences that the parents reported are a function of having a child who is not of the same “ethnicity,” or a child who is not of the same “biology.” We have known people who have adopted children of the same ethnicity as they and still received the questions about why they wanted to adopt a child that “no one else wanted.” On the other hand they also received a lot of positive feedback about adopting a child. Furthermore, in U.S. culture, people are less likely to report positive comments when asked about other people’s reactions. Instead the tendency is to focus on negative comments.

Suggestions for further research

There are some major limitations of our study that need to be addressed. First, there was not comparison group (see above). Second, parents who were affluent and college educated adopted many of the Korean children in our study. These factors often affect adjustment of many children—adopted or biological. In addition, a larger than normal percentage of the Korean chil-

A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

dren came from adoptive families that were intact (i.e., The parents were not divorced). This also provides a bias to our sample since identity development in children of this age is a function of parental relationship factors. Before they were administered, the questionnaires were pre-tested, although judging from the responses, additional improvements can be made. Because steps were taken to ensure that respondents could not be identified, we were unable to follow-up with respondents to further clarify their answers, or to determine their reasons for not responding to certain questions.

Note also that the “teen” and “pre-teen” groups were classified as such, and given different surveys because they were enrolled in slightly different camp programs; it was not known until the surveys were returned that the ages of the students overlapped. A chi-square analysis of the 11 and 12 year-olds in both pre-teen and teen groups revealed no significant differences, however. Responses to the open-ended questions (such as their reasons for participating in culture camp and experiences of racism) were not limited to single, mutually exclusive categories. Future questions should allow respondents to rank in order of importance a number of competing, mutually exclusive responses. To account for differences in perception, respondents should be allowed to indicate the negativity of their experience with discrimination (on a 1 to 10 scale, for example).

Unfortunately, our methodology did not measure cultural identity directly but measured some related aspects such as exposure to a culture. The questions we asked are only a small part of cultural identification. From a true definition of culture, most of the KIDS Culture Camp attendees had lifelong exposure to mainstream American society by participating in it directly. Exposure to Korean culture was only limited. Even in situations where parents are from Korean but have immigrated to the United States and have raised their children in the United States, their exposure to Korean culture is often moderated by exposure to American culture via schools, television, books, art, literature, music, etc.

The Korean KIDS Culture Camp attendees have experienced a predominately American influence with some Korean influence. We do not know if that will motivate them to seek more information about Korean culture as they age. We also do not know if this exposure gets translated into value changes. However, according to Dr. Trimble, it usually does not lead to a person “giving up” the American values to which they have been exposed.⁴⁹ At most, some of those values will be moderated or contextualized.

Because the age of adoption strongly influences identity, directly asking parents and children their age when they arrived in United States would be useful. While the children appeared to have a good understanding of their racial identification, an attempt should have been made to distinguish be-

The Korean KIDS Culture Camp attendees have experienced a predominate American influence with some Korean influence.

tween adoptees and their sibling participants. Additionally, more research needs to be conducted to determine what the racial identifiers actually signify to these respondents.

Finally, more interesting results might be found if the surveys of the children and parents could be linked. For example, we might be able to examine the relationship between parents' interest and participation in Korean

However, the American cultural exposure will not be replaced because of the exposure to Korean culture.

cultural activities, and their children's interest, and what impact this has on their self-esteem. Because teens and pre-teens are not yet independently mobile (because they cannot legally drive), their interaction with the Korean community tends to be necessarily limited by their parents' activities and participation. Similarly, we should provide respondents an opportunity to relate the reasons for their level of participation in the Korean community. Regarding parents' reasons for enrolling in

Korean culture camp, so as to not limit the responses, we left these two questions open so consequently, many of the responses cover more than one category. Future questions should allow respondents to rank in order of importance various, competing responses.

Since studies to date have focused on children, either pre-adolescents or early adolescents, and since we know that racial identity does not usually become a salient issue until adolescence, we suggest that more studies be directed toward adolescents and young adults (ages 16 to 22). Standardized instruments, such as the Casey Family Program Youth Outcomes Survey could be utilized for data collection.⁵⁰ In addition to a case history, the questionnaire covers eight areas: emotional health, family adjustment and other relationships, cultural (ethnic) identification, (educational) competence and achievement, physical health, educational development, self-sufficiency, and legal (civic) involvement. The section on cultural identification asks parents to rank their child on questions such as demonstrating a strong sense of ethnic identity, communication with members of own ethnic group, awareness of racism, and whether the child has peers of the same or different ethnicity. Such questions would appear to be of some use for parents of transracial adoptees as well.

Conclusions

Our study suggests that if cultural programs are available to Korean children who have been adopted by American parents, both the children and the parents can derive short-term benefits from these programs. However, it is not clear the degree to which these cultural programs will have a long term affect on the identity of all participants. Future research efforts in this area should approach this issue longitudinally. Certainly parental willingness and support is an essential component of this process. In fact, parents, as well as

A Profile of Korean Culture Camp Participants

siblings, who participated with their adopted children, seemed to derive benefits from participation as well.

Certainly the premise of KIDS Culture Camp is valid. We only acquire identity with a culture if we have been exposed to elements of that culture, but exposure must be more than a few days at camp over a few years. There must be supportive environments at home and school as well as with peers. However, the American cultural exposure will not be replaced because of the exposure to Korean culture. They will coexist, and the context will determine which cultural perspective is relevant. Our data is a nice description of some cultural events. However, because we do not have pre/post measures or comparison groups, and because we do not have extensive measures of cultural identity, it is difficult to arrive at conclusions. We do think that this data will serve as a stimulus for people to develop more in-depth research in this area. It is definitely an area that is ripe for research because it has important implications for parenting and education.

In today's technological world, . . . this interaction opens the possibility for additional exposure to cultural ideologies.

From a long-term impact perspective, the difficulty is in providing exposure to cultural programs on a continual basis, particularly since the opportunities available are limited to one-week sessions in the summers or to weekend gatherings. While these may have some long-term impact on identity, the lack of continuity is problematic. Although face-to-face contact may result in the greatest impact on identity, opportunities are increasingly available via web-based sources. Although certainly not a substitute for social interaction, web pages on Korean culture could enhance exposure to Korean culture. In today's technological world, movie clips of important cultural events can be included in web-based sources as well. Furthermore, e-mail is increasingly available for children in the United States to interact with children in Korea. This interaction opens the possibility for additional exposure to cultural ideologies. Furthermore, these sources would be available to parents and siblings and could serve as a stimulus for discussion at home. This technology could be utilized as a supplement to the face-to-face programs such as KIDS Camp to enhance the knowledge and appreciation of Korean culture for all individuals involved.

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We are indebted to the members and families of Korean Identity Development Society (KIDS), without whose cooperation this study would not have been possible.

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Korean Adoptions: KAHS Research

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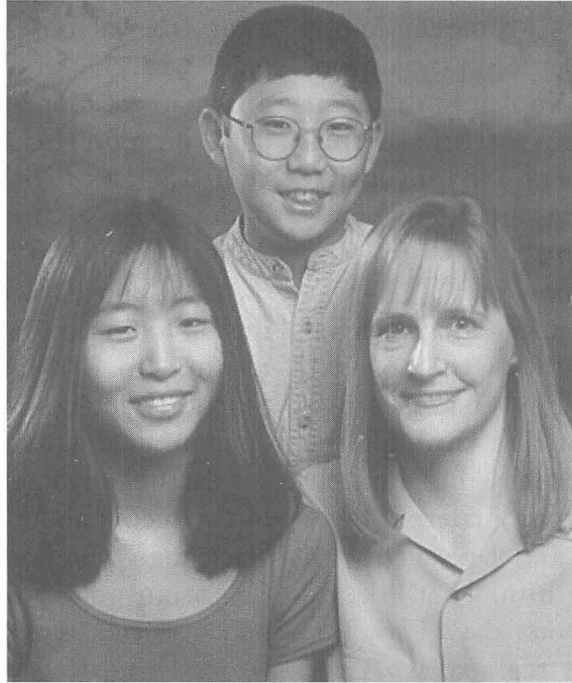
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Raising Young Americans in Korean Skin



YUENLUISTUDIOS

The Holder Family

Louise Holder

Seven years of pain, sorrow and infertility melted away by the perfection of one moment: A Travelers' Aid volunteer placed 6-month-old Ashley in my arms. Ashley didn't smell very good, her hair stuck straight up and her tongue hung out, she was so thirsty. But to me she was the most wonderful baby in the world. She fit into my aching arms as if she had been made for them. The rest of the world disappeared as I reveled in her sweet face. You're home now, dear Ashley. This, undoubtedly, was the happiest day of my life.

Two years later, Travis arrived at a week shy of five months old. It was 1987—a time of college riots in Seoul—and we had to wait weeks for conditions to improve enough that babies could travel to the Seoul airport. Finally peace

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came to the streets of Seoul and Travis flew to Seattle-Tacoma airport on rather short notice. My parents joined in the joyful celebration at the airport. Travis looked completely different than early photos of him, a thin newborn. My reaction to him at first was laughter—at the fullness of his round face—and tears—for the uncertainty was now over.

Within a month of Travis' arrival he became very ill. At the hospital, doctors told me Travis had meningitis and may not live through the night. How could this be? I barely knew him. A strong maternal bond already existed, and I pleaded with God not to take him. That, like no other, was the worst day of my life. But that night I realized what the most amazing thing is about adoption. The bond I share with Ashley and Travis is just as strong as if I had carried them myself for a nine-month pregnancy. I had carried each of them in my heart and soul far longer, or so it seemed. Travis did recover, slowly. His meningitis would be the first of several illnesses to prove just how resilient he is.

As a family, we talked of adoption since day one, so it never became an issue. Race, however, became an issue quickly, and from the one person I'd least suspect—their adoptive father. As our marriage crumbled, his treatment of Ashley worsened. Labels like "gook," "chink" and "slanty-eyes" soon became the norm. Their adop-

tive grandfather declared repeatedly that "Travis would one day take a job away from a more-deserving white man" with the "unfair advantage" of affirmative-action hiring in the workplace. I couldn't believe anyone in the United States still held such an archaic notion. And so after a 1989 divorce, Ashley, Travis and I faced life on our own. We moved across Lake Washington to a 1,000-square-foot condominium in Kirkland, a suburb of Seattle, about 10 miles from my more open-minded parents.

In the early 1990s a story emerged in the media about Rodney King, a black man who had been beaten by Caucasian police officers. After the police officers were found innocent of wrongdoing, riots broke out in Los Angeles among the minorities who lived there, including a strong Korean community—and the whites didn't like it. Upon hearing this, Travis, who was hardly five years old, looked up at me so innocently and said, "You mean someone may not like me because I look different?" All I could say was, "Yes," and shake my head apologetically.

A year later, Travis asked me another thoughtful question after church one Sunday, "Does Jesus still love us even if we weren't born in the U.S.?" I quickly reassured him, pointing out that Jesus wasn't born in the U.S. either.

Both kids say that once they entered Kindergarten and joined a larger group of peers did they notice their family was "different:" other Asian kids had Asian parents; they had a Caucasian mother. Even at this aware-

It happened to be that I was wearing my white T-shirt with the words "Asian With Seoul" on it. And that didn't go over well with a small group of men in their 20s.

ness, however, both said it wasn't a big deal. The love between the three of us would be our strongest fortress against any prejudice.

One summer day Ashley, Travis and I went on a day hike at Snoqualmie Falls. We took to the trail down the 280-foot slope of this popular tourist attraction. About halfway up on our return, we paused to refresh ourselves at a small creek. It happened to be that I was wearing my white T-shirt with the words "Asian With Seoul" on it. And that didn't go over well with a small group of men in their 20s. I stood dumbstruck as two of them shouted epithets of such hatred to me, "a stupid white woman who had brought these 'gooks' into the USA." I became painfully aware once more how some people think. Another group of hikers soon came to our defense and escorted the men, still shouting, all the way up the trail.

Ashley reminded me of two other occasions. The last two summers we happened to be in Hayden, Idaho, at the same time as the white supremacists' annual parade. She remembers walking in the grocery store feeling so uncomfortable with the glares of the men who had gathered that we decided the groceries weren't worth the risk. How silly the parade participants looked shouting about ethnic purity when they live in a country called "the melting-pot."

Explaining our unique family is a recurrent theme: The number-one question asked of us over all these years is, "Are they really brother and sister?" We first would answer, "No, they came separately." But now we

just smile and say, "They are now." Other questions we hear are "Do they talk with an accent?" or "Is she your mother?" I've learned to introduce myself as, "Hi, I'm Ashley's mother, Louise," or, "This is my daughter, Ashley." Doctors, teachers and others stumble over who this white woman is, so I've learned to put everyone at ease by stating the facts up front.

Travis agrees. He is tired of people asking him if he's adopted, but prefers that they bring it up right at the start. "I'd rather people ask," he said. "I'm not ashamed of being adopted." He also relates an embarrassing time when a store cashier assumed he belonged to the Asian woman in front of us in line. We've grown used to similar mix-ups or, simply, being stared at. Most people think we make a pretty cute family. On more occasions than I can count strangers have told me how sweet Ashley is or how they must pinch Travis' cheeks.

We met two schoolmates who are Korean adoptees, and our two families soon became the best of friends. With these friends Travis and Ashley attended the Korean Identity Development Society's Korean Culture Camp every summer for many years. Culture Camp is our adoptive parents' attempt at providing cultural training to our children. Gratefully, many Korean adults support and volunteer for the program. My only wish is that we

Doctors, teachers and others stumble over who this white woman is, so, I've learned to put everyone at ease by stating the facts up front.

could all devote more time to this important purpose.

At home we do our best to celebrate Korean heritage. Korean art adorns our walls, purchased in part by friends who have been there. We've bought beautiful *hanboks*. We listen occasionally to language tapes and delight in *Tae Kwon Do*. Our absolute favorite meal is *bulgogi*, and we make it often. Rice is a staple in our diet, but so, too, is the all-American pizza or McDonald's fare.

Being a multicultural family opens our eyes to the whole world. . . . We embrace the world as our community, seeking more knowledge and experiences about Korea at every opportunity.

Ashley, now 14, and Travis, 12, attend neighborhood schools with about a 15 percent minority enrollment. Ashley finds in junior high that not many of her peers are adopted, and adeptly fields adoption-related questions, "Do you remember Korea?" or "Can you speak Korean?" Some students make fun of Asian languages by mocking them, but Ashley says she's never offended because "They're making fools of themselves."

Ashley attributes her healthy concept of adoption to the fact that "I've always known, and that's just the way it is. I don't ever remember not knowing." She says the only downside of her adoption is the lack of medical history and unknown hereditary details. For instance, in her current science class she was unable to participate in a hereditary probability exercise comparing eye and hair color to parentage. Other years, however, she eagerly researched her family tree tracing her American family ancestry back to the

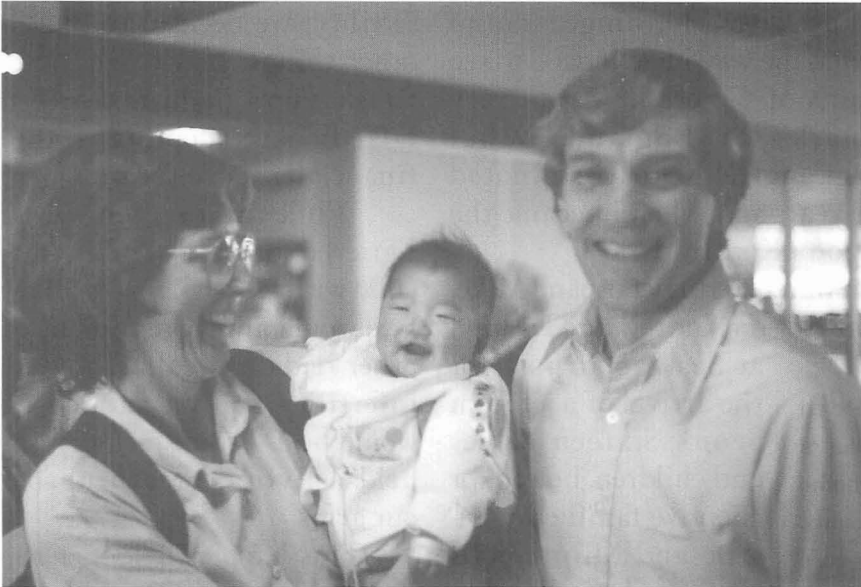
early 1600s.

Being a multicultural family opens our eyes to the whole world. Ashley and Travis don't belong only to the USA, but to their mother country, Korea, as well. We embrace the world as our community, seeking more knowledge and experiences about Korea at every opportunity. We vow someday to travel to Korea and explore the country from which they came. I envy my kids' specific ethnicity. I am but a combination of several European cultures.

And to those who look at us as though we've done something wrong in creating a multicultural family, I say: look at us as individuals first, then at our family's strength. Travis is an exuberant boy with a heart-melting smile and dimples. Although shy, he is more relationship-aware and shows great insight by the most amazing observations. He plays Little League Baseball and plenty of Nintendo games, and is discovering a real sense of humor.

Ashley is a mature, graceful girl, proud of who she has become. She cares about other people and herself. She volunteers at a nearby hospital and maintains excellent grades. She plays the clarinet. Her Bible knowledge recognizes that we're all adopted and co-heirs of God's riches. And I work from home to be there when they need me and to enjoy them these precious few years. For their value is not in what they say or do, but in who they are. They are twice-chosen. Once by the God who created them, then by an American woman who loves them and is proud to be their mom.

International and Private Adoption: One Family's Story



CLAIRE HAGEN DOLE COLLECTION

Claire, Kate and Mike Dole upon Kate's arrival in the U.S. (1987)

Claire Hagen Dole

Last summer, I lingered at the tail end of a tour group through Seoul's *Changdokkeung* Palace and Secret Garden. Since I wasn't allowed to wander through the extensive grounds on my own, I joined the first-available group, a Korean-language tour. Feeling sad about my upcoming departure from Korea, I allowed the mood of the strangely-empty, silent palace to mingle with my own thoughts.

What surprises had Korea revealed to me during my stay? I was awed by its stunning natural beauty: rice fields next to rocky outcrops covered with delicate maples and evergreens; noisy cicadas and stately swallowtail butterflies taking nectar from *Rose of Sharon*. This setting was a fitting backdrop for the priceless antiquities scattered near Kyeongju. At the same time, Seoul and the country as a whole were very modern and sophisticated.

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Perhaps the greatest surprise was that the country and its people had claimed my heart so strongly. I hadn't grown up with a burning desire to visit Asia, the way I had longed to see the ruins of Greece or the literary landmarks of England. What brought me to Korea originated twelve years ago, when I became the parent of a Korean child.

In March 1987, my husband Mike, six-year-old son Andrew and I waited at Sea-Tac airport for the arrival of a jet from Seoul. Sixteen babies and children, bound for adoptive families in Seattle and Minneapolis were on board. After landing and a trip through customs, four Travelers' Aid representatives entered our waiting area, each holding a baby. When our name was called out, we hurried over to meet our four-month-old daughter, Katherine Mee Hwa. Fat and healthy, she gave us a big smile and babbled expressively about her long trip.

Andrew, thrilled to become a big brother, held her carefully and talked to her. A few days later, she would be his show-and-tell subject at school; for now, they were getting acquainted.

Four strangers, joined together over the years to make a family. A fairly traditional family, in spite of our obvious differences in appearance. How has adoption, both private and international, affected our family life? To begin with, Mike and I had ex-

pected to create our own children, but this did not happen. After a couple of frustrating years of dealing with infertility, we decided to move on to other things. I switched jobs, Mike finished up a graduate degree and we talked about adopting in the more financially-stable future.

While this decision was a relief, I grieved for the loss of an imagined child with flaxen hair—a child whose face would always remind us of each other. I didn't realize how quickly infertility and unrealized dreams would be a distant memory, once we held a living, breathing baby in our arms.

This happened sooner than we expected, thanks to my physician. He asked if we wanted to be considered for adoption if a patient should decide to relinquish her infant. Thinking it was not likely to happen, I answered yes and then forgot about it. A few months later, his office called to tell us about a teen-ager whose baby was due soon.

Those weeks were an anxious blur of completing a home study for the county, taking baby-care classes, buying baby clothes and supplies, renegotiating job hours and making the mental leap into parenthood. A big part of the anxiety had to do with the fact that she might change her mind and keep the baby.

When we finally brought Andrew home from the hospital, it seemed as if we had captured the ultimate prize: a healthy, white infant gained almost effortlessly by private adoption. Perhaps this prize was squandered on us, since we also had

Those weeks were an anxious blur of completing a home study for the county, taking baby-care classes, buying baby clothes and supplies, renegotiating job hours and making the mental leap into parenthood.

been interested in international or mixed-race adoption. However, we were immediately captivated by this beautiful, little boy.

Along with endless evenings of Uncle Remus and Richard Scarry, we read him *The Adopted One* by Sara Stein. Its photographs of a blonde boy in an Italian family turned the tables on our family of two blonde parents and a darker-haired child. But the book nicely conveys the feeling that all children, birth or adopted, find a way to fit in within their extended family and to value its unique qualities. By age four, Andrew had a fine grasp of adoption as simply a fact of our family life. Beyond that, we didn't belong to an adoption support group or make anything special out of the situation.

Some adoption-related situations did present themselves while Andrew was growing up, however. What adoptive family has not had to deal with the family tree assignment! Andrew drew himself as a grafted branch on our tree, with a big question mark on one empty side of the page.

One year his school had a Christmas tree fund-raiser with the theme "Adopt a Tree." I pointed out to the principal that this definition of adoption meant killing a living thing for ornament and then discarding it two weeks later. Some good did come of my objection, as it prompted some discussion of adoption, and the motto was toned down.

There was a short time during grade school when Andrew used his adoption as a way of getting attention and being "special." We and his

teacher treated it as a matter-of-fact reality, like his friend Miria being Jewish. Soon there were other things to talk about.

When we decided to expand our family, we made a conscious choice to look for a child overseas. Avid travelers and readers, my husband and I both have a strong interest in other cultures. This interest led me to a job at the regional office of CARE, the international relief agency. Here I was confronted daily with the needs of children in developing countries. We also had spent a summer living in Mexico with then-two-year-old Andrew, who was cared for by a local family while we attended classes.

Our interest in Latin America pointed us toward Colombia, a country with many available children. There was a drawback to this option, though; because of our ages, we didn't qualify for an infant. We didn't feel comfortable dealing with issues that an older child from such an impoverished country might present, especially in regard to Andrew. On the other hand, Korean adoption presented several attractive qualities: it would allow us to adopt an infant; the pre-placement care by foster parents was reputed to be excellent; and the adoption would connect us to a new and fascinating part of the world.

We adopted Kate during a period when many Korean infants were coming to this country. We joined a group of families who met frequently for children's play sessions and social

When we decided to expand our family, we made a conscious choice to look for a child overseas.

events, such as a *Chuseok* party to celebrate the harvest. This group was especially active and close-knit while the children were small, but new school friends and activities took priority as they grew older.

Kate enjoys attending Korean Culture Camp, a summer day camp staged by the local group, KIDS (Korean Identity Development Society). The camp sessions have recently added field trips and activities for preteens and teens, in an effort to keep children interested over a period of years. Kate has made several friends at the camp, who she looks forward to seeing each year.

In addition, she has school friends who are Korean adoptees. They are important to her because they, too, are reminded of their situation every time they walk down a street with two Caucasian adults. She can feel truly comfortable with them as an ordinary person, not as a token minority in a white world.

My proud and happy self-consciousness when first taking the infant Kate in public, changed over the months. I began to forget that there was anything unusual about our being together, unless someone (especially another parent with a Korean baby) approached us for conversation. Kate was so cute that I welcomed these positive encounters as a chance to brag about her and show her off.

An embarrassing experience caused me to be a little more cautious about initiating such approaches, however. Seeing a woman with an Asian baby at a playground, I asked her what adoption agency she had used. In an offended tone, she told me that she and her Asian husband were the parents. Obviously, it was none of my business! After this, my own manner was a little more reserved toward curious strangers.

If Kate ever encountered racial prejudice, she was not forthcoming about it. She did go through a stage during grade school when she complained loudly about being ugly because of her Asian eyes and dark skin. We were not able to find out if this was related to racial slurs.

In general, her teachers were very sensitive to this issue. They intervened if they observed name-calling or any other form of racism, sending the offending child to the school counselor. They did not report a problem in response to our questions about possible incidents. To the contrary, they always mentioned that Kate was well-liked by all of the students. I think that Kate was struggling to fit into our family, at first by wishing she looked Caucasian; now in middle school, she's more likely to be embarrassed that we don't look like her.

My only experience of prejudice happened when she was a toddler and we were walking on a downtown street. A man I had seen several times on the bus, who I knew to be mentally unbalanced, shouted, "Dirty little Jap!" as we walked by. Even

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International and Private Adoption

though I knew his condition, I felt a rage that left me breathless. It made me realize how unfairly privileged I have been all my life, and how little attention I have paid to this privilege. I was also very glad that she was too young to understand the incident.

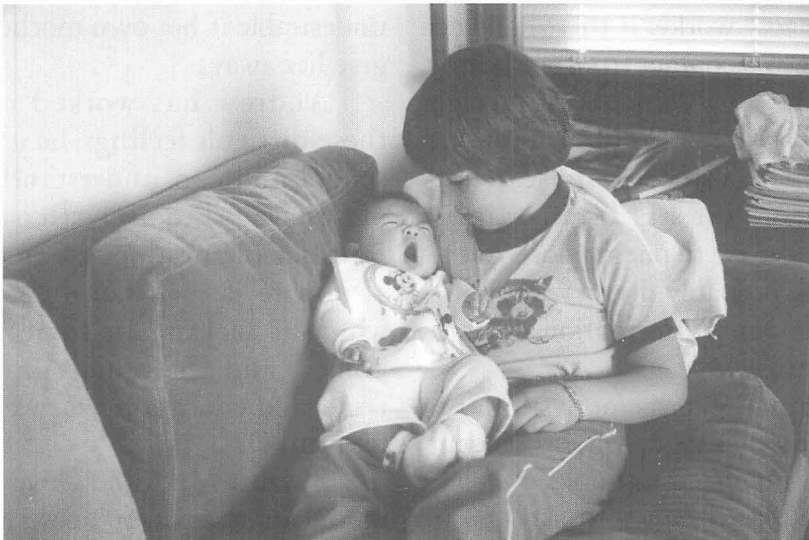
We felt strongly that both of our children, but especially Kate, should attend Seattle Public Schools rather than private schools. Both are getting daily exposure to a microcosm of society that is ethnically and socioeconomically diverse—in other words, the real world. For the same reasons, we're adamant about living in a city with a large Asian population and a tolerant attitude toward interracial families.

Both children have friends across the color spectrum, and they don't mention race in conversation. A real rainbow of kids appeared at our door for Kate's twelfth birthday party.

This gang of friends from her new school must have been surprised when I answered the door; I suspect that Kate had not made an issue of being a Korean adoptee in a white family. Likewise, I was pleasantly surprised and proud that she enjoys such comfortable friendships with children of diverse backgrounds.

Just as birth siblings can be very different, our children differ in temperament and personality. Our son, in particular, challenges us to appreciate talents and traits that aren't narrowly academic. When younger, he drew Mike into evening sessions of roughhousing. Andrew constructed elaborate bus dashboards out of cardboard, made a bus out of couch cushions and gave orders to his passenger (the indulgent father) as he "drove" the bus.

With his strong personality and love of physical play, he might have



CLAIRE HAGEN DOLE COLLECTION

Andrew and his new sister (1987)

been better matched to a farm family full of boys. Indeed, during his preteen years, he wrestled with the question of how he fit into our family and what he might have in common with birth relatives. In his imagination, he might have been better off staying with people who understood him perfectly and who made no unreasonable demands on him.

We encouraged Andrew to write a letter to his birth family and to include photos of himself at different ages, to be placed in his county adoption file. After describing his likes and dislikes in the letter, he wistfully commented, "If you had kept me, I wonder what it would have been like, fun, sad, I do not know." He asked them to write, peppering them with questions about their names, age and marital status. Writing the letter seemed to satisfy him. We had given him permission to act on his feelings, and he

Andrew has been a source of comfort to Kate as she begins to deal with the issue of rejection that is part of the adoption process.

showed no interest in asking the county caseworker if there had been contact from the family.

Since turning eighteen, Andrew has taken a step toward searching for his birth family, with our support. At this point, he probably doesn't want a reunion; he wants information about his own history.

Our daughter is more similar to us in temperament. A good student, she was interested in books even as a baby. We have spent many happy hours cuddled on the sofa, reading and looking at pictures. *Katie-Bo*, an adoption-related book by Iris L.

Fisher, became her special story. Andrew took to calling her Katie-Bo; now she is simply Bo—but only to him.

Less demanding of our attention, Kate still gains one-on-one time with each of us by quietly asking to playing board games with me or to practice clarinet with Mike. I'm happy to have a daughter who likes to do activities such as cooking, drawing and gardening with me.

Just heading into adolescence, Kate is developing a new, more equal relationship with her brother. Realizing that he will not be living at home much longer, they have been spending more time together.

Andrew has been a source of comfort to Kate as she begins to deal with the issue of rejection that is part of the adoption process. Like him, Kate has fantasized about how perfect life might have been with her "real" mother. At the same time, she thinks that she must have been very undesirable if her own mother would give her away.

Andrew has worked through these difficult feelings; he is in high school and can understand how it must have felt to his birth parents to confront an unwanted pregnancy. He also appreciates our family's stability, which is lacking in some friends' homes, and the opportunities for travel and education that we can offer him.

Because Mike and I love to travel in out-of-the-way places, we have fostered an interest in other cultures among our children. Andrew attended an alternative elementary

school within the public school system. The school's focus was Latin American culture, and Spanish language was part of the daily curriculum.

When Kate and Andrew were ages five and eleven, our family spent two weeks in a Mexican fishing village where no one spoke English and there was one community telephone. With her dark hair and skin, Kate was an object of curiosity; more than once I heard a murmured reference to her being Japanese.

It was an eye-opening experience for both children to see daily life in a developing country and to see the generosity with which villagers responded to our halting Spanish.

