

Korean American Historical Society

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

VOL. 2, 1996

THE KANG FAMILY

An Oral History of First and Second Generation Korean Americans
During the 1900s

STUDENTS OF KOREAN HERITAGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

Community Research by
Kevin W. Madden Jae Hwan Kim Jesse S. Curtis

KOREAN STUDENTS IN THE 1930S: THE OREGON PAPERS

Collected by William Carlson Smith

KOREANS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Collected by Songmoo Kho

REPORTS AND BOOK REVIEWS

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COVER DESIGN based on an imperial Korean government passport issued to Mr. Duk Wha Ko, 1903 (*Their Footsteps*, p. 16 (Dr. Samuel S. Lee collection)).

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ISSN 1088-1964

MANUSCRIPTS SHOULD BE SENT TO: 10303 Meridian Ave. N., Suite 301, Seattle, WA 98133 (email kahs@arkay-intl.com)
The Editors will consider all manuscripts received, but assume no responsibility for returning them, and will only return materials accompanied by appropriate postage.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Available with membership. To become a member, submit application and fee to KAHS, 10303 Meridian Ave. N., Suite 301, Seattle, WA 98133.

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FORTHCOMING

FOREWORD

It is with a great sense of relief and satisfaction that we now put forward, after an extended interval of 11 years, this second issue of the Korean American Historical Society's (KAHS) publication. Our first issue was released in the fall of 1985, in a bilingual (Korean and English) format, under the rather ambitious title, *The Journal of Korean American Historical Society*. The promise of a periodic continuation intimated by that name was never to be realized, so we now give it a new name: *Occasional Papers*.

Our decade-long dormancy contrasts with the growth and vitality of the Korean community in this country during the same period. With a population reaching 1.5 million and a maturing second generation forging ahead in many spheres of American life, the community has been making its presence felt and its members' voices heard by mainstream America. Community consciousness has also risen to a new level too, through such experiences as the 1994 Los Angeles riots. The past decade has also been marked by a raging debate over ethnicity and multiculturalism in American society, involving intellectuals and politicians from both minority and mainstream circles. Much of the debate has centered around the tension between commonality and diversity in America, ultimately calling into question the very nature of America herself. Developments such as these have created a new relevance for our endeavor, and have spurred the resumption of our publication.

The stories told in *Occasional Papers*—oral histories, community studies, essays and reviews—constitute a chapter on the tale of the Korean diaspora that is unfolding in many parts of the world today. Yet, at the same time, these represent episodes taking place in America—a unique society of individuals seeking to make a community from a diversity of people and cultures. We are interested in telling and recording the stories of Korean immigrants as a relevant part of this broader American experience.

I invite you to read and enjoy this journal, and to think about what it means to be a Korean American in this great society of immigrants.

Sincerely,



Ick-Whan Lee

President & Publisher

EDITOR'S NOTE

It has been ten years since the Korean American Historical Society published its first journal under the title, *The Journal of Korean American Historical Society*. At that time, as the project director of the Korean American Research project at the University of Washington's Department of Ethnic Studies, Professor Daeshik Yu served as the chairman and founding editor of, and was the primary researcher for, the journal, and he planned to continue its publication. Unfortunately, he had to return to Korea to serve on the faculty at Pohang University of Science and Technology. The Society has been dormant since then mainly because there has been no one else to take over editorial responsibility.

When I was initially approached by Ick-Whan Lee, President of the Society, to become editor of this journal, I was rather reluctant to assume such a heavy responsibility, simply because I did not have the time to devote myself to it. I have now accepted the responsibility, not because I have the time, but because I am convinced that we need to create and preserve our collective memory, which is the backbone of any community life. But I cannot do this alone; I ask that readers support me and the Society by actively participating as members and in sharing what you know about important events and personages which will help us weave the colorful tapestry of the history of Korean Americans.

The Society intends to publish at least one occasional paper a year, and with the help of our readers, it may be quite possible to make more than one issue available per year. Much of it depends on your support for our endeavor. Let us then work together to enrich our community's collective memory. Our children and their descendants will get as much out of a record of our lived experiences as we put into the effort of creating it. Just as a person does not have true personhood without a biography, so too does a people not have true nationhood without history; a people without a history will perish.

The present issue is divided into four sections: The first contains three of a number of oral interviews conducted among Korean students from Hawaii by Professor William C. Smith in the early 1930's. In view of the fact that Korean immigration to America started in 1903 (with the coming of a small group of Koreans to work for the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association), it is important for us to record and maintain the oral history of those who were first born, raised, schooled and Americanized in the US. The second section presents the oral history of the Kang extended family. It begins with Mrs. Sung-Hark Kang, who was a picture bride. Marion VanDeel is the middle child of three sons and two daughters born of Mrs. Kang, and William Kang is the youngest child. Hor-Choo Kang is William's cousin, and is the only child born to the older brother of William's father; Ruth Kang is Hor-Choo's wife. The family was interviewed over a period of ten years, and we are indebted to the Kangs for their allowing us to publish their stories, particularly Sung-Hark Kang who recently passed away. We are also greatly indebted to

Professor Yu, who was the primary interviewer and without whom this section, and much of the journal, would not have been possible.

The third section includes two short essays on Koreans in the former Soviet Union, collected by the late Professor Songmoo Kho, and the fourth section presents a demographic and sociological analyses of Korean American students at the University of Washington. This study was conducted as part of a class project by students enrolled in a class taught by Anthropology Professor Kwang-Kyu Lee, who was on sabbatical from Seoul National University, and Major Kevin W. Madden. We are very grateful for their allowing us to publish this abridged version of the larger report. To date, very little has been done to research and report on the values of second and third generations of Korean Americans, and this report is a timely one. Finally, we have some new thoughts on an old book review, and a report concerning leadership in the Korean American community. Lastly, we wish to thank the Committee on the 90th Anniversary Celebration of Korean Immigration to Hawaii for allowing us to reprint selected photographs from their book, *Their Footsteps* (Dr. Samuel S.O. Lee, Editor; Seoul: 1993).

In closing, I encourage you all to become contributing members of the Society, and I would like to invite any comments and questions you might have to me.

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Koreans on a Hawaii Plantation (n.d.)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 30.

THE OREGON PAPERS

These three interviews are part of the archival collection deposited at the University of Oregon. They were originally conducted by Professor William Carlson Smith, who was then teaching at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. The interviews were conducted in Hawaii as part of a larger study which was later published as a book, *Americans in Process: A Study of Our Citizens of Oriental Ancestry*, (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Co., 1937). The book primarily dealt with second generation Asians of both Chinese and Japanese ancestries in terms of eight different themes: organizations, familism, ancestor worship, marriage, separation of the sexes, male superiority, celebrating the new year, and gambling. The interview data on second generation Korean Americans were likely not integrated because there were not enough interviews collected for the author to draw any general conclusions. The stories here are presented courtesy of Gary Y. Kim, Professor of Ethnic Studies, College of Liberal Arts, University of Oregon (Eugene).

Story One

My father was one of seven sons born to a farmer, and was educated in one of the schools in P'yeongyang, the capital of a state in Korea.¹ There he became a scholar and was ready to become a teacher when duties at home called him back; he took to being a farmer, and had no occasion to be a teacher. My mother was one of four daughters. As it was the custom of Koreans not to educate women, mother was illiterate until she became a Christian in 1885.

In 1904, after a great many hardships and useless efforts on his farm, father left Korea with my mother, two brothers and a sister. He settled in Ewa as an immigrant and became a plantation laborer.² There he barely earned enough to keep up with the family needs, but mother took in washing, and with the meager earnings of father, they managed.

A year later, my grandmother came from Korea, and in the following year, 1906, on January sixteenth,

I was born. Soon after, another brother joined us. With mother's and grandmother's consistent and untiring care and patience, we managed to save enough to buy a piece of coffee land in Kona, and moved there when I was five.

To recollect my life in Kona is to bring back happy memories of the land of donkeys and coffee (Kona is noted for her nightingales). It was there that I became conscious of myself; of my desire to read and write. I remember how anxiously and covetously I watched my older brothers and sisters studying.

We had quite a number of acres of land. Our home was built in its midst—a two-story house, homey and comfortable. As there was no water or sewage system, we had three tanks to preserve rain water. I used to roam in the field playing with my dog, Brownie, or picking coffee flowers, which in full bloom have a snow-clad appearance. They are

similar to orange blossoms and are very fragrant. Thousands, countless buzzing bees would roam around looking for pollen. I was happy and carefree then. My hobby was climbing trees and playing.

Father was kind and generous—almost too good for a man. He was often influenced by others, had no initiative and was weak physically. Mother was persistent and hard working, as was my grandmother. We were fed and clothed comfortably and were always encouraged in studies and any activities we were in.

In 1912, we welcomed our last brother. That same year I was sent to school. I remember the flag drills we held in the mornings, and how we used toothpicks when learning to count. Although I did not know the reasons for them, I still enjoyed doing the motions. Each year I was promoted; sometimes with honors.

We had a platform, elevated quite a distance from the ground to dry shelled coffee. One evening when Henry, my youngest brother, was three years old, we were sitting out on this platform watching the sunset, when suddenly we heard a cry. Henry, while romping around, had fallen over the platform onto the rocks below. He was found with a fractured leg. That was the first tragedy I underwent. I can still picture my mother weeping with Henry in her arms. But after constant care he became strong and well again.