Occasionally our family hosts short-term international visitors through various student programs. We have hosted several teen-agers and young adults from Europe, Latin America and Asia (including Korea).

Our first visitor, a young man from Costa Rica, was very musical. He enchanted Kate and Andrew by playing piano and guitar for them. One of my favorite photos shows him, with guitar, flanked by two adoring children. Their experience of meeting Mauricio was like having a window opened on the world. They suddenly became very interested in our atlas and globe and in the alluring possibilities of travel to the countries represented.

One of our most meaningful family trips included a four-day stop in Washington, D.C. I knew that Andrew, a history buff who is interested in the Civil War, would be excited by

the sightseeing possibilities. I was unexpectedly moved by the sight of eight-year-old Kate standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, hand to her chest, doing an impromptu recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. Since that trip, Andrew has participated in a Close-Up tour of the Capitol with high-school students who are interested in history and government, and Kate will join a tour for middle-school students during this year's spring break.

Without doubt, the most significant travel experience for both Kate and me was our two-week trip to Korea.

We joined a tour for adoptive families, organized by Tim and Kim Holm, of KIDS. Tim, a Korean adoptee, and Kim, who grew up in Korea and visits her family each year, are tireless advocates who help children like Kate learn about their origins.

During the trip, families are taken to agencies such as Holt and Eastern Social Welfare Society, shown their adoption files and reunited with their foster mothers, if possible. To my surprise, a few teenagers on the trip actually met birth relatives—an experience that Tim cautions can be overwhelming to some young adoptees.

At Eastern Social Welfare Society, Kate and I saw the nursery where she had spent the first two weeks of her life. She met the foster mother who had cared for her until she came to the United States at the age of four months.

Without doubt, the most significant travel experience for both Kate and me was our two-week trip to Korea.

This happy reunion sent her a powerful message: she had been loved, so much so that the foster mother cried when Kate was taken to the airport. Kate also heard about the woman's children who had helped to care for her, about being carried to market, about the apartment in which they had lived. She was invited to visit the entire family on a future trip to Korea.

It was obvious that Kate was nervous about the meeting. However, photos of her embracing her foster mother for the first time show an expression of pure joy. It's a joy that she now carries inside her heart. A reunion with her birth family, if it is ever possible, is still years away. What I have noticed is that she no longer expresses sorrow and anger at the birth mother who relinquished her. She seems to have made peace with her past, at least for now. The entire country of Korea and its people have been demystified; the land is full of living, working human beings who struggle with life choices as we do.

Before the trip, I wondered how Korean people would respond to the sight of Korean youngsters with middle-aged, white Americans. We saw so few American or European tourists that we did stand out in crowds, and we attracted a lot of curious stares.

Our children were often uncomfortable walking through open-air markets because of this attention. For

the most part, I don't think it was negative, and there were other sources of discomfort (such as the odd, unfamiliar sights of squid and pigs' heads). Kate made it clear that this part of the trip had been a strain when we landed at Sea-Tac at trip's end. Her first words were, "Thank goodness! Now I don't have to feel weird anymore!"

While our families have had years of daily experience seeing an English-speaking Korean child in a Caucasian family, it must have been an odd sight to people in Korea. Just how incongruous it seemed was brought home to me at the folk village near Seoul, the one place where we saw other white tourists. Two middle-aged Europeans, touring with their teen-age Korean daughter, spoke to her in a Scandinavian tongue. How extremely odd it sounded to me! Yet, how perfectly normal to hear my own daughter speaking English.

Kate and another adoptee went to a small grocery store next to our hotel in Seoul, looking for snack food. Thinking they lived in Korea, the shop owner began speaking to them in Korean. Kate had learned how to say, "I don't speak Korean," along with other basic phrases.

She was very proud of her ability to communicate, even in this limited fashion. Many of the words and social customs that she had learned at Korean Culture Camp were useful and gave her a confidence that she might not have otherwise had.

International adoption is sometimes viewed as a way to "save" children whose futures are bleak or

uncertain. I know that we have given Kate a good childhood, full of love and opportunity. But I never internalized what she had lost until I visited Korea.

One episode stays in my mind: I and three other parents hiked up to the Seven Buddhas Hermitage in the Namsan region near Kyeongju. It began to rain very hard, so we hurried down the trail. We were offered a ride out to the main road, where the owner of a restaurant called for a taxi.

While my friends looked at kiosk souvenirs, I sat next to an extended family who were having their Sunday meal. The grandparents were served first, and they began to eat their soup while two young children waited patiently. Conversation among the three generations wandered in a comfortable fashion, giving a drowsy buzz to the place.

The family graciously acknowledged my presence (they had invited me to sit down and tried to help me dry off), but since I spoke no Korean I was not expected to interact. I was able to sit quietly and enjoy this rare glimpse into family life. What came to me, in a poignant flash, was a vision of Kate in such a family, having Sunday dinner with her grandparents. What a tremendous feeling of loss that vision brought!

Yet, it's most likely that my vision was a false one—for her and for the other children on our trip. Each adoptee has his own birth story, whether it involves the birth mother's death or her inability, as an unmarried factory worker, to care for her infant. Had the circumstances been more

favorable, perhaps Kate would be taking dinner in Pusan, surrounded by loving family members.

As it is, Kate lives in an established, middle-class neighborhood in Seattle, near a lake and a park. She plays with eight other children on her block, gathering in informal groups that have to be called in after dark on summer nights. In spite of tales of American gang violence and unsafe neighborhoods, there exists a small-town atmosphere where neighbors watch out for each other's children. She sees her grandmother, aunt and cousins regularly, and she looks forward to holiday celebrations with family and friends. She has career aspirations and fully expects to attend college for as many years as it takes to reach her goals. Most fundamentally, she is loved and cherished, and she brings an extra dimension to our family through her Korean heritage.

**Each adoptee has his own birth story
Had the circumstances been more favorable, perhaps Kate would be taking dinner in Pusan**

Postscript

Our son, Andrew, decided to spend a year in Germany as an exchange student, so we are hosting a girl from Kwangju, Korea, this year. Her name is Jae-hyun, and she is attending the same high school that Andrew recently graduated from. She is a delight, and Kate enjoys having an older sister.

Sometimes Love Isn't Enough: The Voices of Some Adult Korean Adoptees in Minnesota

Willie J. Johnson and Meelyn Kim-Johnson

Abstract

This paper presents some of the findings and discussion of a longer qualitative study, which explores the self-images of nine adult Korean adoptees in light of their experiences while growing up in non-Korean families. We profile the participants' experiences, using excerpts from our interviews to illustrate key issues, and discuss our findings. We make some recommendations that we think will help adoptive parents better address the issues experienced by the participants in this study. We find that transracial adoptees experience difficulties in U.S. society because race matters a great deal. Parents who have adopted transracially must understand that love alone is not enough to help their adopted children resolve the issues they uniquely face while growing up. The adopted child also must be taught coping skills that will allow him or her to develop a positive self-image.

Introduction

"I used to think I was Irish. It was my cousin's fault. She gave me a giant green button that read, "Kiss me, I'm Irish." I was hooked. St. Patrick's Day became my favorite holiday. . . . My mom tried to explain that I wasn't Irish, but I figured she had her information mixed up.¹

This excerpt was written by an adopted Korean. It typifies the struggle for identity and self-concept formation. There are an estimated 130,000 Korean-born adoptees in the United States.² Not very much has been done to illuminate the plight of Korean adoptees, especially in states such as Minnesota where more than 10,000 reside.

During the spring of 1998, we researched the experiences of nine adult Korean adoptees in Minnesota to evaluate how well they had established

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their social identities by dealing with the dissonance of trying to identify with their European-American families, coping with overt and covert prejudice, and how all of this has shaped their communication and relationship patterns as adults. Our findings are significant in that they give voice to the experiences, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and opinions of those who participated so that we are better able to understand the experience of being transracially adopted.

Method

We took a qualitative research approach because it is inherently intensive, holistic, descriptive and analytical of particular instances, phenomena or social units. Helpful information on qualitative research design and preparation was provided in the works of Paul Leedy, Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman, David Fetterman and Mary Anne Pitman, Nigel Fielding and Jane Fielding, Sharan Merriam and Bryan Pfaffenberger.³

We developed a very detailed and structured interview guide to gather information from the participants on topics such as early childhood memories, the emphasis placed on being Korean while growing up, their level of comfort with being Korean, self-concept and self-esteem, present relationship and comfort level with other Asians, attitudes and feelings about Korea, transracial adoption, their search for their birth families and life goals. Responses were audiotape recorded, and after transcription they were clustered, grouped and coded according to theme.

Analysis of the themes yielded the major factors, and although not all factors emerged as part of a pattern or theme, every factor was given voice within the text of the findings. Participants were solicited from college campuses, the Minnesota Adopted Korean (MAK) organization and personal referrals. Seven women and two men participated, ages 17 to 28. Most were infants when adopted and had grown up in an urban setting. Some were adopted at an older age and had already learned to speak Korean.

Because this study was limited to the nine respondents, no attempt was made to project the representativeness of these findings to the experiences of all Korean adult adoptees. More adoptees had expressed interest in participating, but eventually declined.

This is a difficult subject, even right now, for Korean adoptees, and we believe that this may account for those who chose or chose not to respond. Although limited by the number of respondents, this study does contain some important snapshots that tell part of the adopted Koreans' story. Excerpts from their interviews are used throughout the discussion of our findings to illustrate their experiences. The names of participants have been changed to protect their privacy.

Discussion of Results

Analysis of the interviews illustrates how the adoptees were at different stages of coming to terms with being racially different, from rejection to acceptance:

I am uncomfortable around Asians (not Asian Americans) because I don't know how to interact, and I don't know if I am going to insult them—even something like making eye contact may be insulting. (Sara)

I feel more comfortable around Asian people, because they know what it's like to be different. (Shannon)

I'm more uncomfortable being around other Asians. Sometimes they don't speak English as well. It depends on the situation. (Louise)

I feel that the Asian people understand more of what I'm going through. (Patti)

I am very uncomfortable around other Asians. Asian people that I have experienced tend to be very introverted thinkers, and you are always wondering what they are thinking. (Rob)

Sometimes I'll get together with some of my adopted Korean friends and I really feel great around them. Around other groups of Asian cultures I feel a bit uncomfortable because we have different ethnic backgrounds and they are a bit stand-offish. (Ruth)

It's not an issue anymore. Up until about two years ago when any Asian people would try to talk to me I would kind of push them away. I have found out that when I take a class and there are Asian people there I end up talking with them more. In the past year I have started meeting more Asian people. I think it's because I have become more open and receptive. (Star)

Issues such as identity dissonance, experience of covert racism, internalized oppression and the need to develop a positive self-image emerged, and affected participant's efforts to resolve his or her identity.⁴

Identity Dissonance

According to the respondents, most of their adoptive families did not become "minority families," as suggested by Lois Melina.⁵ This would have meant not just adopting "this needy child" and molding him or her into "an average white child," but making an active and earnest effort to inculcate cultural aspects of the adoptee's Korean heritage into the fabric of the family.⁶

Most kids know that when you're growing up the best thing is to blend in—you don't want to be different, and I stuck out like a sore thumb! (Sara)

I think I was in such a “la-la land” when I was younger. Once you hit a certain point in your life you get hit real hard if who you are wasn’t emphasized when you were younger. (Shannon)

My parents were very good parents other than the fact that they didn’t teach me, at all, about being Asian—not that they could. They are very good people and they try very hard, but I was very confused about who I was and I was in denial a lot when I was younger. I thought of myself as the same as my parents, yet when I looked in the mirror I was different. In grade school I was teased a lot, and even though I was in denial I was often forced to look at myself. While growing up I didn’t want to learn anything more because I was embarrassed that I was Asian. (Sara)

When I was quite young, I didn’t want to be around Asians at all. I was in denial. It was a self-hatred sort of thing. I remember going to Chinatown in another city when I was younger and it made me feel very uncomfortable. . . . I do think that they do need to do more serious screening of who is allowed to adopt. I know a lot of Koreans who got the short end of the deal and are now estranged from their families. Families should know what they are getting into. People think that they are going to get this cute, little baby and that everything is going to be okay. It’s more complex than that. One of the biggest problems they’ll face is the child’s identity crisis. People need to understand what their motivation is in adopting a child of a different race. (Ruth)

In order to understand what they are getting into, parents must learn to be adaptable. It would help them to better understand their child. (Phil)

All of the participants were raised as if they were white and were not provided with the necessary skills to deal with the inevitable dissonance between European American enculturation and their non-European American physical selves.

My mother wanted me to be white, not because she was trying to be vicious, but that she just wanted me to fit in. She didn’t want to point out that I was different even though it was very evident. (Sara)

I lost a girlfriend because her parents didn’t approve of [her] dating a Korean. I tried to forget about being Korean as much as possible because I just wanted to be me. (Rob)

When you are young you need to see reflections of yourself in order to affirm your identity. You also need role models. I didn’t have any Asian role models when I was younger. My role models were all white. The people I looked up to were all white. The lack of being affirmed as a person and being acceptable, even though you’re different, is a problem. It can take us a longer time to be able to appreciate ourselves. (Ruth)

I think many of the adopted Korean Americans are in denial because they are raised in a white community. Once at the mall I was introduced to an adopted Korean American girl who was going to law school, and she just totally ignored me. That’s not the first time I experienced that. I think

Sometimes Love isn't Enough

many of them are uncomfortable being with other Koreans because they were raised white and they want to be white. They are trying to avoid be [sic] noticed as Korean. (Phil)

My parents don't understand what it's like having to live a double life. They don't understand the identity crisis that adopted kids go through. They didn't teach me anything about it. When I was in junior high this one white girl said to me, "Do you think I don't like you because of your chink eyes?" And I didn't know how to react to that. (Shannon)

Most of the respondents believed that their parents were ill-equipped to teach them how to handle the prejudice they encountered. Some said that their adoptive parents would have been hurt to know that their child had been subjected to racial slurs and racist behavior; therefore, they would not tell their parents about such incidents.

I was fine with it until junior high, when the kids would act funny toward me. The white boys wouldn't want to go on dates with me. When out at a movie or at a mall all the white girls I went with would get together and kind of forget I was there. (Shannon)

I didn't like it. I didn't like who I was. I didn't like the fact that people would call me names. Nobody likes that. (Sara)

It was kind of hard because kids were teasing and I didn't know how to handle it. (Patti)

Experience of Covert Racism

There were times when the parents themselves reminded the adoptees directly and indirectly that they had been rescued from a depraved life.⁷

There is a degree of guilt my mother places on me. She used to say things like, "You wouldn't have had such a good life if you were in Korea," or "You should be thankful that you are in America now." They think that I should be thankful that I didn't grow up in Korea, not that they knew anything about Korea. I am grateful that they did try to give me a loving household and a very comfortable life, but I can't say that I am grateful that they adopted me. (Sara)

I'm grateful, but it's not like I am so grateful that they adopted me. I'm grateful for the love and support they've given me throughout the years. (Star)

This experience, we found, did not endear the adoptees to their adoptive parents or birth parents, but instead created antipathy toward the adoptees' country and culture of origin. For example, several respondents said they grew up believing that all Korean people abandon their children.

Respondents' parents were reported to be tolerant of the differences between themselves and their adopted Korean children, but some acted out

prejudices against other minority groups.

Recently I found out that my parents are kind of racist. That was hard because I don't think that [white people] can raise Asian children and be racist. It was tough to come to terms with that. (Carrie)

My dad has often admitted to being racist. He doesn't approve of me dating African American, Hispanic or Asian men. (Patti)

By being exposed to this type of behavior the child may come to believe that other non-whites, non-U.S. citizens, or people of other religions are worth less.⁸

Most respondents did not know why their parents had adopted a Korean child and not an African American or Latino. Two respondents believed that their parents adopted a Korean because they thought that Korean babies were cute. We contend that for some respondents' parents in this study, a preference may have resulted from conscious or unconscious prejudice against other cultural groups. For instance, many European Americans consider Asians to be "model minorities."

It is interesting that they did not adopt children of other races. Thus far I have made my adoptive family out to be saints, but I don't truthfully think they would have adopted an African American child. I think it has to do with the way they were raised with prejudice. This question makes me think. This is a question that I've never asked them, but I think I will. (Phil)

Internalized Oppression

Internalized oppression was a factor for many respondents. Some stated that they have thought or spoken of their own ethnic background in derogatory terms. Minority children in the United States have historically had difficulties developing positive images of their own race. This is understandable because everywhere the child looks, she or he sees evidence of the advantages and privileges held by European Americans and not by people of color. Parenting children of a different race obligates the parents to let the children know to what race or ethnic group they belong and to help them build positive attitudes about being part of that group.

I get along with my mom okay, but I can only go so far with her, because if you bring up something that she doesn't like or doesn't agree with she gets real defensive—especially things that have to do with non-European American issues. My father is the same way. (Shannon)

It was never mentioned. I was never presented with any literature from my home country or anything. I was just their daughter. That was just it. (Sara)

They wanted to transform me into a white person. The child needs to be comfortable with him or herself right from the beginning and parents

Sometimes Love isn't Enough

must be supportive of the differences. That will help greatly later on as they are making the transition into their adult identity. (Phil)

It is important for adoptive parents to show a strong interest in Korean culture because it shows a lot of support of the child. It shows that the parents acknowledge that the child is different and that it's not bad to be different. There are some adoptive parents who want their adopted Korean child to be white. That's not right. It causes more confusion. The child needs to be comfortable with him/herself right from the beginning and the parents must be supportive of the differences. That will help greatly later on as they are making the transition into their adult identity. (Ruth)

It was in about seventh or eighth grade when I began to not like being Korean. I wanted to look like everybody else [white]. I thought that Koreans were unattractive. I thought that white people were a lot prettier. I think that was because all that I saw around me were white people. This was also true of the media. (Star)

Additionally, in most instances, respondents reported their parents were not comfortable discussing the adoptee's birth family. According to Melina, adoptive parents need to remember that the adoptee comes with a genetic code that not only helps to determine their eye color and hair color and texture, but also influences the formation of intellect, personality and much more.⁹

Lastly, fear of abandonment on conscious and unconscious levels was an issue for a number of the respondents. This information is valuable for adoptive parents, other adoptive family members, significant others, teachers, and others involved on an interpersonal basis with a Korean adoptee, though it should not be used in order to stereotype the Korean adoptee. One respondent gave a clear picture of how the fear of abandonment can affect relationships:

When I was younger I tested my parents so much. I told them that they didn't care about me or love me. They always did things to show their love, but if they made me mad I would do that to get back at them. I always tested them. When I started seeing my first boyfriend I stopped testing my parents and I tested him instead. Every day I was prepared to never see him again. I was always scared that it was going to be over. I was afraid of abandonment. I didn't realize what it was until later. I would push him so far over the edge just to see if he would stay. As soon as I get close to people I get scared of them leaving me. Just now I am starting to feel more comfortable that someone won't abandon me. I also get very uncomfortable when there is a big change. (Star)

Two other participants mentioned developing strong attachments to the adoptive parents, with one of the participants going so far as to throw tantrums for hours after her adoptive mother had left the house.

Developing a Positive Self-Image

As William Chartrand, Melina and others have written, children develop a positive sense of ethnic identity by being exposed to their cultural roots and their parents showing that their children's heritage is valued in everyday activities.¹⁰

. . . They have adopted these children, and they just can't ignore the fact that they were born in a different country and of a different race. I went through a pretty hard identity crisis—lots of self-hate. If I had known more about my culture and how to be proud of my race, then I don't think it would have been quite so bad. (Sara)

It is infinitely important. Your identity is one of the most important things you have. You can't go forward if you don't know where you came from. (Rob)

I think it's important because when they don't teach us it makes it seem like they wanted to ignore the fact that we were Korean. It makes it seem like they thought that it was too much effort for them to look into the background and teach it. There are so many things that I wish that I just knew, even just little parts of the culture. (Carrie)

I think it's very important, although I think many adoptive parents are so thrilled to have this child that they forget that he or she is different, and sometimes they do recognize that he or she is different and don't know where to start [teaching the child about him or herself] because they are not Korean. (Shannon)

The kids have a right to know about their past. (Patti)

Some adoptees say that they have left their Koreaness behind and want to be considered just American (meaning white).

I don't identify with Koreans. I have a skin color. I can't say that I am Korean by anything more than physical appearance. I feel more German and Catholic. I don't have any ancestral ties to Korea. (Rob)

It's weird because I don't look at my family as "my adopted family" because they are the only family that I have known. (Star)

Eventually they must deal with all of the elements of their identity in order to be whole, however. Identity is a crucial part of human existence, and many adoptees will always have issues surrounding their adoption and their identity.

I know I have a birth family somewhere out there. (Louise)

My adoptive parents' ancestors are European, and I'm not. I feel it important to know their history, but their history is not my history. (Ruth)

Forgetting the past and only living for the future is not an axiom that works here. Most of the respondents believed that they must try to search

Sometimes Love isn't Enough

into their past in order to go forward. They believed that the search must take place whether it ultimately reveals answers or a dead end. What is at issue is being able to find a form of closure that will allow the adoptee to move forward.

I want to go back and search for my birth family because it's a part of me that's missing. My life is not a full circle yet. It's very important. It will bring some sort of closure to the questions that I have about who I am, where I came from, why I came from there. When I do go back someday I want to interact with the people on a speaking level. (Shannon)

I haven't always been so confident in myself. That changed when I became comfortable with being Korean, with being Asian American. Before I wanted to be white so I pretended that I was white, but I wasn't happy. Now I'm happy with who I am. I want to learn to speak Korean again. It would teach me more about who I was, because I did speak it when I came over. (Sara)

I think knowing who your biological parents are is important to a kid. Knowing why you were given away is important. I want to learn to speak Korean just to know something more about my background. (Carrie)

I would really like to meet my biological family and talk to them and know about them—what they're good at and what they do. I would like to go back to Korea, and I think that it would be pretty insulting to not know the language. (Star)

I would like to learn to speak Korean because if I ever decide to go back to Korea to visit or to live I think it would be good to know my language. (Patti)

I feel pretty good about myself. In the past I was diagnosed with low-grade depression. I don't think that's uncommon with Korean adoptees. I know many adopted Koreans who suffer from depression. (Ruth)

It is crucial that adopted Korean children learn that it is not necessary for them to choose between their dual heritages. Korean children raised by European American parents will develop a different sense of racial identity than those raised in Korean families. In one sense they develop their own unique culture.

Conclusions

In U.S. society, race matters a great deal and often determines the course of an individual's life. Parents of transracial adoptees must understand that love is necessary, but sometimes is not enough to help their adopted children resolve the issues they will uniquely face while growing up. The adopted child must also be taught coping skills that will allow him or her to navigate this terribly complex and extremely color-conscious society.

Even in the most functional of European American families, we expect that Korean adoptees will develop problems in the area of identity. There is hope, but more research is needed. The Korean adoptees in this study have given their voices in order to help us develop a clearer picture of their collective and individual experiences. Other Korean adoptees in the United States may find similarities between their own experiences and those voiced here. More voices must be added to the chorus.

Scholars, educators, social workers, adoption agencies and other professionals must work together to develop meaningful programs that help transracial adoptive parents work toward the best interest of the child. Parents can take ample opportunities to make positive comments about the child's physical features. Children usually do not like to stand out in their families, so parents must reinforce that it is okay that they are different and that it does not mean that they are any less important or beautiful. This means more than shipping the child off to a Korean Culture Camp, or occasional forays to a Korean restaurant. It means infusing part of that heritage into the fabric of everyday life for the entire family.

Adopted Koreans who've reached adulthood must reconcile themselves with the effects of having grown up in a European American family. Their quest for full self-identity must continue and each individual must ask, "Who is it that I want to be or not to be?"

. . . We seek to break a certain silence—silence from our land of origin, silence from the lands we now inhabit—tongues tied by racism, some external, some painfully internal; tongues tied by social mores, codes and contradiction; tongues tied by colonialists myths of rescue missions and smooth assimilation . . . sowing new seeds for future generations not to be silent. . . .¹¹

Notes:

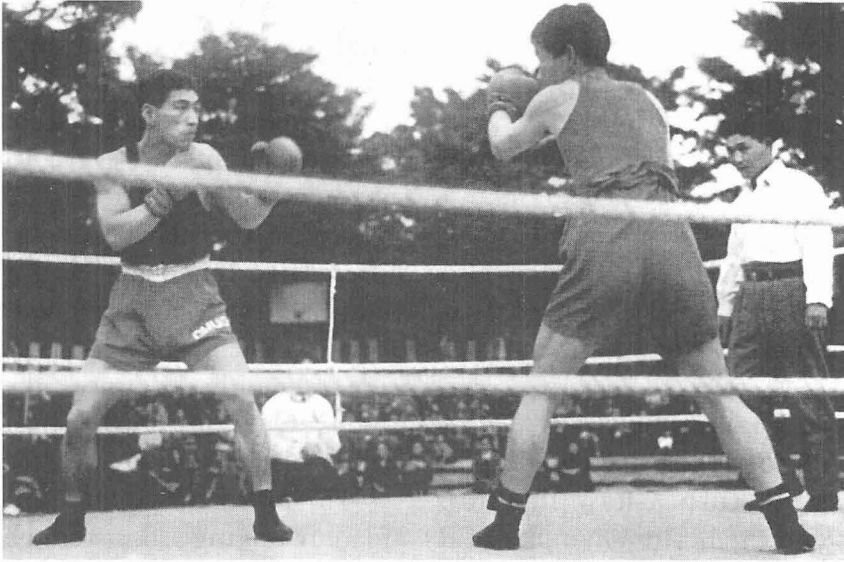
1. Kari Ruth. "How I Got Here," *Korean Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (Spring 1988): 12.
2. Terry Hong. "Beyond Biology," *A Magazine* (June/July 1997): 34-40.
3. Paul Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1993); Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1984); David Fetterman and Mary Anne Pittman, *Educational Evaluation: Ethnography in Theory, Practice, and Policies* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986); Nigel Fielding and Jane Fielding, *Linking Data*, Vol. 4, Sage University Qualitative Research Methods Series (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986); Sharan B Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach* (San Francisco: JosseyBass, 1988); Bryan Pfaffenberger, *Microcomputer Applications in Qualitative Research*, Vol. 14, Sage University Qualitative Research Methods Series (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988).
4. We use the term "internalized oppression" because it means something more pervasive than "negative self-image," which contributes to internalized oppression, but is not the same thing. Internalized oppression encapsulates the development of negative self-image,

Sometimes Love isn't Enough

but goes further into self-denial, and even further into not thinking in favorable terms about one's self or one's ethnic, racial, cultural, etc., group. We live in a country in which racism is pervasive; there are overt and covert dynamics and institutions at work in our society that cause those of us who are not of European descent to have to constantly battle the images that are foisted upon us. After so long, the surrounding society does not have to continually reinforce this tangible and intangible oppression upon us, because we, as people of color, have internalized it. Most persons of color, and those who do not fit the "norm" in U.S. society who have taken an introspective of themselves, understand this. We are simply saying that this is one of the things faced by persons struggling for identity, especially when their identity, culture, etc., is not willingly and deliberately represented as positive, or more simply when one's culture is supplanted by another, no matter what the motive.

5. Lois Ruskai Melina. *Raising Adopted Children* (New York: Harper, 1986): 171-172.
6. *Ibid*, 176-177.
7. *Ibid*, 91-92.
8. *Ibid*, 70.
9. *Ibid*, 88.
10. William Chartrand. "Application of Selected Components of a Correspondence Theory of Cross-Cultural Adjustment to the Adjustment of White Families Who Have Adopted Older Children from Korea" (PhD. diss, University of Minnesota, 1978).
11. Tonya Bishoff and Jo Rankin (eds.). *Seeds From a Silent Tree: an Anthology by Korean Adoptees* (Glendale: Pandal Press, 1997).

Community Reports



ARTHUR E. GRIX, JAPAN'S SPORT IN BILD UND HORT (BERLIN: WILHELM-LIMPERT, 1937)

School boxing contests draw many spectators. Here fights a member of Chuo University with a student of Hosei School (trans. by Joseph R. Svinth).

“Fighting Spirit”: Korean Boxers in the United States, 1926-1945

Joseph R. Svinth

From 1910 to 1945, Japan ruled Korea, and from 1919 until 1945, the Imperial Japanese government did its best to fit the Korean people into a Japanese mold. Because many Japanese viewed Koreans as inferior, part of the government's molding process involved introducing “character-building” sports into Korean public schools. Koreans excelled at the new games, and by the 1930s some of Japan's finest athletes were ethnically Korean. For example, marathoner Kitei Sun (Ki Jung Sohn) set a world record in 1935 and won Olympic gold in 1936.¹ In October 1938, a fifth-degree black belt named Senkichi Ri

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won a national-level judo championship in Tokyo. In October 1939, a freestyle wrestler named Kin took second in the welterweight division of an international amateur wrestling competition held in Tokyo.² And in October 1940, three Koreans—Juitsu Nan, Seiichi Kin, and Turitsu Boku—set world weightlifting records.

From the mid-1920s, Koreans also took up American-style gloved boxing modified to suit Japanese tastes, and again they excelled. Korean amateur boxers earned berths on Imperial Japanese squads, participating in the Far Eastern Championship Games and the Berlin Olympics, and during the early 1930s the Korean Teiken Jo was arguably Japan's best professional boxer.³

Because Korea was a colony of Japan from 1910 until 1945, Korean boxing of this period is best understood as part of the history of Japanese boxing.⁴ Since amateur and professional boxers were recruited and trained differently, they need to be examined separately.

Amateur Boxing

Although Japanese began boxing in the United States during the early 1880s, amateur boxing did not make much headway in Japan until May 1923, when Yujiro Watanabe, a Japanese who had learned his trade in the United States, organized Tokyo's first amateur boxing tournament.⁵

Originally, amateurs fought according to rules similar to those used in U.S. professional boxing, the chief exception being that the goal of

the game was to score points (clean hits) rather than knockouts. Additionally, amateur matches usually consisted of three rounds lasting two minutes each (rounds in professional matches lasted three minutes each and were usually scheduled for at least four rounds); fights were stopped whenever a fighter suffered a bad cut or appeared groggy; and gloves invariably weighed twelve or more ounces. (Professional gloves were often only six ounces in weight, or barely enough to protect the fighter's knuckles.)

In 1937, however, Japanese amateur boxing rules were changed so that they mirrored Olympic rules. This meant that fighters were required to wear padded headgear in the ring, and over time the change also meant a move toward the stand-up European-style of point fighting rather than the crouching American-style of knockout fighting.

I suspect but cannot prove that the training methods of Imperial Japanese amateur boxers included considerable sparring in the gym. My supposition is based on observers' statements that Japanese amateur boxing was too gentlemanly and refined to attract a crowd. As Arthur Suzuki of the Japanese-American Courier put it:

[The student boxers] couldn't get into the spirit of the thing. They were afraid to let go and when a punch would accidentally land with a little steam, they were profuse with apologies. A bloody nose would send them into a panic and stop any practice match.⁶

“Fighting Spirit”

A Japanese named Kari Yado agreed with Suzuki’s assessment, adding:

There was no knockout in those days.
When a boxer began bleeding in his
nose, a cry of horror went up . . .⁷

That is not to say that knockouts were not part of the amateur game—indeed, due to problems with biased officials, Olympic coaches sometimes encouraged their fighters to go for knockouts rather than points. Instead, it was just that the goal of the amateur fighter was not to be knocking the other fellow senseless.

While relatively few Koreans attended Japanese colleges and universities during the 1930s, many who did go to college also joined collegiate boxing clubs. I expect that the main reason was that Korean fathers wanted their sons to learn some “manly” sport, but feared the abuse that right-wing Japanese would heap upon them in a judo or kendo class.⁸

A secondary reason was probably that every boy of the 1930s wanted to fight like the cowboys and gangsters he saw on the big silver screen. The cowboys and gangsters punched, so, of course, the little boys did too.⁹ Finally, many Koreans had previous experience with head-banging athletic games. As early as third-century B.C.E., Manchurians and northern Chinese played head-butting games, and as recently as nineteenth-century C.E., the men of northwestern Korea were seen playing a head-butting game called *pakchigi*.¹⁰ While the Japanese called these Korean games old-fashioned, they couldn’t say anything negative about Western sports

such as boxing.

Evangelical Christianity also played a role in introducing boxing to Japan and Korea. From the 1870s until the 1930s, the philosophy called “Muscular Christianity” was quite popular in the English-speaking world, and the YMCA, which opened a gym in Tokyo in 1917 and in Seoul soon after, was a leader in this movement.¹¹ Although basketball, volleyball, and swimming were the chief attractions in most YMCA gyms, boxing was also popular.¹²

The foregoing merits mention because the best-known amateur boxing club in Korea was at Keijo Imperial University, established in Seoul in 1926. Keijo (the future Seoul National University) was a notorious hotbed of anti-Japanese politics and activity.¹³

While the Japanese government regularly complained about Canadian and American missionaries teaching the Koreans dangerous ideas, and the Keijo University boxing club trained at the Keijo YMCA, I have no idea whether this radicalism bled over into the university boxing program.

At the level of the individual boxers, however, I would be surprised if it did. For one thing, the boxers were all quite young (most Japanese professional boxers were 17 to 22 years old, and Korean amateurs were frequently even younger). While often rebellious, teen-agers are rarely politically radical. Furthermore, had their politics been radical, the youths would have spent more time in jail

**Evangelical
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than in the gym.

Additionally, socialist organizations of the period usually encouraged members to participate in national wrestling styles such as the Korean *ssireum* rather than consumer-oriented Western spectator sports.¹⁴ So

In October 1937, three of the ten semi-finalists in a boxing championship held in Osaka had Korean surnames . . . one named Meishaku Kin took the bantamweight crown.¹

probably most of these early Korean boxers were simply tough kids who liked (or learned to like) fighting with their fists.

During the mid-1930s, the Keijo Imperial University boxing coach was a man named Yeijutsu Kin.¹⁵ Coach Kin was good, too, as his teams did unusually well during tournaments. For example, in October 1933, a Keijo team defeated two Japanese collegiate teams and tied a third.

In September 1935, another Keijo team fought a mostly Russian team at Dairen. According to the *Japan Times*, the local fans considered the Koreans, who included the Korean bantamweight champion Zaiko Ko, to be clean fighters, and much better sportsmen than the average Japanese professional.¹⁶

Finally, in November 1939, yet another Keijo team met a visiting squad from California's San Jose State University. The result was a victory for the Koreans.

Koreans also boxed for home island Japanese universities. In 1936, for example, the five-man Chuo University varsity squad boasted two members surnamed Ri. Chuo was not

unique, either, as the Hosei University team included a Ri and a Kin. (Although "Ri" [Lee, or Yi] could be ethnically Chinese, the many Koreans in Japanese professional boxing causes me to think that they were Korean).¹⁷ In October 1937, three of the ten semi-finalists in a boxing championship held in Osaka had Korean surnames, and one named Meishaku Kin took the bantamweight crown.¹⁸

In April 1938, Waseda University's Ri defeated Meiji University's Kin, thereby earning a berth on a five-man team scheduled to meet a Filipino all-star team. Two weeks later, Kin defeated his Filipino opponent, too.¹⁹ Finally, in November 1939, members of an all-Japan boxing team that held the visiting San Jose State University squad to a tie included Sensho University's Kisho Ri, Nihon University's Heigoku Kin, Rikkyo University's Ginshaku Ko and Waseda University's Keikan Ri. In fact, the only member of this All-Kanto team to bear a Japanese surname was Katsuye Mori.²⁰

At the international level, Keijo's Shoba Kin and Ryushin Boku boxed for Japan during Manila's Far Eastern Championship Games of 1934, where these two men comprised half of the Japanese squad.²¹ In December 1934, Ryushin Boku went on to win the All-Japan featherweight crown, and in February 1935 he returned to Manila to win fights against members of the Jose Rizal University team.²²

Eighteen months later, Keikan Ri also boxed for Japan during the Olympics. In 1933, Ri had belonged to

the same Keijo University squad as Ryoshin Boku. The 1933 team's other members were Shuncho Boku, Shoka Kin and Karaku Kin.²³

A Korean also has the dubious distinction of being Japan's first amateur ring fatality. According to the *Japan Times*:

[Kiei Ryu], a Korean member of Nihon University's boxing club, died shortly after receiving a concussion of the brain during a fight with Hoichi Kanazawa, a Sanshu University boxer, in the Six-University Freshman's Boxing Tournament at the Seinen Kaikan Hall, Harajuku, Tokyo, Wednesday night [13 November, 1940].²⁴

Of course, college students were not the only Korean amateur boxers. In Seoul, for instance, it seems that many schoolboys joined boxing clubs to please their fathers. An example is Jae Joon Kim, whose father enrolled him in a Seoul boxing club in early 1945. Young Kim was soon fighting in local smokers, and within a few months he had a record of eleven wins and four losses.

In his fifteenth bout, however, his opponent, a friend, was knocked out and remained unconscious for twenty minutes. "I thought that I had killed him," Kim later recalled, and as a result his father took him out of boxing and instead put him into a karate class.²⁵ While this story appears in English (Kim went on to become an internationally known teacher of Tang Soo Do karate), it seems likely that additional anecdotes could be found using accounts published in Korean.

Professional Boxing

From the mid 1890s until the late 1920s, a kind of boxing vs. jujutsu known as "Merikan" [American] was done in seaports throughout East Asia. In 1922 Heinie Miller described a typical Merikan bout staged in Manila thirteen years before.

The bout was to be two falls or knockdowns out of three. The Jap was to wear a sort of jujutsu shirt while the American was to wear gloves. The Jap was not allowed to hit, but all jujutsu holds were permitted. The American was not allowed to wrestle or hold, but all clean blows were permitted.

The gong rang. Quicker'n you can say, 'Sap,' the Jap grabbed ye scribe by the right arm, twisted and pitched us on our ear in a neutral corner some fifteen feet away. One fall for the Jap. After we got the resin well out of our ear we arose only to find the little brown brother right on top of us again. But this time we beat him to it with a sweet right hand, inside and up. The little rascal only weighed 98 pounds, while we displaced some 124 at that time. So we take no credit for the fact that the gent from [Tokyo] folded his tent like an Arab and silently stole out of the ring.

He forfeited the third trip to the canvas, explaining that he did not expect to get hit, being under the impression that the gloves were only used as a handicap for the difference in weight.²⁶

Of course, not every boxer was the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet flyweight champion, and it didn't take long for interested wrestlers to learn defenses

against most punches. As a result, it wasn't long before legitimate judo champions started winning most of these mixed matches.²⁷ While that outcome appealed to Japanese audiences, it wasn't what foreign audiences wanted to see. So, to maximize profits, promoters started arranging the outcomes of matches in advance. As a result, by the 1910s Merikan matches were about as sporting (and realistic) as American professional wrestling is today.²⁸

Then, in February 1921, Yujiro Watanabe started the Japan Boxing Club. Announcing its establishment, Watanabe told the *Japan Times* that his purpose was "to teach boxing to those interested in building up, scientifically, good health and a perfect physique."²⁹ Furthermore, to distinguish this scientific bodybuilding from Merikan, Watanabe called the sport *kunto*, or "good fighting."³⁰

A year later, Watanabe also organized the Japan Boxing Association. This was essentially a guild, and its purpose was to make money for Watanabe and his financial patrons. To train fighters in Japan, gym owners first had to pay the association about ¥20,000.³¹ To put this sum in perspective, in China of the 1920s one could buy a stud horse for ¥70,000, a trained pointer bitch for ¥300, and a Chinese girl for ¥30. To recoup their investment, the promoters then had to develop or manage fighters that crowds were

willing to pay money to watch fight. Toward this end, they often indentured their fighters, usually in much the same way as brothel owners indentured prostitutes.³²

Regardless of how or where they were recruited, Imperial Japanese boxers received salaries (or guarantees, if European or Filipino) rather than percentages of the gate. For preliminary fighters, a typical salary was between ¥25 and ¥50 (\$6.25 to \$12.50) per month.³³ Inasmuch as Korean day laborers earned about one yen (25 cents) per day during the 1920s and 1930s, this probably struck most working-class youths as a reasonable wage.³⁴ What was more, the salaried fighters could always dream of becoming champions earning a princely ¥300 (\$75) per month.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that promoters expected fighters to pay their own living and training expenses, plus reimburse them for any indenturing fees. If so, then many, perhaps most, fighters would have been deep in debt upon reaching the end of their careers.

Watanabe held his first major card in Tokyo in May 1922. The fighters included three Americans whom the Californian promoter J.J. ("Moose") Taussig had brought to Japan. To continue generating interest in boxing, in 1923, Watanabe brought some European and Filipino fighters to Japan. In 1924 he accompanied a Japanese boxer to the Olympics, and in 1926 he took four Japanese fighters to California.³⁵ There the promoters told these serious young men that it was their duty to treat the fans to a

Wanting to please, these earnest young men soon adopted a system of fighting that almost guaranteed somebody getting knocked out.

"Fighting Spirit"

knockout. Wanting to please, these earnest young men soon adopted a system of fighting that almost guaranteed somebody getting knocked out. Known as the "piston attack," after the piston-like way that the boxer's arms kept hammering the opponent without giving any thought to defense, it wasn't boxing, but it did satisfy fans who wanted to see the fighters "rush madly against each other from the start, punching mechanically and make a quick end of the bout."³⁶

Except that they took their training very seriously, details of how Imperial Japanese fighters trained are scarce. An exception is the following statement by Alfred E. Pieres that appeared in the *Japan Times* on April 16, 1925:

The boxers [in Young Togo Koriyama's gym at Mikage, outside Kobe] keep on training all the time. Despite the occasional cold snaps that Kobe has been recently having, there they are, almost in their first birthday suit, with just a pair of very short drawers, doing their work. . . . [They] are good with their fists, but are still rather slow as regards footwork [sic]. . . . The boxers are working with a willing heart. . . . [and] all appear to be in fine physical condition, muscular, well developed and hard as nails.³⁷

The predilection toward the piston attack suggests that their training included considerable work on heavy bags. Furthermore, that the Japanese fighters were repeatedly amazed by the fancy footwork of Filipinos and Americans suggests that they didn't spend a lot of time sparring with one

another. Support for the latter conjecture includes postwar Japanese fighters recalling that prewar fighters had learned their trade by fighting actual bouts before paying customers.³⁸

On the other hand, Imperial Japanese fighters were rarely out of shape. Not only does this mean that they must have spent a lot of time doing roadwork, it also implies that they did not drink, smoke or chase women with the enthusiasm of their foreign counterparts. And, as they were rarely overweight, their diet deserves some attention. For example, postwar Korean boxers ingested vast quantities of ginseng and garlic during training, and perhaps Imperial boxers did so as well.³⁹ Finally, the way injuries were treated might reward further study. For example, the Koreans of the 1980s drank barley tea as an energizer and used powders made of crushed chrysanthemum roots to cure headaches.⁴⁰ So perhaps the Imperial fighters of the 1930s did as well.

The emphasis on the piston attack suggests that Japanese martial culture may have influenced Imperial Japanese boxing ideology. After all, *bushido*, the "way of the warrior," was a popular concept in Japan during the 1920s and 1930s, and Young Togo Koriyama taught kendo and judo as well as boxing at his Mikage gym.⁴¹

That said, jingoism knows no boundaries, and as late as 1922, Nat Fleischer's *Ring* magazine stated as fact that it was boxing rather than tanks, artillery and airplanes that had "led America on to victory amid the shambles of the Marne and Chateau-

Thierry!"⁴² So perhaps it would be equally correct to say that parents everywhere wanted their sons to be manly, that boys everywhere wanted to possess the tremendous punching power (and income) of Jack Dempsey, and that promoters everywhere used whatever vocabulary best suited local needs.⁴³ For his part, Watanabe talked more about "the spirit of manliness" than *bushido*.⁴⁴

Although North American promoters used similar language, the Japanese sometimes took this emphasis on "manliness" to extremes. For example, the Japanese featherweight champion Piston Horiguchi suffered from jaundice, and as a result, he started losing speed in his punches.⁴⁵ Rather than treating his illness, his trainers told him that his problem was that he lacked sufficient *Yamato damashii*, or "Japanese spirit," and toward restoring this spirit in their fighter, the trainers then had Horiguchi practice kendo.⁴⁶

Japanese fans did not go to the fights to see clever feinting, quick footwork and smart dodging. Instead they came to find what Kari Yado called the "romance in the art of knocking people unconscious."⁴⁷

This passion for knockouts had various roots. Hollywood films certainly played a role. Jack Dempsey's "Fight and Win," for example, played in Tokyo from late 1924 until the middle of 1925. More importantly, however, Japan had a cult of *gaman*, or "perseverance". The 47 Ronin who endured all kinds of humiliation before finally avenging the death of

their master exemplified *gaman*, as did boxers who remained standing despite taking a savage beating.

Another root was the Japanese belief that "violence is like sex: not a sin as such, but subject to social restraint."⁴⁸ Since boxing was not of Japanese origin, it was not bound by traditional social restraints. Therefore people who would never have dreamed of saying anything during a judo match felt free to shout, "Kill him!" during boxing matches.⁴⁹

Finally, there were people who frankly enjoyed watching two nearly naked men beating one another bloody. As writer Sadao Togawa said, "I have a friend who is extremely timid but who tells me that after he has seen a boxing match he feels extremely strong."⁵⁰

Because taking an aesthetically pleasing beating is a hard way of making a living, few top-ranked foreign fighters wanted to visit Japan. Undaunted, the Japanese then started recruiting Koreans. For this purpose, Shanghai was a particularly popular recruiting location.⁵¹ Not only was it nearby, but also its laws allowed promoters to indenture human beings.

Professional Korean Boxers

The first Korean to become a prominent member of the Japan Boxing Club was Tetsuro Uemura (alternately spelled "Uyemura"). Born on June 11, 1908, his real name was Ryushoku Ri.⁵² But, like many Koreans living in Imperial Japan, he later changed his name so that it was Japanese rather than Korean.

DON'T MISS
The Coming
Sensational Fights
FRIDAY NIGHT
Oct. 28th—8 P. M.

Houston
Arena
Main Event—10 Rounds
LITTLE
PANCHO
Rated One of the Best Fighters
In the Game
-- VS --
DYNAMITE
UYEMURA
Knock Out King of Japan

Semi-Final—8 Rounds
BILLY BOGGS
Hardest Hitting Fighter In
Honolulu Today
-- VS --
CYCLONE GOMEZ
K. O. Prince of Mexico

6-Round Special Event
RUSH BASCO
Leading Filipino Lightweight
of Manila
-- VS --
Kintaro Usuda
Lightweight Champion of Japan
—Just Arrived

Three 4-Round
Smashing Prelims:
KID SCHOFIELD
Joe Tribble's Champion—vs.
KID PONCIANA
Never Stops Fighting

KID SARONG
Halls from Kakaako—vs.
ARCHIE LEONG
The Chinese Demon

KID RAY
Waipahu Firecracker—vs.
MAX TANAKA
Sad Sam's Champion

PRICES
\$1.00 - \$1.50 - \$2.00
Tickets at Hawaiian Drug Store
Corner Bethel and Hotel Sts.

JOHN YASUI COLLECTION
COURTESY OF CURTIS NARIMATSU.

Tetsuro Uemura's fight with Little Pancho
Oct. 28, 1932

During the 1920s, Uemura started boxing in Shanghai, where he became known as "Young Ambition." Judging from newspaper reports, he came to Tokyo around 1930 and retired to Korea in September 1933. His most important foreign fight was probably his ten-round loss to Little Pancho in Honolulu on October 28, 1932, but he also had a six-round loss to Henry Callejo in Honolulu on December 10, 1932. His manager in Hawaii was a Japanese national named J.I. Fukuoka.⁵³

Although a fit, aggressive fighter, Uemura appears to have lost as many fights as he won. Poor officiating may have had something to do with this, as in April 1931, when a Nisei named Leslie Nakashima described Japanese referees as "somewhat pitiful, especially during the preliminary during the course of which a man was permitted to punch at his opponent while he was sitting on the canvas."⁵⁴ Mostly, though, his problem seems to have been too much reliance on wild right swings, the kind so beloved by Hollywood film stars.⁵⁵

Teiken Jo also fought for Watanabe during the early 1930s. Born in Korea around 1913, Jo took up boxing to earn the money his family needed to put his two younger brothers through a Japanese high school.⁵⁶ His pro debut took place in Tokyo on April 16, 1931.

Despite giving up ten pounds to many opponents, the 117-pounder lost none of his first nineteen professional fights, and his six-round victory over Young Pancho Villa on November 6, 1931, was the highlight of the second

boxing card ever broadcast over Japanese radio.⁵⁷ But, as the Japanese were not enthusiastic about having a Korean champion, Jo soon went to California, where fighters were said to earn enormous sums.⁵⁸

Despite fighting about twice a month while in the United States, Jo never made much money.⁵⁹ The reason was that North American managers typically took 30 to 50 percent of a fighter's purse, and also expected fighters to pay for travel and training.⁶⁰ Jo nonetheless remained optimistic about his future, so what the wife of Hollywood matchmaker Charlie McDonald had to say about the man is worth repeating:

I was first attracted by his shy and modest mannerism. He was extremely polite and although unable to speak but very little English, I could see that he had culture and education. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that he was a university graduate in [Tokyo] and was sending his two brothers through the same school.⁶¹

On May 22, 1933 Jo got a crack at the California bantamweight crown held by the Filipino fighter Speedy Dado. Living up to his reputation, Dado won the first six rounds on speed alone. In the third, he also started a cut to Jo's left eye that caused it to swell shut. But in those days they didn't call professional fights for mere bleeding and by the eighth Dado, whose training for the fight had included considerable partying, was starting to tire. Desperate, Dado then landed a low blow in the ninth that under California rules should have caused the fight



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Teiken Jo preparing for his fight
with Eugene Huat
(*Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 13, 1933)

to be awarded to Jo. However, the Korean was too proud to win sitting down, so he stood back up to finish the fight. As a result, Dado went on to win on points.

In October 1934 Jo participated in a Canadian elimination tournament designed to fill a recently vacated world bantamweight title. Despite some trouble getting through Canadian immigration checkpoints—his work permit did not extend to Canada—he finally got to fight Carlos “Baby” Quintana in Montreal on November 7, 1934. Although Quintana won the fight by a unanimous decision, a sportswriter for the *Montreal Gazette* wrote that the Canadian promoter “could do worse than match the little Korean on another of his cards, however. He

"Fighting Spirit"

never stopped throwing punches last night."⁶² But by November 1934, Jo's future was already past. As John Fujii had written in the *Japan-California Daily* only four months before:

A badly cut left eye which develops each time it is lacerated by punishing blows, a false set of molars which he spits out each battle, and a slowly bruised body tells us that the former hard-socking phantom is slowly reaching the end of cauliflower lane.⁶³

Of his fourteen subsequent fights, he won just four—and two of those victories came over prelim boys in New York.⁶⁴

Another boxer, Umio Gen (we know his last name is Hyun) also



JOHN YASUI COLLECTION,
COURTESY OF CURTIS NARIMATSU

"To my pal, Johnny Yasui, from Jo Teiken"
signed publicity photo

fought in North America during the 1930s. Gen was born in Korea in 1919. At the age of eleven, he moved to Tokyo, where he worked by day and went to school at night. Although he had an unusually witty mind and was good looking, Los Angeles reporter Joe Ishikawa said that Gen had no girlfriends because, "to use his own words, he is going to grow up to be a 'bachera' [bachelor]."⁶⁵

In November 1935, Gen entered the All-Japan Pro Boxing Championships. Fighting for the Imperial Boxing Club and weighing about 117 pounds, in his first fight Gen earned a four-round decision over the experienced Yukiichi Masumura. Gen continued winning his bouts, and in December 1935 he surprised everyone by winning the Japanese bantamweight title.

Unfortunately his jab was weak and his straight right (the overhand punch that most sportswriters call a cross) wasn't much stronger.⁶⁶ Therefore he lost fights to harder-hitting Filipino fighters in Manila throughout the summer of 1936, and in September 1936 he lost the Japanese bantamweight title to Seiichi Otsu.

Hoping to improve his skills, Gen went to the United States in August 1937, and although he fought at least seventeen fights over the next eighteen months, including several in Seattle, Cleveland and New York, he did not seem to have won a single one.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the promoters and fans adored him. The reason was that no matter how hard the other fellow hit him, Gen kept boring in, fists pumping like pistons. "Many a time

Gen was hit hard," the *North American Times* said following a loss to Frankie Lembo in Hollywood on February 1, 1938, but "his speed and stamina . . . carried him through to an excellent finish."⁶⁸

Such courage carries a price, however, and recent studies have shown that a boxer's risk of brain and eye injuries is directly related to the number of rounds fought.⁶⁹ So, on August 6, 1938, Bill Hosokawa of Seattle's *Japanese-American Courier*, wrote this about the nineteen-year old Korean:

The world of boxing is cruel. . . . This weekend on a crowded San Pedro street, mainstem of Los Angeles' Li'l Tokyo, a stocky youth strolled along, dark glasses over his eyes. In the city of Los Angeles the sight of dark glasses is no rarity, but this youth needed them to guard weakened eyes from the sun.

His name is Umio Gen, the boxer, as willing a fighter as has ever been seen in a Seattle ring. A few months ago, he didn't need those glasses. And injured optics or no, Gen is signed to go in the ring again on August 9 in Stockton.

The game which has no place for those who can't stand the pace, needs them to make fodder for some younger fighter testing his fists in his upward climb. The willing boys without the ability are the stepping stones.⁷⁰

In September 1938, Gen was involved in a minor scandal. He had fought Baby Arizmendi in San Diego on September 23, 1938, and afterwards his manager Jesus Cortez said that the fight should have been called a draw



ART © BY JANET BRADLEY 1998

Umio Gen lacing his gloves to fight
Billy Buxton
(*North American Times*, Dec. 11, 1937)

instead of a loss.⁷¹ Referee Jack Means responded by saying that the decision was fair because Cortez had tried to bribe him beforehand. After investigation, the California Boxing Commission found that Means was wrong and suspended him. Arizmendi's victory, however, remained on the books.⁷²

Gen fought in Madison Square Garden in January 1939 and then returned to Japan.⁷³ After a break of nearly a year, Gen returned to the ring on January 5, 1940. His opponent was the Japanese featherweight champion Piston Horiguchi. Although Gen's footwork impressed everyone, Horiguchi won the fight on points.⁷⁴

On March 7, 1940, Gen lost a ten-round decision to Susumu Tokunaga. Gen's timing in this fight, said the

Japan Times afterward, "was something terrible."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, his last two known fights both ended in wins by knockout.⁷⁶

Lastly, the aforementioned former collegiate champion Ryushin Boku also earned considerable reputation as a professional boxer. After leaving college, Boku joined the Japan Boxing Club, and during his pro debut in July 1937 he earned a four-round decision over Kikuji Minakawa. Boku continued his winning ways, and by March 1939, he was fighting main events throughout the Japanese Empire.⁷⁷

Boku won two important victories before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor effectively ended Japanese professional boxing for the duration.⁷⁸ The first was on October 10, 1939, when, despite a 17-pound weight disadvantage he defeated the former Japanese welterweight champion Matsuo Amino. The other was on October 12, 1940, when he defeated Piston Horiguchi to become the undisputed featherweight champion of Japan.

Nevertheless, Boku was never a popular champion. The reason was that he rarely used the piston-style offense, and therefore was perceived as lacking fighting spirit.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Foreign sailors and merchants introduced Western-style gloved boxing into Yokohama and Kobe around the turn of the century. At first boxing was seen mostly during handicap matches against local judoka, but by the early 1920s it also had begun to

be seen during American-style professional bouts.

During the early 1920s Christian missionary organizations such as the YMCA, the Japanese military and professional boxing promoters also began sponsoring amateur boxing matches in Korea as well as Japan, and by the 1930s Koreans were leading members of various Japanese collegiate and international boxing teams.

Interestingly, the Koreans seem to have sometimes comprised as much as five-sixths of those Japanese teams. Probably this had to do with ethnically Japanese athletes preferring more glamorous sports, thus leaving the boxing to lower-status Koreans.

Professionally, Koreans started participating in Western-style boxing during the mid-1920s, and by the early 1930s they were among Japan's best. Some of the better known Korean professionals included:

1. Tetsuro "Young Ambition" Uemura, who began his career in Shanghai in the mid-1920s and was, by 1931, the first Korean professional boxer to become popular in Japan;
2. Teiken Jo, a talented professional boxer who was ranked sixth in the world in 1935;
3. Umio Gen, a brave but not particularly skilled professional boxer who toured the United States during the late 1930s; and
4. Ryushin Boku, a former collegiate boxing champion who became Japan's professional featherweight boxing champion in 1940.

Western boxing also may have had some influence on the development of Korean karate. For example, Jae Joon Kim, a current leader of Tang Soo Do karate in the United States, got his start as an amateur boxer. In this he does not seem exceptional. So the influence of Western boxing on Tang Soo Do and other forms of Korean karate appears to warrant further investigation.

Both Koreans and Japanese clearly believed that *gaman*, or perseverance, was a character trait developed by boxing.

Due to my reliance on English-language Japanese sources, the economic, political and social histories I have presented were frequently speculative and rarely presented in any detail. That said, the following patterns emerged.

Intending to please audiences expecting to see knockouts, Imperial Japanese (ergo, Korean) boxing placed more emphasis on courage and endurance (*ganbare*) than ring generalship. Professional boxers received minimal training, and the few techniques they did learn emphasized the crowd-pleasing “piston” offense.

Unsurprisingly, professional careers were short—usually about five years—and when the fighters were through they were often physical wrecks.⁸⁰ This is not surprising inasmuch as lightweight fighters of the era routinely fought several times a month, and in some cases as often as several times a night.⁸¹

While descriptions of boxing-related injuries are sadly lacking, amateur boxers probably suffered

fewer serious injuries than professional boxers. The reasons included shorter rounds, different rules and heavier gloves. Nevertheless, Japan’s first-known boxing fatality was a Korean amateur in 1940.

So what happened to the professionals? Boxers have been dying in Japan at the rate of about one every two years since 1945, and surely they were dying at similar rates before the war. Yet nothing appears in the *Japan Times* about this. The reason is probably that casualties in the pursuit of manliness were a price that the Imperial Japanese were always willing to pay.

Despite the promotional hype, few Imperial Japanese boxers ever made much money. Although beginning fighters earned as much as, or slightly more than, day laborers, there is reason to believe that promoters expected fighters to pay their own living and training expenses, plus reimburse them for any indenturing fees. If so, then many, perhaps most, fighters were likely deep in debt upon reaching the end of their careers.

Both Koreans and Japanese clearly believed that *gaman*, or perseverance, was a character trait developed by boxing. While promoters told people that boxing was a manly, character-building sport, given the period, this must be seen in the context of instilling patriotic nationalism rather than developing individual saintliness.

A secondary trait developed by boxing was *Yamato damashii*, the Japanese spirit that inspired people to ignore all obstacles in their quest to

“Fighting Spirit”

accomplish their missions. An interesting phenomenon associated with this is the fact that the Japanese fans preferred fighters who lost bravely to fighters who won inelegantly.

Finally, Korea’s independence from Japan following World War II does not seem to have had much effect on the way individual Korean boxers fought. Witness, for example, the following description of a bout between the Hawaiian fighter Robert Takeshita and the Korean lightweight champion Chung Bok Soo in Honolulu in 1948:

The bout, scheduled for eight rounds, was stopped in the seventh. . . . when Chung Bok Soo, suffering a cut inside of his left eye, was found unable to continue . . .

The fight was a sensational one all the way. Soo rushed out from his corner like a mad bull and started slugging it out at close quarters with Takeshita. For six rounds Soo fought at this fast pace, taking a terrific beating but without yielding an inch of ground. Though the aggressor all the way, Soo, nevertheless, fought a losing battle as he took three or four punches before landing one of his own . . .⁸²

The piston attack lived.

Notes

Most of my research was conducted at the University of Washington’s East Asia and Suzzallo-Allen Libraries. Additional research was conducted at the Fort Smith Public Library and the Sno-Isle Regional Libraries.

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1. Because Korea was then part of the Japanese empire, spellings of Korean surnames usually show considerable Japanese influence. Korean sources would probably show Boku as Park, Gen as Won or Hyun, Jo as Cho, Kin as Kim, and Ri as Lee.
2. The following weights (in pounds) are the maximum allowable for each class. Flyweight: 112; Bantamweight: 118; Featherweight: 126; Lightweight: 135; Welterweight: 147; Middleweight: 160; Light-heavyweight: 175; Heavyweight: greater than 175. They have changed over time, but these are the weights in use during the late 1920s and early 1930s. (*The Ring*, December 1929, p. 38.)
3. As Japanese sources frequently list Tsuneo (“Piston”) Horiguchi as Japan’s greatest boxer, some discussion of my reasoning is required. Although I’m undoubtedly missing fights—the lists in *Everlast Boxing Record* and *Ring Record Book* contain many errors and omissions—I show Teiken Jo having a career record of 40 wins, 12 draws and 23 losses. Because many of those losses were to internationally ranked fighters, *Everlast Ring Record* ranked Jo sixth in the world for the 1934-1935 season. Meanwhile, I show Horiguchi having a career record of 49 wins, 7 draws and 3 losses. While an impressive record, few of Horiguchi’s

in early 1936 resulted in a disappointing two wins and three draws, and caused the Honolulu sportswriter Don Watson to complain that Horiguchi's punch couldn't dent a two-day old package of poi. Therefore *Ring* magazine ranked Horiguchi as simply the third best in Hawai'i. As sixth best in the world strikes me as better than third best in Hawai'i, I feel justified in classifying Jo as a better boxer than Horiguchi. Jo's rating appears in *Everlast Boxing Record* (New York: Everlast Sports Publishing Co., 1935), 131. Horiguchi's rating appeared in *Japan Times* (30 January 1937, 5), and evidently refers to the ratings appearing in the February 1937 issue of *Ring*. Finally, Watson's remark about Horiguchi's lack of punching power appeared in the *Japan Times* (23 February, 1936, 5). Researchers interested in seeing my tabulations of the careers of Jo and Horiguchi may write me, care of KAHS.

4. Although people with access to the records of the Korean Society for Physical Culture (the predecessor of the Korean Athletic Union) may quibble with 1926 as a starting date and 1945 as an ending date, I selected those dates for a number of reasons. First, they essentially coincide with that portion of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito's reign that the Japanese call the early Showa era. Second, Korea separated from Japan following WW II, which in turn means that after 1945 its sport history becomes separated from Japanese sport history. Third, Western-style gloved boxing only became popular in Japan after 1921. Therefore it seems unlikely that the sport would have been successfully introduced into Korea any sooner. Finally, Keijo Imperial University—the future Seoul National University—was established in Seoul in 1926. Since Keijo University was an important center of Korean amateur boxing before World War II, its establishment seemed an appropriate starting point.
5. While it is traditional to date amateur boxing in Japan to Yujiro Watanabe's establishment of the Japan Boxing Club in February 1921, that club was always dedicated to professional rather than amateur boxing. Furthermore, the only major reference to Japanese boxing I've seen in the *Japan Times* between 1921 and 1923 was a photo published on July 23, 1923 that showed Watanabe teaching boxing to the American-educated actress Komako Tokunaga. Thus my dating the advent of amateur boxing in Japan to May 1923.
6. *Japanese-American Courier*, 25 March 1933, 2.
7. *Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 2.
8. For an example of a Korean father encouraging his son to take up boxing because it he believed that it was manly, see "Who Is the Grandmaster?" in the Eric Madis collection. For an example of the type of prejudice Koreans faced on Japanese high school judo teams, see Jim Yoshida with Bill Hosokawa, *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 55-58.
9. "American movies in which the hero knocks men right and left have taken an important part in the training of the Japanese mind for the reception of the savage Western boxing," wrote Kari Yado in February 1931 (*Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 2). Japanese minds were not the only ones influenced by these films. For example, Tang Soo Do karate teacher Haeng-ung Lee told *Tae Kwon Do Times* (March 1992, 33), "As kids [in Korea during the early 1950s], we loved to watch them [Hollywood film stars] fight, and all of us wanted to be able to fight better. I tried Judo when I was nine or ten, but I couldn't throw the big guy. Then I took up boxing, and I got hit too much and got lots of headaches. I looked for something better and found Tang Soo Do."
10. The ancient Chinese head-butting games are mentioned in Josef Srám, "Chinese Acrobatics of the Han Period," *Eastern Horizon Monthly Review*, 3:5 (May 1964), 28. *Pakchigi* is mentioned in Pyung Soo Kim, "The Hands are for Hypnotizing" (*Black Belt*, September 1966, 43). Finally, the *Japan Times* (10 February 1923, 5) published a photograph of "a Korean-style wrestling bout" in which the wrestlers pulled on a rope with their heads, and the one

“Fighting Spirit”

- dragging the other three feet wins. Unfortunately, none of these articles contains much detail. So if someone has such information, I would appreciate receiving copies of it.
11. For an introduction to the doctrine of Muscular Christianity, see Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981). For analogous Continental doctrines, see Richard D. Mandell, *Sport, A Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). For the attitudes of the early YMCA leaders, see David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). And, for an introduction to the role that the YMCA played in East Asia, see Jonathan Kolatch, *Sports, Politics and Ideology in China* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1972).
 12. Although basketball was introduced into the Tientsin YMCA in January 1896, I haven't seen anything showing when the Seoul YMCA started a team. That said, Hyozo Omori introduced volleyball and basketball into the Tokyo YMCA in 1908, and on January 7, 1920, the Tokyo YMCA reported that its opponents included Kyoto, Shanghai and Seoul. As for boxing, what churchmen opposed was the gambling and drinking associated with prize-fighting rather than the pugilism per se. During the early 1900s, Philadelphia socialite A. J. Drexel Biddle was notorious for using boxing and boxers to illustrate Bible stories. See, for example, Cordelia Drexel Biddle, as told to Kyle Crichton, *My Philadelphia Father* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1955), 21, 24-25, 63, 185-186, 191, 233-236, and Biddle's article "Why Boxing is Better than the Ball Room" in the Seattle *Sunday Times* (11 April 1909), Magazine Section, 4. But Biddle was hardly unique in his love of what he called Athletic Christianity. See, for example, New York *World* (20 January 1905), 1; New York *World* (5 February 1905), 12; Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* (11 November 11, 1909), 9; *Japan Times* (2 May 1922), 5; *Japan Times* (27 March 1922), 6; New York *World* (8 August 1924), 6S.
 13. *Japan Times*, 5 November 1931, 1.
 14. Although the Japanese government started arresting socialists as early as 1900, Japanese-language texts extolling the virtues of proletarian sports continued to be published into the 1930s. But, as the Soviet Union itself did not organize an All-Union amateur boxing championship tournament until 1934, I suspect that most Koreans associated Western-style pugilism with international capitalism rather than world socialism. For an introduction to the tribulations of socialism in Japan, see Ikuo Abe, Yasuharu Kiyohara and Ken Nakajima, "Sport and physical education under fascistization in Japan" (*Bulletin of Health & Sport Sciences*, University of Tsukuba, 13 (1980), 34-36). For an introduction to Russian (and by extension socialist) sport, see Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); *National Folk Sports in the USSR*, edited by Yuri Lukashin and translated from the Russian by James Riordan (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980); and James W. Riordan, "Tsarist Russia and International Sport" (*Stadion*, 14:2 (1988), 222-226). Finally, for a description of the All-Union boxing championships of 1934, see *Japan Times*, 12 December 1934, 6.
 15. *Japan Times*, 11 December 1934, 6.
 16. *Japan Times*, 8 September 1935, 5. Other members of Keijo's 1935 team included Ryutoko Sai, Jyuncho Kyo, and Jyurin Gon. So although Keijo Imperial University had many Japanese students, its boxing team appears to have been mostly Korean in ethnicity. Because this pattern persisted over time, the ethnic exclusivity appears to have been intentional. I cannot say, however, whether the discrimination was of Japanese against Koreans or of Koreans against Japanese. Identifying the Koreans on these teams, by the way, is not hard, as the *Japan Times* was as careful about indicating the ethnicity of fighters as any American newspaper.

Community Reports: Joseph R. Svintb

17. *Japan Times*, 27 September 1936, 5.
18. *Japan Times*, 30 November 1937, 30.
19. *Japan Times*, 28 April 1938, 3; *Japan Times*, 14 May 1938, 3.
20. *Japan Times*, 8 November 1939, 5.
21. *Japan Times*, 20 March 1934, 6.
22. *Japan Times*, 11 December 1934, 6; *Japan Times*, 13 December 1934, 5; *Japan Times*, 19 December 1934, 6; *Japan Times*, 9 February 1935, 5; *Japan Times*, 22 February 1935, 5; *Japan Times*, 6 March 1935, 5.
23. *Japan Times*, 10 April 1936, 5; *Japan Times*, 10 October 1933, 4.
24. *Japan Times*, 16 November 1940, 8. Published counts of ring deaths fail to account for the deaths of many, perhaps most, amateur fighters. So, while the *Chicago Tribune* (15 May 1986, C-26) reports that there were 335 professional and amateur ring deaths between 1945 and 1979, I am currently tracking 411 during that same period and expect to find dozens more. Readers interested in seeing or adding to my ring death data may contact me via the editor.
25. "Who Is the Grandmaster?" in the Eric Madis collection.
26. Heinie Miller, "Now *Yōu* Tell One!" (*Ring*, December 1922, 5). The occasion was probably the Manila Carnival of 1909. For a photo and a description of a similar match in Tokyo in which the judoka won, see *Japan Times*, 7 November 1913, 1.
27. See, for example, *Japan Times*, 9 May 1923, 8. During the 1910s and 1920s, it was axiomatic in the United States and Britain that boxing was superior to wrestling for personal self-defense. See, for example, J.L. Dorgan, "Wrestling vs. Boxing—Which is the Superior" (*Ring*, 15 March 1922, 5). But, as the Gracies showed during the so-called "Ultimate" matches of the 1980s, skilled wrestlers normally beat skilled strikers in open competition. Explained Charles B. Roth in *Esquire* in June 1949 (102): "It all boils down to this: in any kind of a scrap the man with the grab can beat the man with the jab, and—no matter what the credo of ordinary citizens—the muscle-head [wrestler] always wins." The standard tactic requires the wrestler to jump in, grasp the boxer by the biceps, and then trip, reap or cross-buttock him.
28. E.J. Harrison, *The Fighting Spirit of Japan* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1982), 46-48; *Japan Times*, 9 February 1931, 4; *Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 4. One difference between "Merikan" and American professional wrestling was that real fights sometimes followed the Merikan matches. On July 24, 1925, for example, two Hokkaido judo men were stabbed to death after embarrassing some visiting professionals during an advertised free-for-all. (*Japan Times*, 25 July 1925, 1)
29. *Japan Times*, 10 February 1921, 5.
30. *Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 4. While Young Togo Koriyama was Kobe's pioneer boxing trainer, his financial patron was a man named Kenji Kano. Kobe fighters included Europeans, Japanese and Filipinos, and they fought in Shanghai, Manila, Osaka and Tokyo. The local fight venues included the Shochiki Theatre.
31. *Japan Times*, 8 May 1933, 8.
32. The *Japan Times* (8 May 1933, 8) quoted Shiro Otsuji as saying, "In this country the fighters are handled like a courtesan." For a discussion of how prewar geisha were recruited—the gist of which appears here—see Liza Carihfield Dalby, *Geisha* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 222-224. The way in which prostitutes have been recruited in Asia since World War II seems to be similar. See, for example, David E. Kaplan and Alec Dubro,

“Fighting Spirit”

- Yakuza: The Explosive Account of Japan's Criminal Underworld* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1986), 202-208, and Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: New Press, 1992). An alternative is the sumo school model, where the athletes are members of a fictive household rather than indentured servants. For details of how the sumo system works, see Yoshihiro Oinuma and Mitsuru Shimpo, “The Social System of the Sumo Training School” (*International Review of Sport Sociology*, 1:18 (1983), 6-19). But, operating on the assumption that Otsuji knew the difference between wrestlers and prostitutes, I assumed that the prostitution model applied to boxers.
33. *Japan Times*, 8 May 1933, 8; *Japan Times*, 5 June 1933, 1.
 34. In October 1925, a Japanese laborer earned about ¥2.15 per day while a Chinese earned ¥1.24 and a Korean earned ¥1.2. Wages dropped, of course, during the Depression. For wages of the 1920s, see *Japan Times*, 6 October 1925, 4. For Depression-era wages, see *Japan Times*, 1 June 1931, 1.
 35. *Japan Times*, 2 August 1926, 8; *Japan Times*, 27 June 1931, 8; *Japan Times*, 8 May 1933, 8.
 36. *Japan Times*, 15 January 1925, 4. See also *Japan Times*, 16 September 1936, 5; *Japan Times*, 6 January 1937, 5. Judging from the abysmal “Rocky” movies, popular tastes haven’t changed much over the years.
 37. *Japan Times*, 16 April 1925, 4.
 38. Leo Noonan, “And in This Corner the Challengers from Japan,” *The Fighters*, 1:1 (1974), 57-59.
 39. In 1982, the training program of the Korean boxer Duk Koo Kim included sledgehammering a tire 200 times daily and ingesting vast quantities of garlic and ginseng. Since those aren’t standard American training methods, I assume they are Korean in origin. The source of this information is Ralph Wiley, *Serenity: A Boxing Memoir* (New York: Henry Holt, 1989), 116.
 40. These herbal remedies are mentioned in Geoff Crowther and Hyung Pun Choe, *Korea: A Travel Survival Kit* (Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1991), 45.
 41. *Japan Times*, 16 April 1925, 4.
 42. *Ring*, January 1923, 20. This was propaganda rather than truth—many excellent boxers including American Jack Dempsey and Australian Les Darcy did their best to avoid military service during World War I—but it was what was being said about boxing at the time of its introduction into Japan. See, for example, *Japan Times*, 20 December 1924, 8.
 43. Judging from published advertising, a boxing movie of the 1920s had more in common with “The Karate Kid” than “Raging Bull.” See, for example, *Ring*, January 1923, 20, where the hero of a film called “Fighting Blood” (1922) is described as “just the type of boy you’ll see at the counter in the corner drugstore—who overnight becomes a champion of the prize ring!” Likewise, *Japan Times* described Reginald Denny, star of another 1922 film called “The Leather Pusher,” as “an athlete, an expert boxer, a college graduate” with a handsome face and physique. (*Japan Times*, 13 January 1923, 7.) The similarity between “Fighting Blood” and “The Leather Pusher” is not surprising when you realize that both had the same screenwriter, namely H.C. Witwer. “The Leather Pusher,” by the way, was popular enough to rate a twelve-reel sequel that played in Tokyo during August 1925.
 44. *Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 2.
 45. *Japan Times*, 27 August 1938, 3; *Japan Times*, 31 August 1938, 3.
 46. During personal correspondence, martial art historian Graham Noble told me that he has

heard reports that Horiguchi's trainers also had him study *Motobu-ryu* karate. This does not seem unreasonable since *Motobu-ryu* founder Chokki Motobu supposedly knocked out a much larger Russian boxer during a 1921 Merikan match. Unfortunately, no one can agree upon when or where Motobu's fight happened. For example, in *Okinawan Karate: Teachers, Styles and Secret Techniques* (London: A. & C. Black, 1989), 77, Mark Bishop wrote that the fight took place in Osaka in 1921. But on page 34 of *Classical Kata of Okinawan Karate* (Burbank, CA: Ohara Publications, 1987), Patrick McCarthy wrote the match took place in Kyoto. For a description of Horiguchi doing kendo, see *North American Times*, 4 August 1939, 1.

47. *Japan Times*, 15 January 1925, 4; *Japan Times*, 21 February 1931, 2. As a woman named Shizue Tasuta said in 1933, "Whenever there is a knockdown in a match, I jump to my feet" (*Japan Times*, 8 May 1933, 8).
48. Ian Buruma, *Behind the Mask* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 193.
49. *Japan Times*, 8 May 1933, 8.
50. *Ibid.* Several decades later the Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima expressed similar ideas. Buruma (1984, 194) writes that many Japanese intellectuals report feeling "purified" after watching exhibitions of stylized violence.
51. I do not know the full extent of the prewar Japanese professional boxing circuit, but main event locations included Honolulu, Manila, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo, and whistle stops included Dairen, Kobe, Kyoto, Osaka, Seoul and Yokohama. If postwar patterns are any indication, then professional gambling syndicates were intimately involved in this circuit. And, as Japan's prewar gambling syndicates frequently cooperated with the Japanese secret police, the circuit perhaps served a secondary intelligence-gathering function. Reliable information with which to support or refute such conjectures is, however, unsurprisingly lacking. For a journalistic introduction to Japanese organized crime, see Kaplan and Dubro, 1986. For a similar introduction to the Japanese secret police, see Richard Deacon, *Kempei Tai: A History of the Japanese Secret Police* (New York: Berkley Books, 1985). The affiliation of the Japanese and American boxing associations was noted in *Japan Times*, 23 May 1932, 1. The association of gangsters with U.S. boxing is described in Jeffrey T. Sammons, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1988), 138-183. Articles describing a politically motivated assault on Baron Reijiro Wakatasuki by boxer Susumu Noguchi appear in *Japan Times* on 31 May 1934, 1 and 1 July 1934, 1. An article noting the arrest of former Shanghai boxing champion Paul Lojinkoff on charges of being a Japanese police informer appeared in *Japan Times*, 19 November 1945, 1. Finally, in "Meeting of Minds: The Grandmasters Speak," *Tae Kwon Do Times*, March 1992, 34, the Manchurian-born Tang Soo Do teacher Haeng-ung Lee noted that during his youth, Koreans frequently associated martial arts with "gangsters and hoods."
52. Machado, Michael D. (executive officer of the Hawai'i State Boxing Commission). Letter to the author, 23 April 1999.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Japan Times*, 29 April 1931, 8. In fairness, it should be noted that there were not many qualified referees in Japan during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Toward fixing this problem, Japanese boxing officials organized an association in March 1934 (*Japan Times*, 10 March 1934, 4).
55. *Japan Times*, 6 November 1931, 8.
56. *Japan Times*, 3 May 1931, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 22 October 1934, page unknown.
57. *Japan Times*, 4 November 1931, 8; *Japan Times*, 6 November 1931, 8. Japan's first radio broad-

“Fighting Spirit”

- cast of a live boxing card took place on March 13, 1931. The main event, announced by Mr. Matsuuchi, was a ten-round draw between Suelo Hirakawa and Jiro Kumagai. (*Japan Times*, 14 March 1931, 8.)
58. *Japan Times*, 29 April 1932, 8.
 59. My records currently show Jo having 12 wins, 1 draw, and 7 losses during 1933. (I say “currently” because I suspect I’m missing several Northern California fights.) Four of his seven losses came at the hands of Speedy Dado and Young Tommy, who were respectively *Everlast’s* third and fifth best featherweights in the world. The other three winners—Billy McLeod, Star Frisco and Little Pancho—were also highly regarded. Most modern fighters don’t have that many fights in a career. For example, Duk Koo Kim, the Korean who died fighting Ray Mancini in November 1982, had a career record of 17 wins, 1 draw, and 1 loss, and the Mancini bout was Kim’s first big fight. Researchers interested in seeing or adding to my tabular data may contact me via the editor. For details of Kim’s career and death, see Wiley, 1989, 114-122.
 60. During the 1990s, U.S. heavyweight boxer Tommy Morrison told journalist Arlene Schulman, “I would fight for an \$80,000 or \$100,000 purse. My manager would give me 67 percent, and then 40 percent went for taxes. There would be a fight for \$100,000, and my end would be about \$22,000.” And, as another fighter of the 1990s named Tony Tucker reportedly paid 120 percent of his purse to managers and promoters, Morrison’s manager seems to have been comparatively generous. Although the purses of the 1930s were smaller by a factor of 100, managerial greed was not. To give an example, Piston Horiguchi received a guaranteed \$1,000 per fight for his five fights in Hawaii in 1936. Fifty percent of the guarantee went to Honolulu fight promoter Steere G. Noda, and the rest went to paying Horiguchi’s hotel, training, and travel expenses. (*Japan Times*, 9 January 1936, 5; *Japan Times*, 9 June 1936, 5.) See also *Japan Times*, 22 January 1925, 4, where it is noted that the New York State Athletic Commission allowed main event fighters to receive no more than 50 percent of a fight’s gate, with the rest to be divided among the prelim boys. Morrison’s finances are discussed in Arlene Schulman, *The Prizefighters: An Intimate Look at Champions and Contenders* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1994), 59, 70. The Tucker case is cited in Jonathan Rendall, *This Bloody Mary is the Last Thing I Own: A Journey to the End of Boxing* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1998), 144-145. Of course, managerial greed was not restricted to North America. For an example of Japanese promoters cheating the Filipino fighter Don Sacramento, see *Japan Times*, 28 February 1931, 4.
 61. *Japanese-American Courier*, 19 August 1933, 2.
 62. *Montreal Gazette*, 8 November 1934, page unknown.
 63. Quoted in *Japanese-American Courier*, 28 July 1934.
 64. The men Jo beat in New York were Dick Li Brandi (December 4, 1934) and Charles Zeletes (January 11, 1935).
 65. *Great Northern Daily News*, 6 January 1938, 8. It is an adage in Western boxing that a boxer should avoid sexual activity while in training. The theory, which probably has roots in Galenic medical lore, remains popular into the present. See, for example, William Plummer, *Buttercups and Strong Boys* (New York: Viking, 1989), 91-93. Similar theories also exist in Asia. See, for example, Claude Larre, *The Way of Heaven: Neijing Suwen, Chapters 1 and 2* (Cambridge, UK: Monkey Press, 1994), 48.
 66. *Japan Times*, 26 March 1936, 5.
 67. *Great Northern Daily News*, 18 November 1937, 2. As with Teiken Jo and Piston Horiguchi, I have only incomplete records for Umio Gen. According to my data his record stands at 14

Community Reports: Joseph R. Svintb

- wins, 5 draws, and 20 losses. All the wins were in Asia.
68. *North American Times*, 2 February 1938, 1. See also *Great Northern Daily News*, 2 February 1938, 8; *Japanese-American Courier*, 5 February 1938, 3.
 69. See, for example, Andrew Guterman and Robert W. Smith, "Neurological Sequelae of Boxing," *Sports Medicine*, 4 (1987), 194-208 and Vincent J. Giovinnazzo, Lawrence A. Yannuzzi, John A. Sorenson, Daniel J. Delrowe and Edwin A. Cambell, "The Ocular Complications of Boxing," *Ophthalmology*, 94:6 (June 1987), 587-596.
 70. *Japanese-American Courier*, 6 August 1938, 3. As I have found no results for this August 9 Stockton match, I suspect that it ended up being rescheduled for later in the month. While the answer undoubtedly exists in the Stockton newspapers, I do not have easy access to these in Seattle.
 71. *North American Times*, 26 September 1938, 1.
 72. *North American Times*, 1 October 1938, 1.
 73. On January 24, 1939 Gen lost to Frankie Covelli in New York City. On May 29, 1939, he beat Piston Horiguchi in Tokyo. So, while I have not seen Gen's exact date of departure, it was obviously between February and May 1939.
 74. *Japan Times*, 30 December 1939, 5; *Japan Times*, 6 January 1940, 5.
 75. *Japan Times*, 9 March 1940, 5.
 76. *Japan Times*, 19 April 1940, 3; *Japan Times*, 30 April 1940, 2. The first was a six-round victory over Takeshi Kaido in Tokyo on April 17, 1940, and the second was a five-round victory over Shintaro Yamada in Seoul on April 27, 1940.
 77. *Japan Times*, 23 March 1939, 3.
 78. Although the *Japan Times* did not print sporting results between December 8, 1941, and August 15, 1945, boxing exhibitions designed to support the war effort probably continued until at least 1943. Japan's first postwar boxing tournament was held at Tokyo's Kokugikan Amphitheater on December 29, 1945. Organizers included the Filipino boxer Joe Eagle and the Youth Organization for the Reconstruction of Korea (*Japan Times*, 29 December 1945, 2).
 79. *Japan Times*, 5 September 1940, 5.
 80. *Japan Times*, 5 June 1933, 1.
 81. Letter from Thomas Yamaoka, December 14, 1998. Yamaoka was a Japanese American amateur and professional boxer of the 1940s.
 82. *Ring*, July 1948, 38.

From Professional to Manual Workers: The Lives of Korean Skilled and Family Reunion Immigrants in Australia

Gil Soo Han

Abstract

The majority of Koreans who emigrated to Australia in the 1980s include skilled and family reunion immigrants. Unlike those who came in the 1970s ("amnesty immigrants"), the arrivals of the 1980s entered Australia legitimately. While they were better educated and brought some capital, however, the majority have been limited to manual labor. In the context of capitalist development and the Australian economic recession, professional expertise did not help the arrivals of the 1980s, and their lack of fluency in English adversely affected their employment opportunities. Despite the popular and politically promoted multiculturalism policy, the structural disadvantages for Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) immigrants are so deeply embedded in the Australian society that the skilled Korean immigrants have not been better off than earlier immigrants.

Introduction

Korean immigrants are among one of the rapidly increasing Asian ethnic groups in Australia. It is estimated that there are currently about 33,868 Koreans in Australia.¹ More than 80 percent reside in the Sydney metropolitan area; the rest have settled in Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, etc. Korean emigration to Australia began with the coming of about 500 Koreans as tourists in the early 1970s, who had worked in the battlefields of the Vietnam War.² The majority of them came from low socioeconomic backgrounds in Korea, trying to escape unemployment in the 1960s, when the Korean economy was poor. They became permanent residents in Australia during the amnesties of 1974, 1976 and 1980. I have named them "amnesty migrants." Most Korean immigrants who arrived in Australia in the 1980s have come from middle-class and professional backgrounds; and those in the 1990s from the small entrepreneurial class. It is this latter group of skilled and family reunion immigrants that is the primary interest of this paper.³

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Australia is one of the most diverse countries with respect to its people's countries of origin. While it is openly claimed that Australia is a multicultural society, to what extent does Australian society welcome immigrants from Korea and encourages them to settle as "Australians"? To explore this question, I investigated the life of Korean skilled and family reunion immigrants who have come from mostly middle-class backgrounds in Korea. It is not my intent to be highly analytical about the question, but rather to describe the immigrant life of recent Korean arrivals in Australia.

The Settlement of Post-War Immigrants in Australia

Although mainland Europeans were welcomed to Australia as immigrants, their experiences differed from that of British immigrants to a great degree. During the immigration policy of assimilation (1947–1964), newcomers were supposed to acquire as quickly as possible the cultures and language of the established population of the British-Australian society, so that immigrants from many countries would merge and become indistinguishable. Because this policy was not successful, the policy of integration (the White Australia policy, 1964–1972), which was based on a pluralist ideology, was adopted. Governments recognized that it was not possible for different groups of immigrants to "melt" into Anglo-Australian society; instead, migrants' old national and cultural links could be maintained as a bridge to prosperous settlement.

The policy of multiculturalism (1972 to present) is based on a more radical pluralist ideology.

It was inevitable that the Australian society would have to change in order to accommodate newcomers; it was still assumed, however, that the changes would be minimal and that the major institutions such as the system of education, family style, justice and religion would remain unchanged.⁴ The policy of multiculturalism (1972 to present) is based on a more radical pluralist ideology. Ethnic leaders came to argue that all immigrants should be given a fair share of society's wealth and power as a right, instead of having to earn them through integrating into society. Governments had to provide actively the needs such as interpreters, language teachers, assistance with special health problems.

Until the 1960s, when the White Australia policy was still in action, non-British immigrants, no matter how highly professional, were dumped into menial and dangerous work and regarded as foreigners and a source of cheap labor.⁵ It was not possible for those to acquire a relatively high level of literacy and abstract thinking in a new country. Those immigrants, such as Southern Europeans who came from a rural background, found it difficult to be employed even in less-skilled jobs in urban Australia, because the work required a fair level of literacy and sophistication.

When Baltic refugees were admitted to Australia as a way of accom-

plishing the immigration target in 1947 to 1951, they had to work for two years in isolation from much of the population as directed by the government. The refugees contributed their labor to postwar reconstruction in Australia, and Australian workers enjoyed upward job mobility because the refugees had to begin at the bottom of the labor market. Refugees who complained against work conditions were threatened with worse tasks and even deportation. Many highly qualified personnel tended to remain in manual labor jobs even after the two years.⁶ However, in the mid 1960s, an increasing proportion of the population began to perceive that their disadvantage resulted from the structure of the society rather than from the fault of individual members. This social climate led to strikes at General Motors and Mt. Isa in 1964, and a riot by Yugoslavs in New South Wales (NSW) in 1966.

The "successful" implementation of the policy on the Baltic refugees laid the groundwork for the policies to be imposed on Indo-Chinese refugees in Australia in the 1970s. Of the many studies on them, a New South Wales study found that only 3 percent were menial or unskilled workers in their former home countries, whereas in Australia 83 percent took such jobs.⁷ These policies particularly explain how a significant proportion of NESB immigrants who comprise a reserve pool of labor, have not been successful in obtaining jobs commensurate to their qualifications. Such immigrants often live in inadequate conditions and tend to work in occupations requiring heavy physical exertion, the combination of which has serious implications on their health.⁸ Recent arrivals, such as the Turks and Lebanese, are worse off than the Italians and the Greeks (who arrived decades earlier) in terms of income inequality, poverty, housing, health, education and access to legal services.⁹

Method

In analyzing contemporary class structure, currently predominant approaches in social sciences such as cultural, postmodernist and poststructural perspectives tend to exaggerate some of the new features of the society that were not easily observed before. For example, blue-collar workers have decreased to less than 20 percent of the total workforce, while 75 percent of the Australian workforce are white-collar workers in the services sector. But it is the underlying social relationships in the workplace that are crucial to a class analysis. There is little difference between white- and blue-collar workers in terms of their control over the means of production, and over the labor of other workers and over their own work.¹⁰

In comparison with most Euro-Australians, NESB immigrants and their children still belong to lower socioeconomic groups, spend less time in education, and have higher rates of unemployment than those who have been in Australia longer. NESB immigrants are disproportionately concentrated

in manufacturing industries as semi-skilled and unskilled production-line workers and as laborers.¹¹ Compared to the Australian-born workforce, immigrant workers tend to work longer hours, have more overtime, and show less interest in forming or joining trade unions. This has been justified by the Euro-Australian perspective because of the NESB migrants' lack of English-language fluency and knowledge about Australian institutions and customs. Numerous studies of Asian immigrants, such as Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants, have been undertaken, but there has been a dearth of research on the Korean community in Australia, which consists of Koreans from various socioeconomic backgrounds in their home country.

To document their experiences, I interviewed 120 Korean immigrants from various socioeconomic backgrounds, including various health practitioners (biomedical doctors, herbal doctors, acupuncturists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, etc.) in Sydney. The data for this paper is largely drawn from my interviews with 20 male skilled and family reunion immigrants

Compared to the Australian-born workforce, immigrant workers tend to work longer hours, have more overtime, and show less interest in forming or joining trade unions.

and others. Each interview took one to three hours; questions were open-ended. As a Korean immigrant myself, I have stayed in Sydney only from time to time in order to collect data for my ongoing research on the Korean community. This has not only enabled me to confidently access Korean immigrants (in Korean) in Sydney, but has also allowed me to maintain a distance from them. The names used are pseudonyms.¹²

The Korean Nurses Association (KNA) in Australia now has about 80 members, including those not registered in Australia. As my wife is a member, I have known a few members over the last few years. This allowed me to contact them to a degree. The president encouraged me to participate in a picnic for the members' families, which happened to take place when I was conducting interviews for the study, and which gave me an opportunity to make myself known to the members. Without these opportunities, it would not have been easy to contact the nurses in the context of Korean culture, which tends to discourage married men from contacting married women. I tried to avoid interviewing those whom I had known so as to avoid bias. I conducted several informal and formal interviews with the nurses and their husbands.

Another reason I contacted members of the KNA was to talk to their husbands. The husbands of nurses in Korea are mostly university graduates and had been holding middle-class jobs or those commensurate with their training prior to coming to Australia. I had no presupposition that in Australia the husbands of nurses did not have jobs that were commensurate with their educational qualifications. I was most interested in meeting a wide range of Korean men who had middle-class jobs in Korea. The husbands of these nurses made up part of the category of family reunion immigrants.

Australia, the Land of Opportunity?

Korean computer technicians began immigrating to Australia in 1985, and most arrived between then and 1990. By 1995, about 130 male Korean computer technicians and programmers had immigrated to Australia with their family members, said Yun-sang Ha, president of the Korean Computer Technicians/Programmers' Association in Sydney. Ha said that the immigration of computer-skilled Koreans to the United States or Canada virtually ended by the early 1980s so that some members of the association missed out in migrating to either country.

Like most other skilled immigrants, the computer-related workers came to Australia because they wanted a better opportunity for their career and their families. Chin-ho Mun gave the following reason:

Returning to Korea after working in Saudi Arabia for three years, I was nearly suffocated with the human relations at the workplace, authoritarian public officers and the life in general. I simply couldn't put up with the stress of the salary man . . . This made me think about migrating to another country. One of my close friends came to Australia three years ahead of me and spoke about it in positive terms.

The skilled immigrants were generally critical of Korean society. They regarded Australia as a much better country in which to live than Korea. Despite holding jobs appropriate to their university education there, most of them were dissatisfied with the long working hours that adversely affected their private and family lives. Coming to Australia was a relief for them to a significant degree. Mun said,

Considering my personality, I find it comfortable to live in Australia. It allows a proper living environment for a human being. I haven't been able to accumulate a sum of capital, but I've never thought that Australia is not a good country in which to live. In fact, I still think it's a good country, although it's a disadvantage to be far away from close friends and relatives.¹³

Korean nurses and health-care practitioners began migrating to Australia in 1986. According to Su-jin Yi, a nurse and midwife, when she came to Australia as an English-language student one of her friends had just arrived from Saudi Arabia in 1986, and they were aware that there were four other Korea-trained nurses in Sydney. One had worked in West Germany, immigrated to Australia and was working as deputy matron in a nursing home; two had worked in Vietnam during the war and one of them had registered with the Nursing Board of NSW and worked as the matron of a nursing home, and another nurse migrated to Australia under the family reunion program and had just completed a preregistration course and registered with the board.

The education of nurses in Australia around that time was undergoing major change. In NSW the main nursing education site that had been in hospitals until 1984, was transferred to colleges and universities in 1985. The teaching institutions were not getting enough students to meet the number of nurses required by the health sectors, and there had already been a shortage of nurses in Australia. In that situation, the idea was put forward that the Nursing Board should recognize the qualifications of nurses educated overseas to some extent. Su-jin Yi told me that,

As I visited the NSW Nursing Board in Sydney, I was told that I should look for a hospital which might take me as a student nurse for three months. I went to the Westmead Hospital, where I was told to attend a refresher course, taught by an educator at the University of New South Wales, for six weeks. I undertook the program, sat a written exam [sic] at the end and passed. I went back to Westmead Hospital to undergo paid clinical practice. I learned that although the practice was generally supposed to take about three months at that time, there was no set time. In my case, I took six weeks of clinical practice and passed a written test. That is how my friend and I came to register with the Nursing Board.¹⁴

By that time, there were a few hundred Korean nurses working in Saudi Arabia who heard that Su-jin Yi and her friend became registered nurses in Australia. A significant number of them returned to Korea and came to Australia as English-language students. The possibility that Korean nurses could be registered in Australia was good news for some in Korea, and during 1987 and 1988, many Korean nurses came to Australia as English-language students. They paid a tuition fee to language-training institutions but did not attend classes. Instead, they went through a preregistration course to register as trained nurses. Those who completed the program chose a hospital to nominate them for immigration, went back to Korea and formally applied for immigration to Australia.¹⁵

This practice caused concern for officers of Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), however, because many of the nurses rushed through the preregistration program without enough English-language ability, which resulted in the nurses not being able to perform their duties satisfactorily. According to Yi, as overseas trained nurses were able to register in Australia in a relatively short period of time, DEET was concerned about the lack of foreign currency flowing into Australia. She argued that this was why colleges and universities came to be in charge of the preregistration program. As a result, overseas qualified nurses had to pay a tuition fee directly to the university or college, and following a period of time, they underwent clinical practice together with university nurse trainees. Korean nurses were not particularly impressed by this, as they had to go through the course with “poorly qualified ones” (instructors). Of course, the work was without pay. The overseas-trained nurses were also not happy with the policy that they

were required to do one and a half years of clinical practice before obtaining a Bachelor of Nursing degree, whereas the Australian trainees needed only six months.

Nonetheless, Australia's shortage of nurses was not resolved, and some hospitals began sponsoring the overseas nurses in the course for immigration even before they finished training. Yi told me that the Department of Immigration was supportive of the overseas trained nurses changing their visa status.

The female nurses have been the main applicants for the immigration of their family, and the husbands and children came as dependents. The reasons for emigrating by nurses and their husbands are similar to those of other skilled immigrants such as computer-skilled immigrants.¹⁶

Immigration and Adjustment

The skilled immigrants sometimes mentioned the positive aspects of immigration. However, what they thought of Australia or the reality of their life appeared to be a totally different matter. My question as to "what brought them to Australia" to Chin-u Yang, a computer-skilled immigrant who could not utilize his skill, and his wife seemed quickly to remind them of how anxious they had been to come to the "land of opportunity." However, it was quickly blurred by their hard life in Australia.

My wife wanted to come in the first place, though I had been in agreement with her wish. I thought that there were too many people living in Korea, and that as many Koreans as possible should leave Korea. I was also curious about Australia because in Korea it was commonly known as a "heaven on earth." However, it was not my priority to emigrate anywhere. But I couldn't help but be persuaded by my wife. So I was half willing and half reluctant to come.¹⁷

Sang-yun Kim, now in his mid 50s, worked for the maintenance of sports facilities at the Korean Defense Academy prior to immigration, and arrived as a skilled baker in 1986. He trained to be a baker for a year before he applied for emigration and his application was supported by his sister who had immigrated in the 1970s. He emigrated to benefit his three children's education and because he was in search of a country where he, as a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, could carry out his religious activity on Saturdays in Australia.¹⁸ He was a founding member of the church in the Korean community in Australia, and it became full-fledged in 1990.

Another couple, Ki-ju Yi and his wife, visited Australia for five months in 1978. They wanted to wait for a possible amnesty to come here so that their children could receive tertiary education. Although Yu is a university graduate, he was not sure whether he could afford his children's education in Korea.

Although his wife's ill health led them to return to Korea, he encouraged his wife to attend a cooking class in Australia, and his family emigrated in 1983.

The preparation of immigrating to Australia involved many farewell parties from their work colleagues, friends and relatives. Coming to the "land of opportunity" as "chosen" people was considered a privilege. The picture of the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House on the wall of the Australian Embassy in Seoul was a dream for them until they finally received their permanent entry visa. Although they felt sad about leaving their home country for good, they were only happy to leave such a congested place with many lingering social problems, known as the *Han'guk pyeong* or "Korean disease." Arriving at the Sydney airport, or the so-called "heaven on earth," they were full of hopes and it was too early to think about the troubles they would face sooner rather than later.

Immigrants were generally in touch with their acquaintances before their arrival, so that they were met at the airport. The friends assisted the new arrivals to rent a flat, choose schools for their children and receive entitlements such as the family allowance and Medicare. The skilled immigrants generally started their new life by attending the classes run by the Adult immigrant English Studies (AMES) for six months. While attending AMES, Sang-uk Hwang and his wife, who came under the category of family reunion, were able to visit most of the tourist attractions in Sydney every afternoon after class. They did not need to worry about their basic needs as they were paid a living allowance. They felt as if they were back in their dating period. This was also the time to meet those who had arrived in Australia around the same time and play Korean cards and drink or eat together. Those who traveled by the same plane or attended AMES at the same time easily developed friendships. Chin-u Yang, who came to Australia in 1986, said,

The first six months were the happiest period in Australia. I was happy because I hadn't yet come across problems. The fact that I had immigrated to Australia was enough to make me happy because it was hard to be selected.¹⁹

Skilled immigrants tended to spend another six months in the so-called Skill Max Program, which was designed to improve both skills and their English ability at work. After a period of six months to one year, their problems began. Hwang, who taught in school for 17 years in Korea, said,

[My wife and I] didn't know how to earn the bread in Australia Before coming to Australia, I thought that a little bit of work would suffice for our economic needs. I simply couldn't find work suitable for me. In addition, the children had their own problems adjusting to their studies and things We started to quarrel.

The problems they experienced during the first three years were complex. Although they were physically in Australia, their minds continually

swung between Australia and Korea. They suffered from homesickness and often wondered whether they would be better off going back to Korea. After about three years, they came to have a more informed view of what it was like to be an immigrant. Children adjusted quickly to the new school systems and the new society. In three years the children were reluctant to return to Korea, and the women were well in the process of adjusting. Hwang said,

After three years, I had become confident. I came to understand how I could fit into the new culture, society and how to behave. I was no longer too conscious of what others would think of me. Before, I used to worry that I might be smelly to [Euro-Australians] because of my garlic consumption. I gradually came to have peace of mind.²⁰

However, the men appeared to have remained largely dissatisfied. I asked Chin-u Yang,

What have been the most difficult things in the process of adjusting?

Loneliness or isolation at work. It was too hard to recover from the stress caused by having to start from the bottom of the hierarchy at work [despite my long experience]. I wondered whether I wanted to return to Korea or settle in Australia for good. In due course, my children were well adjusting. Then, it became impossible for me to go back.

When did you make up your mind to stay in Australia?

After three years.

In three years' time, why did the children and women come to like and enjoy Australia more than you?

They were given more rights in Australia. But for men, their status dropped dramatically. No wonder they didn't like their life in Australia at all. Children pick up Australian-thinking pattern quickly. I've lost the respect due to a father and husband, which I had in Korea. As children grow up, they hardly listen to parents and behave as they like. From a man's point of view, the longer they stayed in Australia, the less confident of themselves they were.²¹

Even though Yang and others seriously considered returning to Korea, it gradually became more and more difficult. They felt more or less stuck in Australia because their children were already well adjusted after a few years.

Man-yong Yi worked as a senior manager for a Korean construction company in Korea and overseas for several years prior to coming to Australia in 1987. He said that he had to do some menial work, such as cleaning, for his first four years in Australia, until he obtained a plumbing contract. He deeply regretted that he had immigrated.

The skilled immigrants felt that, among many things, the language barrier and racial discrimination had to be endured if they wished to remain in

Australia. The skilled and family reunion immigrants would have had better written English ability than the amnesty immigrants in the 1970s, but after having lived in foreign countries, some of the amnesty immigrants in particular seemed to have a relatively high level of English-speaking ability, which enabled them to be involved in small business. To be brief, I learned that the skilled immigrants did not seem to have an advantage because of their educational achievement. It may be more appropriate to say that no matter how able the immigrants may have been, their prospects tended to be easily undermined by structural forces (i.e., mechanisms deeply imbedded and practiced in Australian society).

Employment

Language Difficulties

I found that some skilled immigrants took up to a few years to be employed in any kind of paid work. Some were underemployed. In addition to structural barriers, the unfavorable economic environment might have contributed as well. I asked Mun-jip Yi,

What kind of work have you done since you came to Australia?

Learning English for a year . . . Then I looked for a job. I couldn't find one because of the economic recession. I registered myself at the Commonwealth Employment Services [CES]. The clerks said, "Even Australians can't find jobs; the chances would be worse for you with little English. Why don't you fill out the form to receive an unemployment allowance? There's no trouble in doing that." I was unemployed for about two years.

During an economic recession, immigrants easily fall victim to unemployment. An unemployment allowance is far from satisfactory. As Mun-jip Yi appeared to be frustrated with his work and life in Australia, I asked,

What do you think of Australia with regard to your work?

I'm still a mere plumber with a certificate and have no license to sign a contract. People with no prior knowledge about plumbing would usually take 4 to 5 years to be a qualified plumber. But those with some experience would have to attend a conversion course, which takes one year and is followed by another year at Technical and Further Education [TAFE]. The year at TAFE could be done over a period of four years, depending on the individual. I had no trouble doing technical subjects such as water supply, drainage, gas in a year. However, the trouble was the subject of business principles, which I couldn't pass. The subject is about running a business, but it was more of an English test to me. I passed all other subjects except business principle for the last three years. The 180 questions were subjective ones. That subject was the easiest one for Australians, but it was a

From Professional to Manual Workers

hassle for non-English speakers like me. I don't think it's fair The subject is useful for newcomers in plumbing. Although I understood the content, it was hard to express myself in English. I couldn't score 60 per cent of the subject.

Not being able to sign a contract yet, Yi found it sometimes difficult to manage his work, saying that,

When I carry out a task, I sometimes need to work in a team of a few people. But I can't pay others to work together. When I have to do a big task on my own, it's stressful. After paying the wages of others, nothing will be left for me.²²

However, Man-yong Yi, a business person who obtained the license to sign plumbing contract work, had his own problems. He said,

I often employ fellow Koreans under apprenticeships. They don't stay long enough with me. When they get skilled they want more pay. Finding suitable workers is a major problem for me. If I work as a plumber for others, it's rather easy and gives me peace of mind.²³

The skilled immigrants generally found that attending the AMES Immigrant classes for six months was not sufficient to enable them to mingle with their colleagues at work. Chin-u Yang said,

Work capability wasn't a problem. But I couldn't mingle with my fellow workers or be one of their colleagues. As I didn't understand what they said to each other I soon found myself isolated at work.²⁴

Yun-se Yi was an executive in an American computer company in Korea and immigrated to Australia in 1975, when he was transferred to a Sydney branch of the company. He told me of the complex links between racism, NESB workers' language ability and personality. He knew Mr. Kim, a computer programmer who worked with Yi for the same company in Korea. As Mr. Kim immigrated to Australia he approached Yi. Yi said,

Mr. Kim once lectured in a Korean university and is an intelligent person of great self-respect [pride]. I helped him find a job in Sydney. The trouble with him in the company was that as his supervisor was assigning him a task, he rarely asked a question of the supervisor. Mr. Kim would get to his work site and, after a while, report to the boss what he had done. The boss was repeatedly disappointed with the work results because they weren't what the boss wanted. I introduced Mr. Pak to the same company. Mr. Pak was also a capable worker, though with limited English ability. But he did well because he always asked and clarified when in doubt. It was natural that Mr. Kim became relatively unpopular and eventually tendered his resignation. He later came to me and expressed regret that my introduction of Mr. Pak resulted in his loss of the job.

Yun-se Yi argued that efficiency or productivity is what is most required at work; however, "a great degree of self-respect or pride" can cause problems.

He knows several Korean computer-related workers who have continued their work at computer companies, so Kim's personality might have been unpopular at any kind of workplace.

Why was one capable worker from Korea not able to survive his work and another able to survive? There seemed to be more than efficiency required. The problem is not only at the level of the individual but also at the level of the preexisting mechanism that expects the new workers to act differently from the dominant group. I mentioned to Yun-se Yi,

I was told that many Koreans have resigned because they couldn't put up with racial discrimination.

It depends on the individual. There are many workers from diverse ethnic backgrounds in my company. For example, people from Vietnam tend to have a high degree of self-respect [pride]. Those workers just concentrating on the work only without paying attention to human relationships eventually can't survive. Racism is a matter of how it is handled.

I mentioned to him again,

I was also told that some Korean computer workers couldn't be promoted because of their race.

It again depends on the individual. When I was appointed as a manager, what was important was my skill as a technician. As I got older I left the position and gave way for the younger generation. There were many "black haired" [NESB] managers in my company. I'm not sure as to how influential "black hairs" would be in decisionmaking. Eventually, what's required at work is work capacity and a good personality.

In fact, I managed to find Mr. Kim. While he appeared to be a person of self-respect [pride], I found his personality rather warmhearted.

Yi also said that,

Among many people in my company there was one person with a British background. He was a character. He worked for the company for 35 years, but he has never been abroad. He had traveled by air only once when he went to Tasmania. I wanted to offer him a cup of tea many times. He wouldn't respond. He was a kind of headache for me. I sometimes jokingly abused him in Korean. He asked me what I said. I told him, "I said, you are son of a bitch [sic]." As time passed we became friendly with one another. When I gave him a birthday card, he was so happy and hugged me Educated and intelligent persons wouldn't discriminate against people on the basis of birthplace. He had received only six years of education.²⁵

Yi has put an extra effort into overcoming structural racism manifested by his colleague at work. It would be wonderful if every immigrant worker could appear to be so cooperative and with a friendly personality at their work.

Although I was highly appreciative of Yi's approach, I was concerned about his continuing emphasis on "victim bashing." Although I was rather

impressed by Yi's constant effort to create and maintain a friendly relationship with the dominant group, I was worried about racial discrimination, which is deeply embedded at the level of structure, which determined, for example, how Yi and his Euro-Australian colleague would interact at work. There seemed to be an expectation that "a friendly climate" at work must be created by NESB workers rather than by the Euro-Australians. It was hard to explain how a well-educated person survived as a computer technician for 35 years and a university-educated and experienced Korean worker could not survive at the same job for more than a few years, although the amount of formal education could sometimes mean little.

Of the 130 Koreans who came to Australia as computer-skilled immigrants, only about 30 percent of them were working in computer-related positions. The rest were involved in menial work, such as cleaning, and a small number were involved in small businesses such as shoe repairing and key cutting. For example, Yun-sang Ha experienced difficulties in surviving as a computer expert and also encountered many other Koreans who had similar experiences.

Ha came up with his own opinion as to how to survive and he often made suggestions to the members of the Korean Computer Technicians/Programmers' Association:

The major hurdle is the language. If one stays in his job for five years, one should be all right. Working in a specified area requires a high level of language ability, but not in tasks such as coding. An ability to talk to the machine is all that is required for coding.

While most computer-skilled immigrants from Korea want to best utilize their individual expertise, limited language ability limits them to working on relatively simple or less challenging tasks. Experienced computer programmers' involvement in coding seems to be not only a waste of skills, but is also humiliating and alienating for professionals. Ha went on to say that,

When an experienced Korean computer worker comes to Australia he is easily tempted by numerous positions advertised in newspapers which offer attractive wage packages. It is important to realize that the advertisements are meant to swap the positions amongst [Euro-] Australians. It is an effective way of enhancing the profiles of the companies. When a Korean sends off about 100 job applications and does not even get called for one interview, he is quite frustrated. I tell the newcomer that once he gets a job, it is important for them to stay at least for three to five years so that he can improve his English and he may have an opportunity for promotion within the same company or elsewhere. I ask them to forget about what they did or how experienced they were in Korea. If he leaves for a better paid job before three years he will soon be weeded out. I tell them not to read the advertisements at all but to be satisfied with coding for a few years The Australian boss will quickly notice whether a new worker is happy with his work or not Limited language ability shouldn't be a

major hurdle in working as a computer worker. I really encourage them not to be involved in administration If they wish to settle in Australia they should relax and adjust to the new society for several months and try to learn good things in Australia. They get paid even though they don't work.²⁶

It seems that there are too many hurdles for a Korean computer worker to overcome before he is able to work like a Euro-Australian counterpart. The hurdles are more than the issues of language and culture. Only a small proportion of the computer-skilled immigrants from Korea remained in computer work, and the majority of them were not able to find a computer related employment at all. I asked Chin-ho Mun, a computer-skilled immigrant who arrived in 1986,

What are the problems for the computer-skilled immigrants from Korea?

I had enough problems. If I could utilize my previous expertise, i.e., computer work, it would have been good. But too many obstacles made it impossible. The language barrier was one problem, and the way in which work is distributed in Australia differs from that in Korea. For example, working as manager of a section in Korea, I didn't have to work on the software program. But in Australia, I had to start from scratch. I worked in the computer section of a banking company for five and one-half years. Starting at the bottom, I couldn't see any prospects for the future. I decided to leave the job and take up a small business. There are many cases like me.

In comparison with the overt racial discrimination experienced by the amnesty immigrants, which tended to be explicit, the skilled immigrants appeared to have experienced a more subtle variety. When I asked Chin-ho Mun why he left his computer work, he said,

I haven't experienced racial discrimination at work in an explicit way. My work is really about technology so there are Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. The manager was Vietnamese. I came across racism in everyday life. For example, I felt it when I had to face a police officer after breaching a traffic rule.

Mun seemed to have felt that there is definitely racism deeply embedded in the wider society. Mun continued to talk about his experience at work.

If you're a capable worker in Korea, you would be promoted. But here, no matter how good you are at your work, you won't be promoted. That's primarily because of your limited command of English. The crucial reason I quit my work was because I couldn't see the prospect for a better future at the job. Unlike with wage-earning work, faithful small business persons tend to get an appropriate reward if they work hard.

Emphasizing the significance of racism, he tended to ignore his lack of English, which is a basic tool at work. His survival as a computer programmer

for more than five years is a relative success. As Yun-sang Ha suggested, Mun might have been able to stay on at the job, provided that he had not minded doing rather mundane work and was happy with the given wage.

While talking to the various groups of Koreans in Sydney, including the skilled immigrants, I realized that they thought it was a privilege to have had a professional job that required a high level of communication skill. It seemed to be particularly so among the skilled immigrants. They already had held professional jobs in Korea and wanted to continue their work at least for several years but in a better environment such as Australia. They were not only highly regarded by the general public in Korea, but had been 'chosen' by the Australian government. Their reason for coming to Australia was not to be underemployed, nor to be involved in small business such as shoe repairing or contract cleaning. As I was concerned about why Mun had given up his expertise for the rest of his life I further asked,

Computer engineers in Korea have been generally known to have good English. Wouldn't you have been able to perform well had you stayed a bit longer?

I don't think so. How could I catch up with those brought up in Australia? It's an impossible task. My English might improve if I study consistently like you. It isn't a problem to work with the computer itself all day. As time passes English-language ability is highly required.²⁷

I concluded that Mun's work capacity was diminished because of his limited command of English and because the constant demands of his work deprived him of a chance of further improving his English.

Chin-u Yang, another computer immigrant now working as a shoe repairer, has low self-esteem.

Like your case, Koreans being underemployed worries me greatly.

There's nothing much I can do about it. If I can't freely express what I want to say, the last thing I can do is a menial work. That would be the bottom line to come up with an actual outcome.

Chin-u Yang regretted that he entered a wrong company, saying that,

My task was too specific, that is, developing a particular software. Such work requires continuing interviews and consultations . . . I should have worked as a computer technician. If I can fix a computer, the result is immediate and my ability would have been recognized. But the work I did required continuing communication and involved many trials and errors. If it takes too long to accomplish a task it's no good.²⁸

Mention should be made of the immigrant Korean registered nurses as well. Korean nurses think that it has now become almost impossible for a Korea-trained nurse to obtain registration in Australia. One has to take a written exam in order to be admitted to a preregistration program. Su-jin Yi

thought that even if an overseas trained nurse did get registered in Australia, there would be no chance for employment.

Korean nurses in Australia generally agreed that their clinical skills were good enough to have been well recognized by their colleagues. However, only one of the Korean nurses has been promoted to the post of nursing unit manager. What they complained about included the following, as Yi said,

How long can we sustain [maintain] lifting heavy patients, showering them and cleaning the bottoms of patients in the ward? As Australian nurses get older, many move out of hospitals and go into community work, where there is no physically hard work but only communication is involved. As Koreans find it difficult to manage busy work schedules verbally rather than clinically [sic] during the day, they don't mind working the night shift.

Korean nurses find it difficult to mingle with other nurses in the tea break. They get back to work after a short break. It isn't because they don't want to mingle, but because they aren't competent enough to be part of the issues under discussion in terms of both English ability and the knowledge about Australian society. Korean nurses tend to develop friendships with the nurses from non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds.

However, odd things go on among nurses. For example, the Filipino nurses sometimes attribute their misdeeds to the Korean nurses. This happens because Filipinos speak better English and they take advantage of it. There are numerous cases whereby Korean nurses are simply isolated Korean nurses are still coming to Australia, and they're getting registered with the Nursing Board. How can they fail as they have paid an enormous tuition fee? But they can't find an employer. How could they, since there are many qualified Australian nurses?²⁹

In another instance, Kwang-su Pak has taught Korean language in TAFE and universities in Australia for four years and earned a Master's degree in Australia. He is currently holding a half-time contract position in a university. While he tried to become involved in a research project and find full-time work, he thought that he should be far better than Euro-Australians to be equal to them. He said,

Many unqualified people are teaching the Korean language at university level. They have the least understanding about Korean culture and the backgrounds of the Korean language. As I've majored in teaching Korean, I could be better than many of them. It's problematic that those people form the dominant group. My experience tells me that Australian society isn't running on the basis of fairness.³⁰

Little Opportunity for Promotion

I observed that Koreans with professional skills found it hard to find a prospective employer and those already working see minimum opportunity

for promotion. Tong-gwan Kim said,

I have a friend who obtained an MBA degree. He was called for interviews numerous times but never selected. He and I think that had he been an Australian with his qualifications and experiences [sic], he would have been welcomed by many companies. My friend got sick of the rigid system which doesn't welcome non-Anglo Australians. He ended up doing an Associate Diploma in Accounting and managed to find a teaching position at an institution of TAFE, for which he was overqualified, but it was his only option.³¹

Chin-bom Ch'oe, another informant told me that

One of my friends worked for a banking company for a few years and quit the job to be a liaison officer for a Korean ethnic newspaper company. As he has grown up in Australia, his English is as fluent as that of an Australian. He said he didn't see any prospect for promotion.³²

Similarly, Chin-u Yang, who worked as a computer programmer for a few years in Australia, said,

Promotion at work is almost impossible. The longer they work the higher level of communication skills is required, which may have nothing to do with computer work Chances appear to be open for non-Anglo-Celtics. In reality, they aren't Australians would smile in front of you, but they may stab you in the back.³³

Small Business Entrepreneurship

One of the reasons that skilled immigrants came to Australia was to enjoy more than economic affluence, by maintaining professional expertise in the wider Australian society, rather than in the Korean community alone. However, after a few years of bitter experiences while in the process of adjusting, immigrants instead took on menial labor or small business ownership (requiring little capital) despite their hopes. Thus, their initial aspirations to enjoy more than economic wealth were shattered, and instead they turned back to the pursuit of economic wealth, which often entails very hard work and/or long hours. Whereas the matter of a decent or a better life was at stake initially, the matter of survival became more important.

Up to 60 percent of the Korean working population may be involved in cleaning, according to two Korean community journalists.³⁴ They also maintained that Koreans tended to be ashamed of their occupations if they were involved in menial work. Koreans in Sydney were likely to agree with this.

According to the 1991 Census, "Korea-born males were more likely to be employed as laborers and related workers (24.9 percent) and trade persons (21.9 percent)."³⁵ Considering the time of the Census and the fact that a significant proportion of the Korean amnesty immigrants were involved in

small businesses, the above statistics might predominantly have included the skilled and family reunion immigrants. If 60 percent is an exaggeration, then somewhere between 45 and 50 percent is more realistic. This was in part indicated by Kwang-su Pak.

My friends are working day and night. When I ring them in the night, I'm mostly told that they would be home soon. Even if I talk to them over the phone they tell me that they should go out to work soon. Their life is extremely busy.³⁶

However, what is certain is that a large proportion of the skilled immigrants are involved in menial work at present. Ki-ju Yi, who worked as a cleaner for several years, observed that,

Many *Kup'o* [the Koreans who have stayed in Australia for a long period or the amnesty immigrants] are doing business, such as running a food store or restaurant. There aren't many *Chungp'o* [Koreans who have stayed in Australia for a medium period or the skilled/family reunion immigrants] doing small business. Those who arrived from Vietnam are *not* generally involved in cleaning work at present, though some of their brothers or cousins who came to Australia under the family reunion program are involved in cleaning. ... Home cleaning workers are mostly university graduates.³⁷

A point Mr. Yi made was that the amnesty immigrants tended to be more involved in small business in comparison with other Koreans who arrived at other times. The skilled or family reunion immigrants were involved in manual work or small businesses that may have required a small sum of start-up capital. This has been indicated by Y. Kim's survey of small businesses in the Korean community in Sydney and Melbourne.³⁸

Sang-uk Hwang found that it is almost impossible to start a business without understanding the culture or consumption patterns in Australian society. After learning that he could not find an appropriate job, he and his wife wanted to run a takeout restaurant. He said,

[My wife and I] decided to run a take-away shop. We trained for a week to take it over. We found it extremely tiring. We had to do shopping early in the morning. There wasn't even time to have meals ourselves. Even after we signed a contract to take over a shop we had to cancel it. The premium required was A\$50,000.³⁹

They used some of the money in purchasing a house and some for buying an office-cleaning contract, which the husband and wife have been doing for the last seven years. They were often not sure why they were doing such a job and often cried together about it. Fortunately, they have recovered from a major crisis and now have a positive attitude towards their immigrant life.

Running a small business after experiencing many difficulties working for a company is not the end of experiencing structural racism or other difficulties, which NESB immigrants have to endure. I asked Man-yong Yi, who had a plumbing business,

Do you have any trouble with racism in running a business?

Well, it isn't terribly explicit, but I have to put up with it. It happens with the inspection of the work I've done. Whereas an Australian business person could pass easily, I've had some trouble. Well, I passed in one region but not in another region for the same result. If I complained I was told that it was a matter of the regulations. I often felt that had I been a yellow-haired [blonde] business person, I wouldn't have run into trouble at all. Racial discrimination is often not obvious as it's subtle, but it's there.⁴⁰

The type of small business popular among the arrivals were ones that did not require a huge sum of start-up capital because of the limited resources they brought with them. Since the 1980s, contract cleaning has been the most popular because relevant knowledge and skills can be picked up quite quickly.

Involvement in a small business creates its own problems for immigrants whose realities do not meet their aspirations, however. Running a cleaning business and home cleaning in particular usually involves both husband and wife in order to save on wages. Clients usually prefer to have the work done by a couple, a man and a woman. Kye-il Chin told me of the following incident:

There was a couple doing home cleaning together. Both of them were graduates of prestigious universities in Seoul. While they were working the husband lost his wife to one of their clients. What happened is as follows. One day, they went to a customer's place where an Australian man lived alone. He might have been a company director. He happened to take a rest for a period. One day, the wife broke a valuable piece of china by mistake. The husband and wife approached the customer, apologized, and suggested that they replace it. Since then, they worked more diligently and offered a better service. The couple maintained a good relationship between them. As she was a kind person and did a good job he might have found her attractive. One day, the customer confessed that he loved her. After weeks of thinking she decided to divorce her husband and leave their children. It's known that she has said she's much happier than before.

Chin went on to say,

How miserable it is! Having come far away to Australia for a better life he had lost even his wife. His hard work was all in vain. How painful it is for him! In order to offer a good education for their children, he left his good job in Korea and came to Australia. From a man's point of view, it's not possible to understand how his wife can live happily with another man.⁴¹

Status Anxiety among Male Immigrants

It is surprising to note that Koreans coming to Australia for their higher studies or to live permanently appeared to be prepared intellectually but were not prepared emotionally. Flourishing media information about life in more advanced nations such as Australia seem to have overwhelmed some Koreans. They seem to think that if they immigrated with a high level of skill or a large sum of capital, as well as good health, they could virtually survive anywhere.⁴² However, they were not prepared for the difficulty of using English in the workplace. Korean university graduates, who have studied English for six years at school and another four at the university, are not generally able to have even a basic conversation with a native English speaker. Contrary to their belief that if they are placed in an English-speaking country and study English as a full-time student for a year or so, they ought to be able to speak English almost naturally, most Koreans I met told me that this view is ill-informed. Not many Koreans seem to have attained a working capacity of English.

Most Korean immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s, however, had already established their own level of prestige and status in Korea, . . . so being limited to manual labor would be perceived as a loss of status for most of these people.

Compared with the Koreans who immigrated in the 1970s, the problem for the Koreans who arrived in the 1980s could be worse. Even though the psychological stress may be similar, the amnesty immigrants were prepared to perform any type of work, including manual labor. Most Korean immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s, however, had already established their own level of prestige and status in Korea, which is a hierarchically structured society, so being limited to manual labor would be perceived as a loss of status for most of these people. After attending an immigrant English-language course for six months or a year, many of the skilled immigrants and a small number of business immigrants, still not confident of their language ability, would be involved in some sort of basic employment, which as I mentioned is most frequently cleaning. This is where they start to ask, "Why did I come?" To survive, they are forced to put their past status behind them. This often adds to family difficulties and the disorientation of values as in the previous example. This kind of life is full of stress.⁴³

Unlike those in Korea, Korean families in Sydney are often dual-income families. According to the 1991 Census, a high proportion of Korea-born women in Australia are employed, as they have been influenced by customs in Australian society and financial needs.⁴⁴ This introduces an additional source of stress for males because if the wife earns more wages than, or as much as, the husband, it is as if the husband had "lost face." Children and wives generally seem to adapt themselves more quickly to the new lifestyle, than do the husbands/fathers. The reason is largely because they compare

what they had prior to migration with what they have now, and men are confronted with a double loss of status—first from having to work in a lesser job, and second from having a wife who makes as much as, or more than, him. Most overcome these difficulties, to a degree, in a few years, which means adapting to new lifestyles, despite dissatisfaction and humiliation. Only a small number become satisfied.

Those who have adjusted quickly to the immigrant life are often those who have given up much of their ambitions for material wealth and social status. Of course, they give up, not because they want to, but because they have little alternative. They become government officers to receive a stable income, which may not be a lot. Others may take up less prestigious jobs, such as cleaning, but work just enough to provide necessities, rather than putting in very long hours. This is known as a kind of “Australianization” among Koreans in Sydney, as this group of people give priority to family life and time spent with friends. Only a small proportion of Korean immigrants in advanced countries fall into this category.⁴⁵ The majority of them seem to be highly materialistic. Finding it difficult to mingle with non-Koreans, their interactive activities are generally with other Koreans.

Income and Home Ownership

The skilled immigrants at the time of their arrival in Australia were commonly in their mid- or late 30s. The skilled immigrants who lack work experience and who are older than 40 are disadvantaged and not generally admitted by the Australian immigration officers in Seoul. The sum of capital they brought with them would be no more than A\$100,000. This would not buy a home in a suburb of Sydney.

I asked one family, where the wife worked as a medical technician and the husband (Chin-u Yang) ran a shoe repair shop,

As you are both earning income, are your finances good enough?

Not at all. We're just managing despite both of us working so hard. As our children are in the high school, we have to spend a lot on them. We have to pay off the mortgage, etc.⁴⁶

Mun-jip Yi, currently working as a plumber, said,

There's no set income for me. If there's work for me, I earn. If not, I go without. It's fortunate that my wife has a set income. We barely manage after paying off the house mortgage. When my wife and I worked in Korea, we always had a large balance in our bank accounts. In Australia, we have no more than a few hundred dollars in our bank account.⁴⁷

Chin-u Yang, a computer immigrant who is currently paying off his house mortgage, said,

Of the skilled immigrants around me, the number who are renting accommodation is much more than those who are purchasing or own their own home. It's too expensive to purchase a house.⁴⁸

At the time of the 1981 Census, the median annual income (A\$20,733) of Korean-born Australian households was more than A\$4,000 higher than that (A\$16,490) of the total Australian population.⁴⁹ Pang-i Kim also found that home ownership among Korea-born residents was higher than that of the total Australian population. During this time, the Korean community was predominantly made up of amnesty immigrants. It was also within a decade since their arrival. However, at the time of the 1986 Census, the Korea-born community exhibited an income distribution that was only slightly higher than the median figure in Australia. Furthermore, very few of the Korea-born community lived in dwellings that they owned (11.3 percent) or were in the process of purchasing (29.5 percent). About fifty-five percent (54.6 percent) rented.⁵⁰ Since about 2,500 Korean families entered Australia as immigrants between the 1981 and 1986 Census, it suggests that the coming of the arrivals of the 1980s or the skilled/family reunion immigrants has lowered the total homeownership in the Korean community.

At the time of the 1991 Census, the median annual income of all Korea-born individuals ages 15 years and older (A\$11,100) was 21.8 percent lower than that of the total Australian population. Only 15.8 percent of Korea-born households owned their own homes and an additional 21.8 percent of Korea-born households were purchasing them, whereas 41 percent of the total Australians owned their homes and 27.1 percent were buying them. About fifty-six percent (55.7 percent) of Korea-born households rented.⁵¹ According to BIMPR (Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research) a probable reason for the low income of the Korea-born immigrants may have been due to the high number of foreign students, of which there were about 3,000 Korea-born students in Australia at the time.⁵² However, it is also important to take into account that the Korean skilled and business immigrants tend to have government allowances for the early years of their life in Australia and, more importantly, their income would not be as high as that earned by the Korean amnesty immigrants at the times of the 1986 and 1991 Census.

The relatively low median income of the skilled/family reunion immigrants may be attributed to a few reasons. First, the Australian economy in the 1980s was relatively unfavorable in comparison with that of the 1970s. During recessions, it is the immigrant who finds it most difficult to gain employment. Second, unlike the amnesty immigrants, the skilled immigrants were more reluctant to hold two or three jobs simultaneously. Even if they

wished to do so, the jobs may not have been as easily available as in the 1970s. For these reasons, the skilled/family reunion immigrants may take a longer period to own homes than did the amnesty immigrants.

Conclusions

Among many problems, the economic environment of the 1980s became relatively worse than in the 1970s and this adversely affected the life of the skilled/family reunion immigrants. James Coughlan suggested that the underemployment of Koreans from middle-class and professional backgrounds is in part due to the conditions of the preexisting job market in Australia.⁵³ For example, a computer science degree from overseas is of little help if most recent computer science graduates from Australian universities are unemployed.

I asked Mun-ho Kim, who arrived from Vietnam in the 1970s and was currently running a Korean restaurant,

Why are many skilled immigrants involved in menial work such as cleaning?

Well, it must be a cycle every immigrant has to go through. For example, when we [those who previously worked in Vietnam] first came we couldn't start a business straight away even though we had a bit of English-language ability. The first thing any Korean immigrant could take up is manual work. No matter how well qualified you are, you can't utilize your skill from the start.⁵⁴

Although Kim pointed out valuable aspects of immigrant life, whether many of the skilled immigrants who have arrived since the mid 1980s can ever hope to own small businesses as did many of the amnesty immigrants, is doubtful. Since the coming of skilled immigrants, home ownership in the Korean community has declined. Furthermore, fundamental expectations about the work and social life of skilled immigrants were different. Also, there was a clear difference in terms of the reasons for migrating. Importantly, the economic environment in Australia also has been much less favorable for skilled immigrants, which has had a significant impact on their economic well-being.

While 7,451 Koreans immigrated to Australia in the six years between 1984 and 1989, 270 of them (3.6 percent) returned to Korea permanently.⁵⁵ It is very likely that the predominant proportion of the returning immigrants would be skilled immigrants and the remainder would be business immigrants. In more recent years, the numbers of return migration from Australia was 188 in 1992, 215 in 1993 and 138 in 1994.⁵⁶ The process would be possible for those who had accumulated enough wealth to readjust to Korean society, where the cost of living and price of real estate is much higher than many advanced nations; likewise those who had maintained some real estate, and

where the cost of living and price of real estate is much higher than many advanced nations; likewise those who had maintained some real estate, and those who found a stable job in Korea, would be more able to reestablish their lives⁵⁷ It is unlikely that those who came to Australia in the 1970s would be able to return to Korea considering the reasons they had left their home country about twenty or thirty years before. This was partially indicated by Y. Kim's empirical study on Koreans in Australia engaged in small business.⁵⁸ *Haeeo Imin*, in its survey of the applicants for emigration, found that the higher the education, the more likely it was that the immigrant would return to Korea.⁵⁹

Although the skilled immigrants or the arrivals of the 1980s were university graduates and professionals in Korea, their lack of English-language fluency and the ruthless capitalism in Australia have not been favorable to their new life. A significant proportion of the skilled immigrants have ended up being menial or physical laborers. In addition, status anxiety has adversely affected the mental health of male immigrants. Despite the adoption of various immigrant policies in Australia, from this standpoint there appear to have been little improvement in the ways in which NESB immigrants are accommodated in Australian society. The problems are not only from the incoming immigrants but also from the dominant Euro-Australian society.

Notes:

I wish to acknowledge my fellow Koreans for having willingly shared with me the happy and unhappy dimensions of their immigrant life in Australia. I also wish to thank Matthew Benuska, who read an earlier version of this paper and offered valuable and constructive comments.

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9. Collins, *Immigrant Hands in a Distant Land*, 14.
10. *Ibid.*, 76.

From Professional to Manual Workers

11. Neville R. Norman and Kathryn F. Meikle. (Eds.). *The Economic Effects of Immigration in Australia*. (Sydney: Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1985), 96.
12. Interviews were primarily conducted in Korean. Regarding the presentation of direct quotes from the respondents, although I spoke to my Korean respondents in Korean, I have decided to reproduce what they said in “broken English” rather than in polished English in order to let it best reflect what the respondents meant to express. However, when a native speaker suggested some changes to make it more understandable, I did not have trouble taking the suggestion.
13. Chinho Mun, interviewed on June 19, 1995.
14. Su-jin Yi, interviewed on February 9, 1995.
15. Cf. Coughlan, “Korean Immigrants in Australia,” 386.
16. Su-jin Yi, interviewed on February 9, 1995.
17. Chin-u. Yang, interviewed on June 18, 1995.
18. In addition to long hours, businessmen in Korea work half-days on Saturdays.
19. Chin-u Yang, interviewed on June 18, 1995.
20. Sang-uk Hwang, interviewed on May 25, 1995.
21. Chin-u Yang, interviewed on June 18, 1995.
22. Mun-jip Yi, interviewed on June 25, 1995.
23. Man-yong Yi, interviewed on June 25, 1995.
24. Chin-u Yang, interviewed on June 18, 1995.
25. Yun-se Yi, interviewed on June 15, 1995.
26. Yun-sang Ha, interviewed on February 8, 1995.
27. Chin-ho Mun, interviewed on June 19, 1995.
28. Chin-u Yang, interviewed on June 18, 1995.
29. Su-jin Yi, interviewed on February 9, 1995.
30. Kwang-su Pak, interviewed on June 21, 1995.
31. Tong-gwan Kim, interviewed on June 31, 1995.
32. Chin-bom Ch'oe, interviewed on June 31, 1995.
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The Role of Korean American Organizations in Influencing U.S. Policy

Bruce E. Bechtol Jr.

Abstract

This paper reports the results of a survey of twelve Korean American organizations throughout the United States as part of a doctoral research program, which examined the role Korean American organizations play in influencing U.S. policy. Responses suggest that these organizations are playing an increasingly important role in influencing the foreign and domestic policy of the United States as well as the policies of the Republic of Korea. In addition, the comments articulated by respondents gave important insights into the attitudes and roles Korean American organizations have towards, and the growing role they are playing, in affecting policy. Korean American groups now influence policy as never before in American history.

Introduction

This paper articulates the results of a survey conducted as part of a doctoral program at The Union Institute during the fall of 1998. My goal was to determine the role Korean American organizations play in influencing U.S. foreign and domestic policy toward the Korean peninsula, and toward Korea-related issues here in the U.S.

I interviewed a number of Korean American organizations all over the country; these organizations were located in Boston, Massachusetts; Gainesville, Florida; New York, New York; Washington, D.C.; Charlotte, North Carolina; St. Paul, Minnesota; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, California.¹ Several of the respondents also had offices located in other areas of the country. All of the organizations interviewed are nonprofit organizations that can be categorized as non-governmental, or private, voluntary, organizations (NGOs or PVOs, respectively).

I intended to collect information on several key areas: the mission and goals of the organization, its most important function, how successful that organization has been in reaching its goals, and what other international and

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domestic non-governmental organizations, interest groups, political groups and churches it works with. The final two questions I asked were how clear an understanding the majority of Americans have of issues that are important to Korean Americans, and respondents' perceptions of how strong U.S. commitment is to the defense of the Republic of Korea. In short, my goal was to examine how much of an impact Korean American organizations have on U.S. policy, if recent changes in U.S. policy are at least partially because of Korean American organizations, and finally, whether the effect these organizations are having on policy is growing, and if so, by how much.

Background

The forces that influence U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula have changed greatly since the early 1990s. Hand in hand with this, U.S. policy regarding domestic issues important to Korean Americans also has changed gradually during the same time period. From 1950 until the early 1990s, policy toward the two Koreas was generally influenced the most by testimony before Congress by military experts and generals who were in command of U.S. troops in the region.

In addition, issues important to Korean Americans such as human rights, immigration concerns, promoting an understanding of security issues important to the Korean peninsula (including peaceful reunification), providing food aid to North Korea, and promoting a greater understanding of Korean American culture in mainstream America, were all but ignored except within the military and policy circles mentioned above.

Despite the fact that the government in North Korea continues to threaten South Korea, North Korea can no longer maintain the facade of *juch'e* (self-reliance), now that subsidies from the former USSR are gone.

Since the early 1990s, and particularly since 1993, the forces that influence U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula have changed dramatically. Major influences now include NGOs, academics, churches and Korean American organizations. The role that these organizations have played in influencing the policy of the United States in providing aid to North Korea, in moving towards economic and social agendas, and in addressing overall unification concerns in recent years cannot be discounted.²

Many factors have contributed to Korean Americans having a stronger voice in policy than ever before. Despite the fact that the government in North Korea is suspected of having nuclear weapons and continues to threaten South Korea, North Korea can no longer maintain the facade of *juch'e* (self-reliance), now that subsidies from the former USSR are gone.³ Because of this, the government there has been forced to open the country somewhat to NGOs, PVOs, UN aid organizations and diplomatic organizations. Many of

the aid organizations operating in North Korea today are heavily dependent on outside funds, some of which are provided by Korean American organizations. In addition, many South Korean aid organizations work closely with organizations here in the United States.

Korean Americans' concerns regarding immigration and the desire for greater understanding between Korean Americans and other ethnic organizations came under the spotlight following the Los Angeles riots in 1992. In fact, many organizations were founded following the riots in a desire to promote greater understanding and to thereby prevent similar events from happening again.

Policy makers in the United States are now influenced by Korean American community organizations as never before. The issues surrounding the Korean peninsula and the diasporic community here are now that much more complex, and can no longer be considered simply as matters of military strategy or simple politics. Issues on the Korean peninsula often go hand in hand with issues of concern to the Korean American community here. Human rights, immigration concerns, and minority rights are all issues organizations in the United States have become increasingly involved with in recent years; much of the effort has been undertaken by organizations such as the ones interviewed in this study.

Issues on the Korean peninsula often go hand in hand with issues of concern to the Korean American community here.

Given the fact that with the demise of the USSR, strategic events on the Korean peninsula have gained much more attention in the foreign policy arena, one would think that the role diasporic organizations have played in helping to influence U.S. policy would garnish more attention. However, this is not the case; in fact, there has been almost no research on the role that Korean Americans play in influencing U.S. policy. This is probably at least partly due to the fact that this is a relatively new phenomenon, though one that will now no doubt continue and attract more attention in the future.

By examining the mission and goals of Korean American organizations, what they consider to be their most important functions, how successful they have been in achieving their mission, who they work with, and what they feel the goals of U.S. policy are, it is hoped that a clearer picture of what issues organizations have influenced will develop.

I also have attempted to examine how these organizations go about influencing policy, and who they work with to accomplish this. Finally, this research will explore the importance of Korean American influence on U.S. policy by articulating their accomplishments, and perhaps even more importantly, by documenting the perceptions those interviewed have of their recent accomplishments.

Method

In order to gain a clear understanding of the issues in which organizations are involved and how successful they have been, it was important to develop a questionnaire that would both ask the questions that would give clear insight into issues addressed, and would be short enough that organizations contacted would take the time to answer the questions in detail.

A questionnaire of five to seven questions was drafted; each question was designed to minimize bias and contained variables that could be reliably assessed. This draft was then carefully scrutinized by several members of the Korean American community in the Washington, D.C. area to ensure the questions would be truly applicable. After several revisions, it was decided that the questionnaire would have six questions, three of which were multiple choice, giving the person interviewed a chance to choose all applicable answers, including "other" (in which case they would be asked to clarify). I also determined that when answering the questions, respondents would be encouraged to provide as many comments as possible in order to allow them to best articulate their response.⁴

Organizations throughout the United States were systematically contacted to ensure that the respondents would represent as wide a picture as possible. A variety of organizations dedicated to issues that affect Korean Americans here in the United States, be they predominately aimed at the Korean peninsula, or at issues here in the U.S., were selected. When contacting organizations, I attempted to interview individuals who could speak directly for the organization and represent its opinions and policies, such as the executive director, president, vice president, or other highly placed or authorized individual within the organization.

Organizations contacted for interview were found by in-depth research on the Internet, contact lists of organizations found at symposiums and seminars, and recommendations made by other organizations being interviewed during the course of research. A total of 29 organizations in were contacted; twelve agreed to give interviews. Others did not return phone calls, were too busy to do an interview, or were unavailable for comment.

Interviews were normally conducted over the phone. An introduction was made giving background on the research being conducted, and the list of questions was read to the person being interviewed. Some being interviewed preferred this way of conducting the interview; others preferred to discuss the questions over the phone and then receive the questions via fax or email in order to respond in writing. One organization preferred to conduct the entire process over the Internet, which was also very informative. All those who agreed to provide an interview gave comprehensive and informative answers.

Results

The results varied. Information derived from many of the comments given during the interviews was particularly interesting. As the results of the answers for each question are analyzed, many of their comments will be articulated.

The first question asked was, "What are the main goals of your organization?" (This is one of three questions that the person being interviewed was allowed to choose all answers applicable.) Many of the respondents did not consider themselves as organizations with the ultimate purpose of having an impact on U.S. policy. During the course of the interviews, however, it became obvious that every organization I contacted was doing just that. By going beyond their stated missions and goals, and examining their *activities and results*, I found that ultimately all of the organizations interviewed had goals and missions that impacted U.S. policy in one way or another—usually in terms of United States dealings with the Korean peninsula or in terms of policy that affects the Korean American community in the United States.

Table 1. What are the main goals of your organization?
(Please check all applicable)

Category	Percent
Promoting greater understanding between Korean Americans and other ethnic groups in the US	75%
Other (please specify)	75%
Immigration Issues	42%
Promoting Korean culture among Korean Americans	42%
Promoting peaceful reunification of Korea	25%
Providing food aid to needy North Koreans	25%
Promoting understanding of security issues important to the Korean peninsula	8%

The two most frequent responses were "Providing greater understanding between Korean Americans and other ethnic groups in the United States," and "Other"; of those that responded with "Other," there were many comments. These varied and included helping to reunite Korean families in the DPRK with relatives in the United States; connecting adoptees in the United States to other members of the Korean American community; providing education, training, and job placement for members of the Korean American community and other minority groups; promoting and safeguarding the civil rights of Korean Americans; encouraging Korean Americans to actively participate in the political process; lobbying for the passage of laws affecting the rights of Korean Americans; and promoting international cooperative research between South Korean educators and those in the United States.

The third most frequent response was "Immigration Issues." Approximately 42 percent of respondents gave this as one of the main goals of their

organization. Korean American organizations are actively involved in many aspects of issues relating to immigration. This remains a key goal of these organizations as immigrants from the Korean peninsula continue to come to this country. The same percentage also stated “Promoting Korean culture among Korean Americans” as a main goal of their organization, showing that maintaining and preserving Korean culture remains a priority for Korean Americans living in the United States.

Two other categories were high priorities by one-quarter of respondents. Agencies of the UN, including UNICEF, have stated that widespread starvation is a major problem in North Korea, which the country is incapable of handling without massive foreign aid.⁵ Thus it makes sense that 25 percent of those interviewed stated “Providing Food Aid to Needy North Koreans” is one of their main organizational goals.

The same percentage of respondents also stated that “Promoting Peaceful Reunification of Korea” is one of the main goals of their organization. Organizations in the United States and multilateral organizations both here and in Asia have made this a priority, particularly since 1994.⁶ Few respondents were directly concerned with military issues, however; only eight percent of those responding listed “Promoting understanding of Security Issues Important to the Korean peninsula” as one of their main goals.

The second question was also one of three in which those interviewed were asked to check all answers applicable (Table 2). The majority of respondents (67 percent) regarded “Advocacy on Issues Important to Korean Americans” as one of the most important functions of their organization.

Many of the respondents stated that advocating on behalf of Korean Americans was a high priority, perhaps the highest of their organization.

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Respondents also commented that this could often be situation dependent. For example, in 1996, the National Association of Korean Americans (NAKA) was heavily focused on a successful advocacy effort regarding the immigration laws being proposed in Congress.⁷ Having completed that effort, other functions such as fund-raising programs for those in need of food in North Korea (a category only eight percent of respondents said was *currently* an important function) could easily become a higher priority.

Fifty percent of those interviewed stated “Raising Awareness on Issues Involving the Korean American Community” and “Building Friendship Between the Korean American Community and Others” were important functions of their organizations. Examples of these two goals—such as voter awareness programs, community festivals, policy forums, community forums, and conferences—reveal how organizations accomplish these functions.

However, organizational functions extend beyond those initially consid-

ered. One-quarter of those stated “Other” as one of the most important functions of their organization. For example, The Global Korean Network of Los Angeles (GKN-LA) indicated linking overseas Koreans as the most important function of their organization.⁸ Resolving conflicts, information sharing, and policy development also were some of the activities performed.

Table 2. What do you consider the most important functions of your organization?

(Please check all applicable)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Advocacy on issues important to Korean Americans	67%
Raising awareness on issues involving the Korean American community	50%
Building friendship between the Korean American community and others	50%
Other	25%
Fund-raising for programs designed to help those in need in North Korea	8%

The third question tried to assess respondents’ perceptions of their efficacy by asking, “Based on the first two questions, how successful have you been in achieving your goals?” Those interviewed were asked to give specific examples of how successful their organization has been. The majority of those responding (67 percent) felt their organization had been “Very Successful.” All of the comments provided revealed that these organizations considered themselves successful in influencing policy both in the domestic and international arenas. Most of those who responded “Successful” (33 percent) said the reason was because they felt they could achieve even more success in the future.

There were many diverse examples of success. The Save North Korean Children foundation was successful in raising \$3,500 to give to the Red Cross in South Korea.⁹ The Korean American Coalition in Los Angeles and the Korean Community Development Services Center in Philadelphia have each expanded their missions to meet the needs of immigrants and address immigration issues through citizenship programs. They and several other organizations also raise awareness through holding community forums, participating in advocacy efforts, and holding press conferences to educate the Korean American community about important issues.¹⁰

In another example, Friends of Korea reached an agreement with the South Korean government to meet with President Kim Dae Jung, and in the fall of 1998, the Korean government paid to bring several Korean adoptees to Seoul to meet with President Kim to discuss issues concerning, and the needs of, Korean adoptees in the United States; another such meeting is planned in the near future.¹¹

The fourth question (Table 3) was the final question where those interviewed were asked to respond to all applicable categories. Of note, no organization participating in this survey indicated that it was working alone. The most answered response was “NGOs or Political Groups in the United States” (75 percent), followed by “Church Groups in the United States” (67 percent), “International NGOs” (50 percent), and “Interest Groups or Church Groups in Korea” (33 percent).

Table 3. Does your organization work at all with any of the following groups?

(Please check all applicable)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
NGOs or political groups in the USA	75%
Church groups in the USA	67%
International NGOs	50%
Interest group(s) or church group(s) in Korea	33%

Examples of coordination with NGOs or political organizations in the United States include joint advocacy efforts with other ethnic (particularly Asian) organizations on key political issues (several Korean American organizations are doing or have done this), and cooperation with other interest groups whose causes would be of interest to those in the Korean American community.¹² Many respondents also indicated that they work closely with churches in the United States. Two developments are of note: first, many of the organizations are active not just with local churches, but with churches in other metropolitan areas, often pooling information and resources to accomplish goals; second, churches are where grass-roots efforts directed towards raising awareness, or funds for aid efforts or other activities, are organized, often with the help or guidance of organization members.¹³

Half of those interviewed stated that they work with International NGOs; examples include Lutheran World Relief, the International Red Cross, several organizations of the UN, labor unions in Korea, the Global Adoption League, the American Friend Service Committee (a Quaker NGO currently working in *P'yeongyang*) and organizations involved in international advocacy efforts to support the Ottawa Treaty.¹⁴

In addition to involvement with NGOs by other organizations, the Korean American University Professors Association (KAUPA), for example, has worked with the South Korean Ministry of Education to organize conferences that address various ROK-U.S. issues, including those of economic cooperation and technology transfer.¹⁵ Clearly these organizations' involvement with the international organizations listed has an impact on foreign policy here in the United States. Those who reported working with churches or interest groups in Korea are all working on issues that have a commonality between the church community there and the Korean American church com-

munity in the United States.

When asked whether they thought the majority of Americans presently have a clear understanding of issues important to the Korean American community (question five), the response was overwhelmingly “No” (92 percent). Almost everyone interviewed thought that this was because mainstream media pays so little attention to issues important to Korean Americans.

The issue of families of Korean Americans in the United States and Koreans having relatives in North Korea is such an example. This affects families both in South Korea and in the United States daily, yet it receives no attention from the mainstream American media, so the average American has no idea this issue even exists.

Several of those interviewed thought that the reason for the lack of attention could be from commonly-held stereotypes about Korean Americans—that they are smart, successful, and have a history of taking care of their own. “Why should [Korean Americans] have any issues or problems that would be of interest to mainstream Americans?” has tended to be the attitude reflected in the mainstream media when it comes to covering issues important to the Korean community. In fact, as also was stated by many who were interviewed, the only time the Korean American community seems to get any coverage at all, it is in a negative light. Recent examples of this include the attention the community received during the Los Angeles riots or Congressman Jay Kim’s recent troubles with the law.

The second key reason given by several respondents as to why the majority of Americans do not have a clear understanding of issues important to Korean Americans was surprisingly pointed inward, at the community itself.¹⁶ Since large-scale immigration to the United States is relatively new (since the late 1960s), Korean Americans have until very recently spent most of their time concentrating on economic survival; political issues were not considered as important by many who also felt they lacked the English-language skills necessary to communicate their needs to mainstream American society.

Since the Los Angeles riots, this has been changing rapidly. Clearly, the founding of numerous organizations involved in policy issues, as well as the continued and steady presence of organizations that were founded years ago, has helped to involve many (particularly second- and third-generation Korean Americans) in the Korean American community in issues that are important to its members. This increase in involvement, a phenomenon that truly began about ten years ago, will no doubt bring increased attention in the mainstream media, and ultimately to mainstream Americans, to issues that are important to Korean Americans.

The final question explored respondents’ perceptions regarding the United States’ commitment to its defense of South Korea (Table 4). In the recent U.S.

“Why should [Korean Americans] have any issues or problems that would be of interest to mainstream Americans?” has tended to be the attitude reflected in the mainstream media . . .

Strategic Assessment for 1998, it was stated that the United States needs to demonstrate that it is in for the long haul and is an enduring, consistent presence that remains relatively well-insulated from political currents.¹⁷ Of those interviewed, most (42 percent) felt the United States was “fully committed” to South Korea’s defense.

Respondents’ comments suggest that while the United States commitment is strong, a review of current policy and a long-term perspective should be conducted. Several of those responding also said the prospect of easing sanctions against North Korea needs to be seriously reviewed. Respondents also stated that the United States needs to consider establishing some type of more serious diplomatic relations with North Korea, thereby opening the door for still more economic aid and perhaps another way to put economic pressure on a country where suffering is apparently the norm not the exception.¹⁸

Table 4. How strong does your group feel the US commitment is to the defense of the Republic of Korea?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Fully Committed	42%
Committed	25%
Partly Committed	8%
The US commitment does not currently fit the needs of the Republic of Korea	8%
My organization does not wish to comment on security issues (NR)	17%

Of the 25 percent who felt the United States was “committed,” it was commented that often U.S. policy analysts do not truly understand the issues important to the U.S.-Korea policy. Sometimes this has led to a commitment that though strong, is not as effective as it could be. Only eight percent of those interviewed felt that the United States was only partly committed.

One respondent said the United States commitment did not currently fit the needs of the Republic of Korea, commenting that with the USSR and PRC no longer perceived as threats, North Koreans are no longer in a position to wage war. Despite this, the United States still maintains the same military presence as it did during the Cold War. He felt security could be maintained with a reduced presence. This individual did not feel complete withdrawal was a good solution, and thought that even after reunification a presence would still be needed.

Finally, 17 percent of respondents declined to comment on this question (this was the only question that received such a response), because they were not involved in foreign policy and did not wish to take a particular stand on it. It is interesting to note that these organizations did not consider them-

selves to be involved in foreign policy, since activity in issues such as food aid to North Korea or exchanging adoptees between the Republic of Korea and the United States affects both the Korean peninsula and the United States.

Conclusions

Korean American organizations throughout the United States are making an increasingly important contribution to United States domestic and foreign policy. Stereotypes of Korean Americans as being a typical Asian ethnic group that reflects all the goals and values perceived to apply universally to all Asians, are disappearing gradually. Because this survey was conducted with organizations from all over the continental United States, and because respondents were varied and diverse in their membership and goals, it is likely that the responses presented in this paper are common throughout the Korean American community.

It is important to note that Korean American organizations still place “promoting greater understanding between Korean Americans and other ethnic groups in the United States” as one of their primary goals. This suggests that many still feel there is work to be done on this issue.

Many organizations also continue to be involved heavily in immigration issues. Advocacy efforts, education and training programs, and information sharing are all indications of an “open-arms” attitude among most Korean Americans to new arrivals from their homeland. These efforts will no doubt help to integrate new immigrants into American society, adding to the melting pot of ethnic groups the United States prides itself on welcoming.

While advocacy efforts by Korean Americans have not received a lot of ink in the mainstream press, it is clear from the success of many organizations such as NAKA and Korean American Coalition that these efforts truly make a difference. The future on this front looks very bright for the Korean American community, as more organizations and private citizens continue to become involved in public policy.

The same is true of these organizations’ efforts to raise awareness on issues affecting the Korean American community. Increases in Korean Studies programs, in consortium efforts involving Korean Americans and other organizations, and in fund-raising programs designed to help those in need in North Korea, reveal that Korean Americans have made solid inroads into building links between their community and others.

Of note, Korean American community organizations work actively with NGOs, both within the United States and internationally. This is interesting because when interviewed, some respondents stated that they did not feel as

The future on this front looks very bright for the Korean American community, as more organizations and private citizens continue to become involved in public policy.

though they had made a strong impact on United States foreign or domestic policy. Taking a look at the big picture shows that this is clearly not the case. Rather, by working with other international and domestic organizations, Korean American organizations are influencing policy regarding the Korean peninsula and in the United States on a daily basis. The same is true of their involvement with churches in the United States and Korea. The strong traditional family values reflected in most of those of Korean descent in the United States has formed a strong core for many grass-roots movements within Korean churches here that have provided a strong voice on issues affecting their community.

There has been a tremendous amount of growth in interest among Koreans living in the U.S. towards becoming involved in issues important to their community and to our country as a whole.

Korean American organizations also are having an impact on U.S. foreign policy. These groups have become more effective in recent years because of changes they have brought about themselves, as well as historical events. Changes in the way the United States deals with North Korea have been brought about because of the end of the Cold War. In addition, North Korea's ongoing famine dove-tailed with its continuing development of a military that possesses offensive capabilities and weapons of mass destruction, has made it possible for others besides military analysts to speak out on U.S. foreign policy regarding the Korean peninsula.

The economic hardship in North Korea has forced it to open up to alternative means of survival, often foreign aid. This has made the role of NGOs and PVOs much more important—particularly since 1994, when the hard times there began in earnest. In the Republic of Korea, the economic crash of 1997 has brought economic issues to a boiling point, and the role Korean Americans have played in the discussion of these issues in the United States has been critical.

However, the most important reason Korean American organizations now have a larger voice in influencing policy comes from within. Of the 29 organizations contacted, almost all had been founded since 1992. There has been a tremendous amount of growth in interest among Koreans living in the United States toward becoming involved in issues important to their community and to our country as a whole. This trend began in the early 1990s and continues today, picking up steam because of the complex and difficult issues that affect the Korean American community in the United States, and because of the problems on the Korean peninsula.

Specific examples include an active citizenship program, involving both advocacy efforts and an education program by the Korean American Coalition, and Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, both located in Los Angeles; employment and training programs and community improvement programs conducted by Intercultural Institute of California's Korean Cen-

ter; a yearly conference by Korean American University Professors Association that promotes international cooperative research between professors from the Republic of Korea and the United States; and the hosting of fund-raising events by Korean American Citizens League of New England for political candidates in Massachusetts, a drive that also resulted in substantially increasing voter registration (KACL is also actively involved in providing free assistance for citizenship applications).

Another excellent example is the recent successful trip by Friends of Korea members as part of a delegation from the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network (KAAN), to Seoul where they met with key high-level officials of the Korean government. This nonprofit organization has influenced policy by reaching out on behalf of families both in Korea and the United States. Global Korean Network of Los Angeles also has been active in linking Koreans together through its contacts in more than 20 countries and has so far managed to reunite 70 adoptees with their birth parents. Korean Community Development Services Center has successfully addressed immigration issues and now receives funding from both state and private endowments.

The National Association of Korean Americans, which has chapters all over the country, has done many things to influence U.S. policy. The most recent is NAKA's ongoing effort with many others to increase food aid to North Korea. The Institute for Strategic Reconciliation also has been involved in this effort, as well as in running a successful program of policy forums on North Korea involving members of the policy-making and academic communities in Washington, DC.

According to Mark Kirk, senior counsel to the International Relations subcommittee in the U.S. House of Representatives, the United States contributed 83 percent of all food aid given to North Korea in 1998.¹⁹ No doubt much of it was because of advocacy efforts made by Korean American organizations such as the ones mentioned above and because of the efforts of such volunteer organizations as Save North Korean Children in Gainesville, Florida, which raised money to help with food aid for starving children in North Korea. Finally, community media organizations such as *Korean Quarterly* in St. Paul, Minnesota, help to promote greater understanding between Korean Americans and other ethnic groups using the printed word to influence church groups, local political groups, and others across the country on important issues such as the tragedy of separated Korean families, particularly those with relatives in North Korea.

Although the majority of Americans still do not have a clear understanding of issues important to the Korean American community, over time,

The National Association of Korean Americans, which has chapters all over the country, has done many things to influence U.S. policy.

and by increasing efforts by Korean American community organizations to educate the public, this will change. The traditional lean in the mainstream press toward cultures of European descent is changing, but slowly. As these organizations reach out, mainstream Americans are likely to gain a better understanding of Asian cultures that currently does not exist. Just as those of Polish descent are recognized as having a different culture from those of German descent, Korean Americans and Vietnamese Americans (for example) are very different. An understanding of Korean culture will grow as Korean American organizations are able to build bridges and promote information about the rich culture they contribute to American society.

Overwhelmingly, respondents interviewed were proud of being American. Correspondingly, the majority felt the commitment of the United States to their ethnic homeland was strong, though with reservations. Again, the ongoing process of creating a greater understanding of the complex issues involved in protecting the security of South Korea will ultimately help the foreign policy of the United States—a policy most Americans feel is necessary to maintain a strong, militarily ready presence on the Korean peninsula.

To conclude, Korean Americans are now actively involved not only in influencing U.S. policy at home and abroad, but also in influencing Korean government policy to an extent not seen previously. This involvement has become particularly important in the last five years. Continuing efforts by organizations in the community to change and influence policy are growing, and the evidence suggests the growth is rapid. As more Americans come to realize the contribution Korean culture is making to our society, I expect that the issues and values that Korean Americans consider important and stand for will continue to become more respected and integrated into the mainstream American mindset.

Notes:

1. Respondents included Friends of Korea, Korean American Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA), Global Korean Network of Los Angeles (GKN-LA), Korean American Coalition (KAC), Korean Center of the Intercultural Institute of California (IIC), Korean Community Development Services, *Korean Quarterly*, Save North Korean Children, Korean American University Professors Association (KAUPA), National Association of Korean Americans (NAKA), Korean American Citizens League of New England, and Institute for Strategic Reconciliation.
2. A recent example of this is the nationwide advocacy effort led by the Institute for Strategic Reconciliation. Participants included many Korean American groups, grass-roots-level church groups and international NGOs. An effort was made to appeal to the U.S. government to give 500,000 metric tons of wheat to North Korea and was successful (the wheat was given to North Korea in the fall of 1998).

Korean American Organizations and U.S. Policy

3. William E., Berry, Jr. *The Invitation to Struggle: Executive and Legislative Competition Over the U.S. Military Presence on the Korean Peninsula*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1996). 4-16.
4. A draft questionnaire was reviewed by individuals, both Korean American and others who are Korean specialists within the policy, academic and foreign affairs communities in Washington, D.C., and was then modified based upon their input.
5. UNICEF. *Update on UNICEF Activities in DPRK*. Office of Emergency Programs (New York, 1997). 6-9.
6. Ralph A. Cossa. *The Major Powers in Northeast Asian Security*. McNair Paper No. 51 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1996). 50-56.
7. John Kim (President, New York Chapter of NAKA), interviewed on November 8, 1998.
8. Mike Won (Global Korean Network of Los Angeles), interviewed on December 7, 1998.
9. Chun Min Sung (Save North Korean Children), interviewed on November 8, 1998.
10. Susie Ahn (Korean American Coalition), interviewed on December 17, 1998. Moo Yoo (Korean Community Development Services), interviewed on November 25, 1998.
11. Chris Winston (Friends of Korea), interviewed on December 2, 1998.
12. For more information on NGOs involved in humanitarian aid to North Korea, see "Humanitarian Aid in North Korea: What U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations are Doing." Available from Interaction (1717 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036), or on the Internet (www.interaction.org).
13. Young Chun (Institute for Strategic Reconciliation), interviewed on November 11, 1998.
14. The Ottawa Conference was convened in December 1997 for the signing of an international treaty banning anti-personnel land mines. By the end of the conference (convened 2-4 December 1997), 122 nations had signed the treaty, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction." Several notable nations did not sign, including the United States, Russia and China.
15. Hae Soo Oh (Korean American University Professors Association), interviewed on November 25, 1998.
16. Half of those interviewed felt that until recent years the Korean American community had not been involved enough in advocacy or mainstream politics on issues that affect their community.
17. ———. *1998 Strategic Assessment: Engaging Power for Peace*. *Institute for National Strategic Studies* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1998). 45.
18. Mark Kirk, Peter Brookes, and Maria Pica. *Mission to North Korea and China August 11-23, 1998*. Report prepared for the U.S. House International Relations Committee, 106th Cong., 1998.
19. Mark Kirk, roundtable discussion on North Korea convened by the Institute for Strategic Reconciliation on 11 February 1999 in Arlington, Virginia.

Reviews

A Nation of the Diasporic, Narratives of Survival

*Passages to Paradise: Early Korean Immigrant
Narratives from Hawai'i*
Daisy Chun Rhodes
Los Angeles: Academia Koreana, 1998

Gary Pak

In the winter of 1921, in Waialua, O'ahu, Hawai'i, my paternal grandmother, Sook Ahn Kim, died of appendicitis. My grandfather, Hyung Bo Pak, was a captain in the Salvation Army and believed that prayer was to cure my grandmother of her sickness. She left behind three young children, including my father, who was six months old.

Despite the numerous hardships they faced, being indentured laborers on Hawai'i's paternalistic plantations and domestic servants to their husbands, the women of the Waialua Korean plantation camp found the time to organize themselves and help in the survival of the Pak children; there were just too many Korean infants and children dying premature deaths. Thus, my father's survival was dependent on a line of Korean women from the community who shared with him, after feeding their children, their milk-swollen breasts. My father survived and later was able to give me life.

When I was young, during social events at the Kook Min Hur [*Kukminhoe*] clubhouse on Rooke Avenue, Nu'uuanu Valley, my father instructed me to greet every one of the first-generation women as "*Halmeoni*."¹ Much later, as a young man fresh out of college, my auntie, my father's older sister, told me this story of my father's survival. An epiphany came over me: I now realized why all these women were my grandmothers.

Reading Daisy Chun Rhodes's *Passages to Paradise*, a collection of thirty-three short narratives written mainly by the second-generation offspring of Korean immigrants to Hawai'i—many of whom I grew up calling "Auntie"

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or “Uncle,” their parents I would call “*Halmeoni*” and “*Harabeoji*”²—was a small celebration for me, a third-generation Korean American born and raised in Hawai‘i: the text empowered me with an organic identity, one that is rooted in the turmoil, the suffering and the rising consciousness of a Hawaiian working-class existence. It reminded me of family stories, such as the one above, that link my father and me with the lives and dreams and struggles of the Korean immigrants who braved those long Pacific crossings.

On another level, these are narratives (the title of which is a bit misleading as most of the narrators are of the second generation, born in Hawai‘i—which makes them American citizens and not immigrants) that signify the making of the Korean American in Hawai‘i.

The beginning of the last selection, a reminiscence by Rhodes herself, describes poignantly an underlying theme of this fascinating collection:

My family became firmly rooted in Wahiawā,³ which the Hawaiians called “a place of noise,” where no Korean was exempt from sharing another’s joys or sorrows. Absorbing our culture’s time-honored traditions, we second-generation children gathered closely into the folds of our parents, homes, church and community. All the while, we shared with our parents their every happiness and sadness.⁴

Thus, survival for these immigrants and their children came from the sharing of hardships and joys, from striving toward a collective vision of paradise. But more importantly, Rhodes’ project of gathering the oral histories about these times is a reconfirmation of a people’s organic relevance and legitimacy to the contemporary history of Hawai‘i.

The compilation of these stories became an “obsession” for Rhodes, especially after the death of her mother in 1979:

Her death became the starting point for my embarking on a river of knowledge I would take for years, and which has not ended.⁵

Returning back to Hawai‘i as an “extended visitor at her [elder sister’s] condominium,” the author began her “own passage,” searching the libraries for information and contacting other family members and long-lost acquaintances.⁶ A driving question she sought to answer was “why Koreans left their homeland.”⁷ But she also found the necessity “to validate the lives of these Korean pioneers as individuals, thereby sharpening the identity of a group of people previously referred to only as Koreans who immigrated to Hawai‘i”:

My forebears gave to me rhythms of language, music and dance, tastes and smells of foods and values of a strong work ethic and belief system. In these ways each of their descendants became strongly tied to the first-generation rites of passage. Therefore, many sections of *Passages to Paradise* are connected to particular documented historical events. Beginning with the news account of January 13, 1903, the arrival of Koreans to Hawai‘i is announced for them to meet the demand for labor in the then burgeoning Hawai‘i sugar industry.⁸

There is no seeming order to the narratives, and most of the selections are prefaced by a historical note, an excerpt from a contemporary newspaper, or a note by the informant, all of which provides a thematic relevance to a particular story. An excerpt from the *Evening Bulletin*, January 13, 1903, introducing the first narrative, suggests the first organic connection that Korean Americans have with the history of Hawai'i:

The Gaelic from the Orient this morning brought 102 Korean immigrants destined for the islands. In this party are 21 women and 25 children. The remaining 56 are able-bodied men. The Koreans came here to seek employment and their appearance in Honolulu is undoubtedly the direct result of the recent trip of E. Faxon Bishop to Korea. That attempt will be made to secure the men for the plantations goes without saying for the mission of Mr. Bishop was for the express purpose of seeking plantation labor to relieve the situation brought about by the cessation of the immigration of Chinese into the country The present immigration of Koreans is experimental. If they are found to be good laborers on the plantation and take kindly to the country, there is no question whether each steamer from the Orient will see a large company of these people.⁹

Koreans came to Hawai'i with a basic dream: to work and to save as much money as they could, then return to their motherland. Dola Ham Kim describes a scenario that was experienced universally by Koreans in Hawai'i:

When my parents came from Korea, they thought Hawai'i's streets were paved with gold. They planned to work for a while before going back to Seoul, where they were from. Instead, they had twelve children and lived, died, and were buried in Maui.¹⁰

What the narratives record is the marginal development of a diasporic existence. These pioneers faced a multitude of struggles and pain and frustration, such as the disappointment that Albert Kwong-Ho Kim's mother internalized when first arriving on the Hawaiian shores:

In Korea, my mother was a schoolteacher after having been a nurse [Her parents] wanted her to marry, so they showed her a picture of my father when he was young. She did not know at the time that when she decided to go to Hawai'i as a picture bride her husband-to-be was already fifty years old! My mother said she was disappointed and disgusted with her situation and wanted to return to Korea. The man she thought she was going to marry was young. Not old. But she married him.¹¹

But arrival on foreign soil also brought visions of a wondrous future, perhaps similar to Daisy (Young-Sil) Chun Rhodes' dreamy rendering of her mother's arrival on the SS Kawi on July 7, 1918:

I imagined her seeing the rise of mountains in the distance as the ship moved slowly through the channel waters past the island chain to the then Territory of Hawai'i. I imagined her seeing verdant volcanic moun-

tains, lush and thick with trees and bushes, fed by gently falling rain. I imagined her stepping to the rails in preparation to meet my father for the first time, and how she felt the warmth of a tropical summer. Perhaps she picked up her satchel and thought that, contained within it was her destiny, wrapped in pieces of cloth to be worn one time each—her wedding and funeral dresses.¹²

As the families grew with children, the need (and obligation) to preserve tradition and identity was felt strongly. Korean-language schools were established to ensure the life of the Korean tongue. John Young-Ahn Kim notes,

The Korean school I went to was at the First Methodist Church on Punchbowl Street. The second Korean school was at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church. At that time Martha Cho's father was the minister of that church We all went to Korean school. I was able to read *Hanmun*. Now, I am able only to read the simple *Kungmun* (colloquial *Hangul*, or modern Korean).¹³

The second generation, however, was integrating deeply into Hawaiian-American culture; several Korean men had married women of other nationalities, as in the case of Margaret Ok-Hee Lee's father, who married a Hawaiian woman and fathered a child. Inter-marriage between races clearly became a fact of life for Koreans of the second and third generations; beginning in the 1930s, Koreans of both sexes had one of the highest percentage rates of interracial marriages of all the ethnic groups (with the exception of Hawaiians) in Hawai'i.¹⁴

The increased interactions between the various ethnic groups evolved a *lingua franca*—a pidgin Hawaiian-English—which helped to develop a new hybridized culture. But learning standard English in the high schools was key to the American acculturation process, as Mary Moon Han depicts:

We spoke only Korean at home. When I attended kindergarten, called receiving grade at that time, I was given an English reader. I had learned Korean before learning English. My brother-in-law translated English words by writing the translation in Korean under them. I'd go to school and speak in Korean. But soon I learned English.¹⁵

More importantly, education for the Korean immigrants was the method to provide for their children a progressive, enduring vision of the future. With their homeland occupied by the Japanese and the Koreans in Hawai'i divided sharply by two rival political factions: the *Kungminhoe*, or Korean National Association, headed by Ch'ang-Ho Ahn; and the *Tongjibhoe*, or Comrade Society, led by Syngman Rhee.

Most Koreans looked toward education as the savior that would preserve, unify and lead Korea to prominence in an ever-growing, complex world, a strong sentiment that is reflected in Nam-Young Chung's account:

A Nation of the Diasporic, Narratives of Survival

[D]eep in the heart of every Korean immigrant, as poor as they were, was the knowledge that they were in a foreign land not by chance but choice. They had it in their hearts that someday they would liberate their country. I saw them working toward this day after day, month after month. Furthermore, they knew their adult days would be numbered while waiting for the liberation of Korea. So they had their hopes in the younger generation. They did everything within their power to educate and provide for the well-being of their offspring. And I have never seen it to fail how they put their best foot forward, made money flow for the patriotic cause.¹⁶

The second generation, however, was transforming into a hybrid of sorts that was claiming liberally to both a Korean heritage and a Hawaiian-American culture, a paradox that Nodi Kim analyzes:

When you are in Korea you really know you are Korean. I am proud to be Korean. I went to every historical site I could get into As far as nationality is concerned, I am an American. My parents were Korean and that is the culture I was born with, but it is a culture I learned as an American so I am an American. I can understand the values of the Korean culture because there are things I see that the Koreans have which I think we Americans should adopt.¹⁷

There were a couple of weaknesses in this book. First, the narratives seemed to gloss over the importance of the sometimes life-and-death conflicts between the Kungminhoe and the Tongjihoe on the islands. The contradiction between these two groups drove the heart of Korean political and social life in Hawai'i, affecting even what church a Korean prayed at (for the Kungminhoe member, it was the First Korean Methodist Church; for the Tongjihoe member, it was the (Honolulu) Korean Christian Church, founded by Syngman Rhee).

As a child, I went to the First Korean Methodist Church on Ke`eaumoku Street, the church of my maternal grandparents, and early on, knew that there was "another" church: "the Liliha Street Church." In my grandparents' time, there was never any social interaction between members of the two churches, though this began to break down during my parents' generation (and fortunately for me—before meeting my mother, my father was a member of the Liliha church).

Secondly, closer editing should have corrected the scattered errors primarily in spelling and punctuation. For example, several Hawaiian words were misspelled (e.g., "Ewalei" for Iwilei; "Mount Kahala" for Mount Ka`ala; "Eleeli" for `Ele`ele; and "Hawai`ian" for Hawaiian); a more disciplined look at Mary Kawena Pukui's definitive *Place Names of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1974) and/or her *Hawaiian Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986) would have easily rectified these errors in

spelling. But these are slight compared to the overall weight of the narratives.

Passages to Paradise should be read by everyone interested in the Korean diaspora. But let's take this one step further: All Americans should read this book, for it shatters the myth of a homogeneous, mainstream America. Collectively, these narratives prove that America is rather a fusion of multitudinous—oftentimes unrecorded and unrealized—voices. This book promotes a vision of an America that *is*.

Personally, I found in this book a reason to celebrate my own existence as a Korean American born and raised in Hawai'i. This book has been a passage of discovery for me, a discovery of the complex identity that was forged through the hardships and joys that were relevant to my Korean ethnicity and my Hawaiian-American culture. The writers of these narratives have become, in a small but vital way, my literary heroes as they have navigated me—and will do so in my future rereading—through a passage into the heart of my own existence.

Notes:

1. That is, “grandmother”—*Ed.*
2. That is, “grandmother” and “grandfather,” respectively—*Ed.*
3. I have taken the liberty to modify the spellings of Hawaiian words in the passages excerpted from *Passages to Paradise* to keep to the contemporary standardized spellings, which use the `okina (‘) or glottal stop, and the kahako (-) or macron [*due to typeset limitations, we had to use a tilde (~) in place of the macron for this article—Ed.*].
4. Rhodes, 265.
5. *Ibid.*, xiii.
6. *Ibid.*, xv.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, xvii.
9. *Ibid.*, 1.
10. *Ibid.*, 169. I personally do not know if many succeeded in the endeavor to go back to Korea on wealth accumulated and increased in Hawai'i; in my family's oral history, no one we knew actually went back to live in Korea. Many diasporic Koreans, such as my grandparents, did go back to *visit* but always returned to Hawai'i and their growing families who were already acculturating rapidly into American society.
11. Rhodes, 179.
12. *Ibid.*, 5.
13. *Ibid.*, 13.
14. Andrew W. Lind, *Hawaii's People* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1967), 108-109.
15. Rhodes, 89.
16. *Ibid.*, 89.
17. *Ibid.*, 165.

Identity Politics and the Transformation of Korean Identities in Japan

North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology, and Identity

Sonia Ryang

Boulder: Westview Press, 1997

Erin Aeran Chung

Until recently, Japanese minorities—including ethnic Koreans, Chinese, Ainu, Okinawans and *burakumin*¹—have been “invisible” because most are physically indistinguishable from the Japanese majority. Indeed, the foreign permanent resident population makes up less than one percent of Japan’s 125 million people, and cultural minority groups about four percent.

However, their predicament resonates with the difficulties and conflicts experienced by racial and ethnic minorities in other advanced industrial societies. Both as a living legacy of Japanese colonialism and as a threat to the Japanese state’s claim to an ethnically homogenous society, the persistent presence of the Korean community in Japan has shaped present-day attitudes and policies regarding immigration, citizenship and nationhood in Japan.

After Japan’s defeat in World War II and Korea’s subsequent independence from Japan in August 1945, Koreans in Japan were denationalized and more than 1.7 million returned to Korea.² The approximately 600,000 Koreans who remained in Japan founded the League of Koreans (or Choryon) with the primary purpose of repatriating all Koreans in Japan to Korea. However, this organization was dissolved in 1949 by the U.S. occupation forces because it was seen as a subversive organization with strong ties to the Japanese Communist Party.

The establishment of the pro-South *Mindan* [Korean Residents Association in Japan] in 1948 and the pro-North *Cheongryun* [General Association of Korean Residents in Japan] in 1955 divided the Korean community in Japan according to the two competing political regimes. Because both were founded as overseas organizations of Korean states representing overseas Korean na-

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tionals, they discouraged their members from acquiring Japanese nationality.

However, the unintended consequence of their rigid stance has been approximately 650,000 highly assimilated Korean permanent residents living within Japan's boundaries without full citizenship rights.³ About 90 per-

cent of these Koreans were born in Japan, and the vast majority cannot speak Korean. In terms of language, cultural "literacy," residence and, often, physical appearance, they are indistinguishable from those that are identified as having "pure Japanese genes."⁴ However, without Japanese citizenship, tax-paying Korean residents cannot vote or hold public office. Accordingly, not only do Korean residents make up the second-largest minority group in Japan, they also make up Japan's largest foreign community.

Not since Changsoo Lee and George DeVos's seminal 1981 English-language publication on Koreans in Japan has there been such a comprehensive social-scientific study of this community in English.

Sonia Ryang's study of *Cheongryun* is an invaluable contribution to the literature on Koreans in Japan. Not since Changsoo Lee and George DeVos's seminal 1981 English-language publication on Koreans in Japan has there been such a comprehensive social-scientific study of this community in English.⁵ Based on two years of fieldwork in the Tokyo area, Japanese government documents, publications by *Cheongryun*, and secondary materials in English, Japanese and Korean, Ryang's work fills a gap in the literature on Koreans in Japan that is the first of its kind not only in English but also in Japanese and Korean—an anthropological study of three generations of *Cheongryun* Koreans in Japan rich in ethnographic detail and free of the bias that plagues much of the literature written to glorify or condemn North Korea by pro- or anti-*Cheongryun* ideologues. By painting a portrait of the *Cheongryun* organization and its members across generations, Ryang presents a dynamic picture of a relatively inaccessible community that enriches our understanding not only of Koreans in Japan but also of Japanese and North Korean society as well.

As she states in her introduction, Ryang is concerned primarily with explaining "how *Cheongryun* forms and maintains the North Korean identity in Japan" (2). By concentrating on the "interlocking relations and indissoluble connections" between language, ideology and identity in *Cheongryun* over time, Ryang explores the structure and mechanism "by which *Cheongryun's* organizational identity is produced and the social effect *Cheongryun's* self-representation generates both inside and outside its organizational boundaries" (2, 11).

Accordingly, she offers an alternative approach to anthropological studies of Japan in English that, according to the author, have been plagued by two central problems since Ruth Benedict's classic wartime study, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*: 1) lack of historical perspective and 2) essentialist objectification of Japanese society under a particular keyword (8-10).⁶

She argues that English-language studies of Koreans in Japan—focus-

ing largely on “suffering” Koreans or “oppressive” Japanese government and society—also have tended to obscure “the temporal and spacial intragroup diversity of Koreans” (p. 10). Rather than employ the term “overseas nationals of North Korea” as a keyword to explain *Cheongryun* Koreans, Ryang seeks to “investigate the term in such a way as to ask why they use it to identify themselves, how they are made capable of using it, what allows them to do so, what compels them to do so and what guarantees their doing so” (11).

The book is divided broadly into three sections. Part 1 examines the institutional mechanism of Korean language usage within *Cheongryun* schools, including its acquisition process and its role in the identity formation of *Cheongryun* students (especially third generation individuals), as well as the effect of recent curricular reforms on the overall organization and social relations of *Cheongryun*. Chapter 1 provides a detailed analysis of *Cheongryun* educational institutions and pedagogy by concentrating on how Korean language is learned, performed and internalized within *Cheongryun*, as well as how this particular acquisition process affects *Cheongryun* Korean identity.

The Korean language that *Cheongryun* students acquire is limited to predominantly formal, text-dependent utterances as a result of censorship devices within the schools that aim to prevent the “Japanization” of Korean words (35). Because they do not learn conversational Korean at school, *Cheongryun* students tend to use Korean language only within the confines of *Cheongryun*.

Ryang notes that when she asked her interviewees questions in Korean, she more often than not received answers in formal Korean that flawlessly reproduced *Cheongryun* orthodoxy. Yet, within moments of “having expressed fervent devotion to the patriotic cause,” a couple of her interviewees switched back to Japanese to talk about their plans for “rather pricey vacations” to Hawai'i and Austria (39-40). As Ryang comments, “It was obvious to me that they could oscillate between distant and conflicting sets of values without self-doubt or hesitation” (40).

Consequently, identity formation among third generation *Cheongryun* individuals is, like their Korean language acquisition, partial and contingent. Rather than total indoctrination into the *Cheongryun* institution, individuals acquire a “dual competence” in the formal “performance” of *Cheongryun* ideology in “correct” *Cheongryun* Korean and in their informal performance of routine activities outside of *Cheongryun* conducted largely in Japanese.

In Chapter 2, Ryang discusses the ways in which second-generation *Cheongryun* members have attempted to address the discrepancy between formal *Cheongryun* education and the daily lives of *Cheongryun* members within Japanese society through radical changes in the curriculum.

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Part 2 provides a historical background to the formation of *Cheongryun* and explores how *Cheongryun* has reproduced and sustained its organizational identity within an often hostile Japanese environment. In particular, Chapter 4 offers an insightful discussion of the complementary relationship between *Cheongryun* and sectors of the Japanese state in answer to Ryang's central question: Why is *Cheongryun* permitted a space in Japanese society?

Ryang argues that *Cheongryun's* policy of noninterference in Japanese domestic affairs and its members' self-identification as "overseas nationals of North Korea" rather than as an ethnic minority or citizens of Japan, have relieved the Japanese state from the administrative burden of controlling a potentially subversive minority organization and the financial burden of providing better living conditions for its members.⁷ In turn, Ryang maintains that social discrimination against Koreans in Japan—or at least the threat of persecution by the Japanese state—has sustained *Cheongryun's* existence. While *Cheongryun's* strict adherence to Japanese law may have prevented the deportation of many of its members in the recent past, Ryang contends that *Cheongryun* elites also have "appropriated and augmented" this threat in order to strengthen the internal unity of the organization as well as to secure the organization's relative autonomy and self-subsistence (113, 115-117).

Consequently, the Japanese government and *Cheongryun* have overlapping interests from the existing structure of mutual noninterference. *Cheongryun* exists within Japanese society as "a lawful, self-governing body

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that not only rarely causes problems in society at large but also vigilantly checks its own members' behavior with regard to the Japanese legal system" (117-118). At the same time, as Ryang explains, these mutual interests are not necessarily intentional but have been "structurally determined" by *Cheongryun's* emergence within the post-1955 system in Japan (characterized by political stability and economic recovery).⁸

In Part 3, Ryang examines shifting identities across generations of *Cheongryun* members, focusing on the predicaments the second generation faces in building a future for *Cheongryun* as an organization for "overseas nationals of North Korea" *permanently* residing in Japan. Chapter 5 demonstrates the widening gap between *Cheongryun's* organizational identity and its members' extraorganizational lives through the story of a second-generation *Cheongryun* teacher.

The boom and bust of Japan's economic "bubble," the end of the Cold War, the democratization of South Korea, and the death of Kim Il Sung brought about significant changes in *Cheongryun's* organizational activities and in its members' individual lives. Many Koreans in Japan have shared the profits of Japan's economic "miracle" and, with the expansion of

communication channels and the liberalization of Japan's immigration laws regarding Korean residents, have been able to reestablish their connections with their relatives in South Korea and visit their "fatherland" in North Korea. Yet, rather than return to what was once described as a "paradise on earth," they have decided to keep their roots in Japan, where living conditions are better and where their sociocultural identities are more closely associated.

Meanwhile, the reformed curriculum in *Cheongryun* schools since 1995 has replaced the "grand discourse focused on Kim Il Sung" (204) with courses comparable to those offered in Japanese schools designed to prepare students for Japanese college-entrance examinations. As Ryang describes in Chapter 6, this transition has produced a third generation of *Cheongryun* Koreans who clearly demarcate their organizational identities as North Koreans in Japan and their everyday lives as cultural members of Japanese society. However, for the second generation, the discrepancy between ideal and reality has displaced both their faith in *Cheongryun* ideology and their identities as "overseas nationals of North Korea."

Ryang's unique position as a former *Cheongryun* member—what she calls her "cultural asset" (16)—provided her with liberal access to a community that normally shuns prying from the outside. At the same time, her years spent abroad provided her with tools for comparison, and as she notes throughout the book, her own position as a *Cheongryun* graduate who left the community prior to the 1993-95 curricular reform gave her almost as much distance from her subject matter—especially the third generation—as a well-informed "outsider."

Part of the appeal of this book lies in Ryang's ability to impart her personal experiences as a *Cheongryun* Korean with subtlety and in her ardor to understand the multiple and changing worlds of *Cheongryun* Koreans as both an Oxford-educated anthropologist who no longer lives in the *Cheongryun* community, as well as part of the second generation that underwent *Cheongryun* education in a political and social climate significantly different from that of the present day. Hence, Ryang negotiates her own multiple identities: "a British-trained academic," "a non-Japanese Japanese resident who normally lives abroad," and a *Cheongryun* Korean when in Japan (220)—throughout the book.

While "textualizing the world of *Cheongryun* Koreans" (220), she also "textualizes" her own position as "a subject-object" and the symbolic, discursive effects of her writing about *Cheongryun* Koreans in English, a foreign language that she acquired after she learned Korean and Japanese, and, at the same time, "a powerful, global, and invasive medium that is too ubiquitous in today's world even to be recognized as a foreign language in many non-English cultures" (223).

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In the introductory chapter, Ryang declares that she will take us on “a three-part ethnographical journey to consider the language, ideology and identity of three generations of North Koreans in Japan organized around *Cheongryun*” (2). Yet, the detours that Ryang makes may cause the reader to forget why she came in the first place. Indeed, I found myself going back to the introduction and table of contents several times to recall the central arguments of this book.

For instance, she does not relate her discussion of literature by Koreans in Japan (“The Writing Generation” in Chapter 6, 185-196) to her overall argument. Instead, we are exposed to a seemingly arbitrary selection of writings by not only second-generation *Cheongryun* Koreans but non-*Cheongryun* Koreans

As a result, her theoretical musings demonstrate the singularity of North Koreans in Japan and make it difficult to apply her study to other cases.

in Japan (whose voices are introduced for the first time in this section), without reference to their specific context or significance. At the end of this section, she writes only that “second-generation literature is both a reflection of *Cheongryun*’s reality, and at the same time, constitutive of this reality, in that it produces the discursive milieu in which *Cheongryun* life is narrated” (96). Can this statement not be said of all literature? Although she introduces the issues of class and gender in Chapter 6, Ryang’s treatment of these enormously significant issues in the *Cheongryun* community is hurried and cursory. Rather than grapple with the class and gender issues that her interviews unveiled, Ryang notes simply that class and gender identities are subsumed under the single identity of “overseas nationals” of North Korea.

Furthermore, the reader may often find herself in a haze of somewhat disjointed references to structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodern theories (7) that tend to obscure rather than intensify the specific insights that Ryang’s exploration of *Cheongryun* offers to understanding the interrelationships of language, pedagogy, identity formation and ideology.

For example, Ryang makes numerous references to linguistic theory in Chapter 1, only to highlight certain aspects that apply to the *Cheongryun* case or to demonstrate how exceptional the *Cheongryun* case is. However, this “slash and burn” approach to disparate, dense theoretical approaches to the study of language, education, performance, ideology, identity and so forth precludes the possibility for thorough engagement with any of the literature.

Indeed, it is difficult to identify a specific body of work that Ryang grapples with because she briefly analyzes most of these works only to test their applicability to the *Cheongryun* case and seldom mentions them again. Rather than offer an alternative explanation to the problems posed by these theories—or pose a theoretical problem in itself—Ryang lessens the rich insights that her empirical research offers by focusing inordinately on their “fit” with various anthropological theories. As a result, her theoretical musings demonstrate the singularity of North Koreans in Japan and make it difficult

to apply her study to other cases.

Thus, while Ryang is successful in discrediting the discourse on Japanese society as homogenous, her lack of comparative perspective tends to reinforce the idea of Japanese exceptionalism (202). She leaves us with few concrete tools for comparing *Cheongryun* with similar groups such as other ethnic, racial or national minorities in advanced industrial societies.

This absence is especially conspicuous in Ryang's chapter on "Diaspora and Beyond." Rather than assess the cross-national, cross-regional implications of her observations in relation to other Korean diasporic groups or even to North Korean society, Ryang summarizes her observations and compares her findings across the three generations of *Cheongryun* Koreans that she has discussed separately in previous chapters. A brief comparison to other cases or works on the Korean diaspora—such as Hyung-chan Kim's now-classic study of Korean immigration and assimilation in North America—would have made Ryang's contribution to the series on "Transitions: Asia and Asian America," published by Westview Press, more poignant.⁹

In fact, her ethnographic observations provide fertile ground for grappling with diaspora theory as it applies across political, national, geographical, generational and gendered boundaries.¹⁰ For instance, what role does the acquisition and performance of Korean language play in Korean diasporic communities not only in Japan but in the United States, Mexico, China, Russia, etc.? How does the increasing presence of recent Korean immigrants affect the "performance" of Korean identity among first-, second- and third-generation Korean residents? As a diasporic group, is there a collective self-identification among members of Korean communities that transcends territorial, regional, linguistic and cultural differences? Or is the Korean ethnic identity more a reflection of racial and ethnic politics in the host country?

Finally, it is ironic that Ryang chose to create a rigid line of division between *Cheongryun* and non-*Cheongryun* Koreans—even referring specifically to a North Korean diaspora in Japan (197-200)—when Koreans in Japan themselves do not live in such dichotomous worlds. While *Cheongryun* and *Mindan* as organizations may be at odds with each other, this separation and antagonism does not necessarily carry over into the everyday lives of all of their individual members. On the contrary, membership in these organizations can be peripheral, functional and/or interchangeable for some Koreans. As Ryang describes, the vast majority of *Cheongryun* members are originally from southern Korea and, therefore, their collective identity as overseas North Koreans is a political construction.

There are a number who are or have been members of both organizations for the purpose of expanding their networking opportunities. Others have

She leaves us with few concrete tools for comparing *Cheongryun* with similar groups such as other ethnic, racial or national minorities in advanced industrial societies.

changed their nationalities from North to South Korean (and thus their membership from *Cheongryun* to *Mindan*) as a result of marriage. Non-*Cheongryun* Koreans often send their children to *Cheongryun* schools not so much for the purpose of ideological education but so that their children can learn the Korean language and be among other ethnic Koreans.

Certainly, the process of identity formation among *Cheongryun* members is not unique to North Koreans in Japan. Yet, Ryang focuses primarily on the relationship between *Cheongryun* Koreans and Japanese society with scarce references to non-*Cheongryun* Koreans. A comparative analysis of *Cheongryun* and non-*Cheongryun* Koreans in Japan would certainly bring to light the ways in which members of the Korean community as a whole interpret and respond to their identities as Korean residents permanently residing in Japan, as well as how the Japanese state incorporates its ethnic and national minorities. Moreover, the generational shifts in *Cheongryun* are representative of those in the entire Korean community: the critical gap between second- and third- (as well as fourth-) generation Korean residents has created a crisis in the entire community regarding its collective identity.

... Ryang's study vividly portrays the multiple identities of the *Cheongryun* community as a whole and of its individual members across generations.

Despite moments of fragmentation and undeveloped theoretical reflections, Ryang's study vividly portrays the multiple identities of the *Cheongryun* community as a whole and of its individual members across generations. Her critical attention to detail in her interviews and daily observations in the community provide insights into the constantly shifting structure and mechanism of identity formation, the multidimensionality of competing ideologies (state and non-state) and the role of language in reproducing and transforming ideology and identity. Moreover, Ryang's "active intervention" in her study of *Cheongryun* Koreans through participation, mutual understanding and self-reflection destabilizes conventional understandings of the researcher and the "field," the subject and object, and the West vs. the rest.

In Ryang's words, "the anthropological 'other' is not just 'natives'; others are everywhere, including in one's own culture, class, family, and self" (222). Accordingly, *North Koreans in Japan* simultaneously opens the reader to the world of *Cheongryun* Koreans and to the world attempting to understand it.

Identity Politics and the Transformation of Korean Identities in Japan

Notes:

1. The *burakumin*, who make up less than 2 percent of the total Japanese population, have not been proven to be of foreign parentage but are descendants of historical outcasts who have been discriminated against since the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868). They are a combination of ritually “unclean” people, much like the untouchables in the Indian caste system, who traditionally worked as butchers, leather workers, and gravediggers. Although they were granted full legal equality in 1871, social prejudice against them is still extreme.
2. During the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), the Japanese government regarded the Korean population as Japanese nationals by virtue of annexation. Korean imperial subjects were eventually enfranchised in 1937. However, upon Japan’s defeat in World War Two, Koreans were stripped of their Japanese citizenship through the Alien Registration Law of 1947 and the San Francisco Peace Treaty with the Allied Powers in 1952. Postwar Japanese citizenship policies have been based on a community of descent and, therefore, native born Koreans do not automatically qualify for Japanese citizenship.
3. This figure refers to permanent residents only and, therefore, does not include newly arrived Korean immigrants. Only about 30 percent of the total Korean resident population in Japan have naturalized in the past 30 years.
4. For further discussion of perceived differences between Japanese ethnic minorities and “pure” Japanese, see John C. Maher and Gaynor Macdonald, eds., *Diversity in Japanese Culture and Language* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1995); Yoshio Sugimoto, *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Weiner, ed., *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (London: Routledge, 1997).
5. See Changsoo Lee and George DeVos, eds., *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
6. See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).
7. Note that *Cheongryun’s* emergence in 1955 as a nonsubversive organization was a distinct departure from earlier Korean leftist movements in Japan that often collaborated with Japanese communists and worked to build an East Asian revolution (see Chapter 3, especially pp. 78-91). The first postwar Korean organization in Japan to declare solidarity with North Korea—the League of Koreans, or Choryon—was dissolved in 1949 by the U.S. occupation forces precisely because it was seen as a subversive organization with strong ties to the Japanese Communist Party. For English language works on prewar and early postwar Korean leftist movements in Japan, see Edward Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan: 1904-1950* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951); Richard Mitchell, *The Korean Minority in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Michael Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan: 1910-1923* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).
8. Ryang describes the conditions of this “structural determination” as follows: Such a mechanism was not brought about and maintained by the intentional “conspiracy” of either *Cheongryun* or the Japanese authorities. It is rather a case where historically determined conditions generated and maintained the structure for the coexistence of *Cheongryun* and the Japanese state; with *Cheongryun* keeping to its lawfulness, the Japanese government would not have to deal with the problem of an “ethnic minority,” while *Cheongryun* could unite its affiliates around itself by perpetuating the rhetorical warning against the subversion of the “enemies.” The very absence of the notion of an ethnic minority from the

organizational discourse of *Cheongryun* was effective in consolidating it as an overseas organization of a foreign state, thereby defining it as belonging to North Korea, not to Japanese society; this was convenient for the Japanese government, in that it could turn a blind eye to the social, legal, and economic deprivation of Koreans in Japan (pp. 201-202).

9. See Hyung-chan Kim, *The Korean Diaspora: Historical and Sociological Studies of Korean Immigration and Assimilation in North America* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1977).
10. The works by William Safran, Leo Spitzer, Paul Gilroy, and R. Radhakrishnan provide comparative perspectives on diasporic populations with which to consider the implications of Ryang's study. See William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1.1 (1991): 83-99; Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, and West Africa, 1780-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); and R. Radhakrishnan, "Is the Ethnic 'Authentic' in Diaspora?" in *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, ed. Karin Aguilar-San Juan (Boston: South End Press, 1994).

A Story of Subversive Obedience

Doing What Had to be Done: The Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim

Soo-Young Chin

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999

*Sonia S. Sunoo*¹

Soo-Young Chin's book is the most compelling work to have sustained my attention during my fierce fight for survival following my stroke. The Dora Yum that grew up with me was a shy and quiet child, but as Chin unfolds Dora's life narrative, she emerges as a powerful and influential woman in San Francisco's immigrant Korean community.

Dora's early boundaries were her parent's restaurant and candy-and-smoke stand that was on the west edge of San Francisco's Chinatown. Then, there was my father's five-chair barbershop, the main door to his business painted in red and gold huge Chinese characters: "Korean Barber Shop." It was located just around the corner on Jackson Street. Another Korean-owned cafe had a red and white sign, simply marked, "Coffee Shop"; the parents had six children who helped out. One other business was Mr. Chun's Champion Shoe Repair Shop. Lastly, there was the Bath House. There were very few bathrooms in the homes in the early days. These five businesses made up the perimeter of "Koreatown."

It took Chin several years of interviewing Dora to research and reflect on the details of her rich life, and the effort was worth it. Throughout the book, Chin weaves Dora's life alongside her own, in the process constructing the two lives of Dora and herself, despite their age difference of more than two decades.

Dora is the daughter of Hang Shin Kim and Man Suk Yum, who were among the first early Korean immigrants to mainland America. She spent her early years in San Francisco's Chinatown, growing up in an environment of racial discrimination, the time of which she tells in detail. Raised as a Korean by her conservative parents, and devoted to serve the Korean community in San Francisco, she co-founded the first Korean community center there with her children in 1975. She visited Korea four times with enthusiasm; however, her behavior is very different from her fellow Koreans as she admits herself.

SONIA S. SUNOO and her husband, Harold, established the first Korean Studies Program in the world at the University of Washington in 1944. The program included language, history and civilization, which they taught. She went on to collect oral histories and authored *Korea Kaleidoscope, Early Korean Pioneers in USA: 1903-1905* (Davis: Sierra Mission Area United Presbyterian Church, 1982). She is retired and living in California.

In the work, Dora refuses to take credit for her contribution to the Korean American community. Her answer is simply, "Doing what had to be done."² Through her work at the California State Department of Employment, she found thousands of jobs for newly arriving Koreans in the early 1970s, and looked after their welfare selflessly, even becoming certified so that she could teach them English. She also initiated the hot-lunch services for seniors at the Korean community center.

Dora's schooling was interesting. Urged by her mother at a time when it was rare for Korean women to have schooling, she attended a girls' high school and attended the school's social affairs, including dancing, but recalls that no white boys ever asked her to dance. She felt very bad, but accepted the social status quo, and instead went out on Saturday nights to Chinese community dance parties, which she enjoyed.

Dora's untiring desire to serve and care for those less fortunate than herself reveals a strong commitment to moral action, as well as a remarkable compassion and kindness . . .

Sometime later, Dora moved out of Chinatown and joined the mainstream of the American society by purchasing a home in the still segregated suburb of West Portal. She wanted her children to be educated as Americans, not Koreans. She did not want her children to feel inferior, but equal to American citizens.

Soo-Young Chin's comparison of her life story with Dora's makes reading this book all the more fascinating. Although Chin was born in Korea and grew up in Southeast Asia, she finds common ground with Dora's background. Chin's anthropological approach makes such a comparative study successful. Chin points out that Korea was changing quickly after the 1945 liberation, when she was born there, and her father was involved in national economic development, whereas Dora's father was engaged in merely surviving as a small restaurant operator in Chinatown. These are two entirely different worlds, but Chin finds that Dora and herself carry the same Korean cultural constructions that had their origins in early childhood. Chin says, "Our experiences were remarkably similar," in spite of their different positions in their lives.³

Chin admires Dora's persistence and conviction in doing what had to be done for Korean American immigrants; her ability to rise above the conflicts and tensions in which she became embroiled in later years; her continued commitment to serve the Korean community in San Francisco. Dora's untiring desire to serve and care for those less fortunate than herself reveals a strong commitment to moral action, as well as a remarkable compassion and kindness, observed by the author.

The Korean American community honored Dora on her retirement with a *hwan-gap* party.⁴ The Korean seniors she had helped over the years organized the affair and sent floral pieces as tokens of appreciation. The local Korean Consul General recognized the affair as well. Reporters from all of

the Korean newspapers, Korean TV crews—in all, more than 300 people—came to participate and to honor her. “Dora was surprised at the magnitude,” Soo-Young Chin recounts.⁵

Who had influenced Dora? Her mother, Mrs. Yum, encouraged and assisted Dora in seeking her place in American society, yet in a manner acceptable to a Korean society that simultaneously pushed those boundaries.

Although Mrs. Yum embraced American egalitarian notions as a liberation ideology, she lived her life within the confines of a male-dominated, Confucian-influenced Korean-immigrant society, without access to mainstream society. She persisted in reshaping her possibilities in terms of this newfound American ideology, even though the only uncontested avenue available for her to express her new sense of being in the world was Dora.

Chin’s anthropological approach makes such a comparative study successful.

Her encouraging Dora to earn her own living counters the more conventional ideal Korean women had in the early 20th century, and could be constructed as an “every day form of resistance,” a strategy of disguised and undisclosed resistance, a “weapon of the weak,” if strength is to be measured in terms of material and social capital, Chin observes.⁶

What Dora was able to accomplish in her lifetime certainly speaks to a ferocious commitment and strength of spirit. *Doing What Had to be Done: The Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim* is a remarkable achievement by Soo-Young Chin. It provides rich material for those who seek to understand the minority experience—especially Asian American history—and the reader will be richly rewarded. I highly recommend it.

Notes:

1. I would especially like to thank my husband, Harold Hakwon Sunoo, for his invaluable assistance with this article, as well as my son, for his gracious computer support.
2. Soo-Young Chin, *Doing What Had to be Done: The Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), 3-4.
3. *Ibid.*, 110.
4. For Koreans, the hwan-gap is celebrated at the end of a person’s fifth 12-year cycle (age sixty), and signifies rebirth. Because of the death of a close family member, Dora Yum’s hwan’gap was not celebrated until 1986, when she retired from the Senior Meal Program at the Korean Community Center (Chin, 139; 163)—*Ed.*
5. *Ibid.*, 167.
6. *Ibid.*, 182.

Call for Papers

Korean American Historical Society *Occasional Papers, Vol. 5, 2000*

Korean American Historical Society invites and encourages submissions pertaining to overseas Koreans which reflect the diversity of the Korean emigrant experience, as well as new approaches to this subject in the humanities and social sciences, including (but not limited to) anthropology, economics, ethnic studies, history, immigrant studies, literature, political science, psychology and sociology.

Manuscripts should be original and not draw significantly from any previously published works. They also should not be submitted simultaneously to any other publication. All articles will be refereed to at least one outside scholar in the appropriate field.

The standard length for articles is 3,000 words for community reports, essays and review articles; research studies are 8,000 words or more. Manuscripts should be typewritten; double-spaced, with margins of at least one inch; and must be fully documented to facilitate fact-checking, with end-notes and a bibliography (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*).

Submissions should be accompanied by a separate title page indicating the author's full name, mailing address, telephone (and facsimile) number, and affiliation. Please include a brief vitae as well. Electronic submissions (Rich Text Format (".rtf")) via email or 3.5-inch floppy disk are preferred, and required if the work is accepted. Contributors should keep copies of works submitted.

Manuscripts received by **March 31, 2000**, will be considered. Korean American Historical Society will consider all manuscripts submitted, but assumes no responsibility for returning submissions unless accompanied by appropriate postage. Korean American Historical Society reserves the right to edit for space.

About Korean American Historical Society

Founded in 1985, Korean American Historical Society (KAHS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the collective memory of Korean Americans through collecting, maintaining and transmitting the heritage and achievements of Koreans living in the United States and abroad. Goals of KAHS include:

1. Annually publish *Occasional Papers*, a scholarly journal of oral histories, community research, book reviews, critical essays and reports. This journal is intended to present information and material for primary researchers as well as general readers.
2. Conduct and archive oral history interviews on the history of Korean expatriates in general, and Korean Americans in particular.
3. Maintain a library of books, photographs and materials pertinent to the mission of KAHS.
4. Organize and conduct seminars, symposia and other necessary activities.
5. Encourage the development of Korean American studies as an academic discipline.
6. Coordinate activities with other Korean community organizations for historical purposes.

Community educational efforts and heritage events supported by KAHS have included:

In 1984-85, KAHS published volume 1 of *Occasional Papers*, entitled Journal of Korean American Historical Society, organized a panel discussion on teaching Korean language to Korean children born in the US, and initiated the Korean American Research Project, a program to collect oral histories of Korean Americans in Washington state for a book length pictorial essay.

In 1986-94, KAHS organized and sponsored Yoojin Chung's P'ansori concert commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Korean immigration to the US along with a screening of the film, "Seop'yeonjae" (1993). Publication of *Occasional Papers* lapsed during this period due to the departure of the editor to Korea following the death of his wife.

In 1995-96, KAHS published volume 2 of *Occasional Papers*, and began advising the University of Washington's Burke Museum regarding three Korean displays for its "Pacific Voices" exhibit. KAHS also organized and sponsored a booksigning for Robert Hyung-chan Kim's book, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-ho: A Profile of a Prophetic Patriot*, with Susan Ahn Cuddy as a guest speaker (1996). KAHS also conducted a survey of Korean Identity Development Society's (KIDS) Korean culture camp participants, and sponsored its first student intern.

In 1997-98, KAHS published volume 3 of *Occasional Papers*, co-sponsored the Seattle Asian American Film Festival, provided staff support to help edit *The Deepest Love of My People: writings and memories of Chang Hei Lee*, a memorial to a local community leader. Staff and volunteers completed advising the University of Washington's Burke Museum regarding the Korean displays for its "Pacific Voices" program, advised regarding its Korean American exhibit, advised the Northwest Folklife Festival's "With One Broad Voice" program, and The Shoreline Historical Museum regarding its "Fresh Voices of the Community: Korean American Youth" exhibit.

KAHS staff also attended the Association for Asian American Studies conference and National Korean American Studies conference. KAHS received a collection of 284 books and periodicals from Arthur L. Gardner, author of *The Koreans in Hawaii: An Annotated Bibliography* (Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, 1970) Hawaii Series No. 2.

In 1998-99, KAHS published volume 4 of Occasional Papers. KAHS staff attended the 1998 American Historical Association and Association for Asian American Studies conferences to increase awareness of current issues regarding Koreans overseas. In September, 1988 KAHS launched its internet web site. Staff and volunteers advised The Wing Luke Asian Museum regarding its "Golden Roots" Korean American exhibit, and is helping advise Seattle Asian Art Museum regarding "A Visit to Grandfather's House" exhibit which opened in October 1999, and continued to work with the Burke Museum's "Pacific Voices" exhibit, who in October 1998 held a Harvest Moon Festival family day. In January 1999, KAHS organized a fundraiser featuring Korean American investigative journalist KW Lee and author Daisy Chun Rhodes, and supported by Korean American Professionals Society (KAPS). KAHS also received a grant from the Overseas Koreans Foundation for journal publication. This was followed by staff making presentations on Korea and Korean American history at Roosevelt High School in March, and at Korean Community Counselling Center's first annual Summer Youth Program in July.

Occasional Papers

Volume 1 was published in 1985 under the title, *The Journal of Korean American Historical Society* (LCCN 86658565, 70pp), and was a bilingual issue that featured the oral history of Joseph Hong (one of the first Korean American Alaskans), a panel discussion on teaching Korean to children growing up in the United States, and a critical essay regarding how the media portrays Asian Americans as the "model minority." Following the departure of the editor to an overseas teaching position, publication lapsed.

Volume 2, 1996, was released under the name *Occasional Papers* (ISSN 1088-1964, 120pp), and marked the reemergence of Korean American Historical Society. This volume included a five-interview oral history of the Sung-Hark Kang family (one of the oldest Korean American families in Washington state), a University of Washington study of students of Korean heritage, papers from the William Carlson Smith and Songmoo Kho collections, and a report on the third annual Korean American Leadership Conference, in addition to other articles.

Volume 3, 1997, (120pp) featured the oral histories of Korean Americans during World War II, a story of a Korean miner in Germany, and a history of Go playing in Seattle and the influence of Korean American players. An essay on Korean Americans in race relations by Elaine Kim, a report by Kun Hong Park and a letter by Soon Hyun were also included. Book reviews by Edward Chang and S.E. Solberg, followed by a review of Chris Chan Lee's feature film, "Yellow," rounded out the issue.

Publication of this journal is made possible in part
by a grant from the

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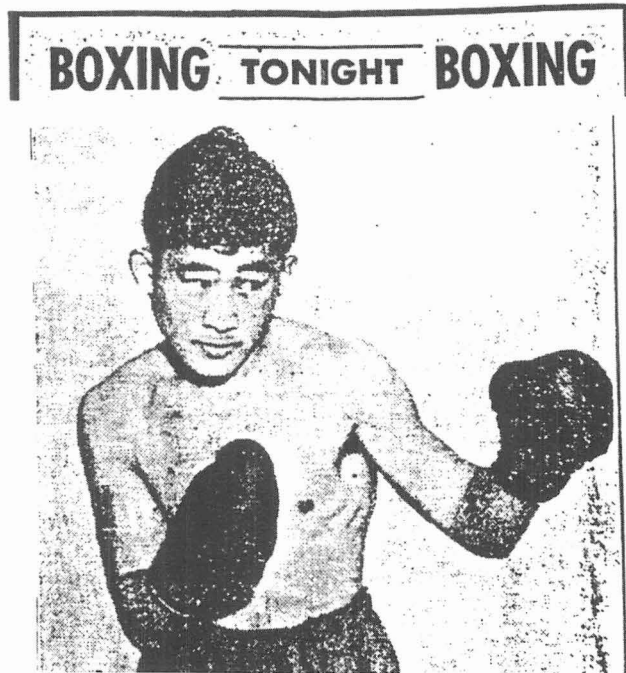
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