Sometime later my grandmother became very ill, and the doctors failed to cure her. We recently found

out her illness was due to mastoids. Those three months of grandmother's illness were tragic—especially for me who was her pet. I often felt miserable and lonely remembering how she used to put me to sleep or take me out into the field hunting eggs or picking wild flowers.

When the crops were in full swing, men worked till midnight with lighted lanterns. The grinding of the coffee machine and the sparkling lights—not to mention those midnight picnics, often kept us wide awake. We picked coffee after school, with baskets hanging down from our necks—a very interesting process.

Mangoes, papayas, mountain apples, guavas, alligator pears, and sugar cane are abundant there, and when these were in season, we roamed in the woods picking and searching for them. The fun we had was immeasurable. Soon this life of happiness and joy was brought to an end however, for the crops were becoming poorer and poorer. In 1915, father sold the land and we moved to a plantation where he again became a common laborer.

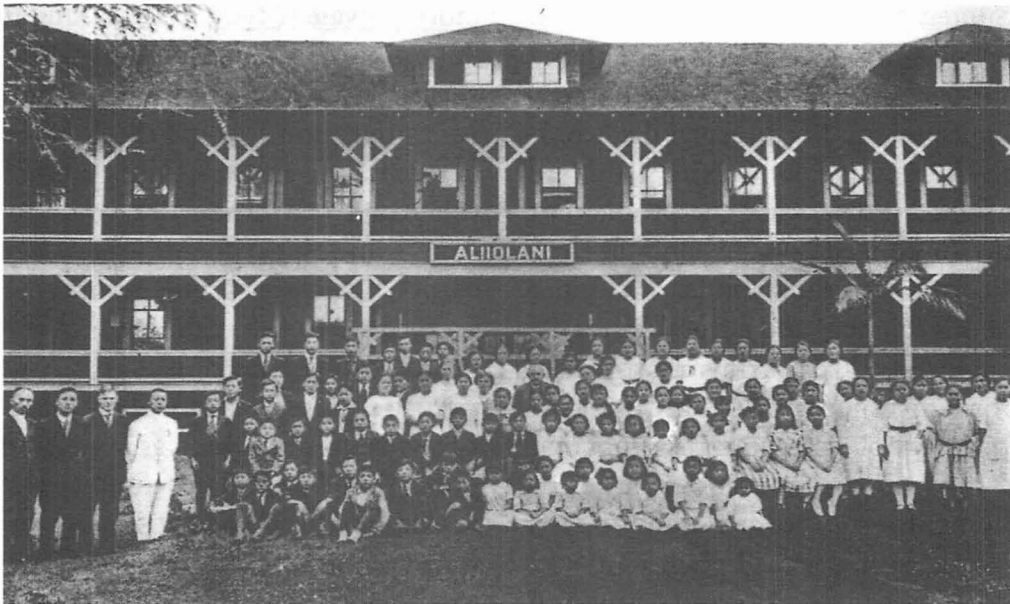
During that summer, a Korean educator visited the plantation, and made arrangements for my sister and I to go to the girls' seminary he had founded.³ After much planning, we sailed for Honolulu to attend the academy, which was superintended by a Christian American lady. Most of the girls were my age, and they were all of my nationality with a few exceptions. The dormitory was in

the suburbs of Honolulu, and the schoolhouse was a few blocks away from it. Schooling was similar to that of the public schools (textbooks and hours), and the teachers were American-trained.

We held chapel in the mornings, said grace before meals, and had regular Sunday School classes and sometimes Sunday services. We were

one could have disbelief, or disrespect for this religion.

There I learned much, living and working with others, and am thankful for countless things. But there is one thing that I now regret, and that is the neglect in training the pupils to read literature. Books outside of the texts were almost unknown. The only books I could remember read-



Korean Christian Institute at Aliiolani School, founded by Dr. Syngman Rhee (*fourth from left*)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 173 (Bishop Museum Collection).

taught to respect and believe in the Christian faith. I had never before been taught with such faith and assurance, so I gradually came to love those meetings (my parents were and are Christians but were not so devout as these teachers were). Soon I realized that I wanted to be a missionary and go to the Orient and be a teacher. I dreamed and planned for it, since I could not believe that any-

ing are those that were given to me as Christmas or birthday gifts, and those were a mighty few.

In 1920, I graduated from the eighth grade. My ambition to become a missionary was still alive. The following fall, I entered McKinley High School, but because of dissatisfaction and restlessness I left school and went home, which was then in Hilo. I spent the rest of that

school year there, doing practically nothing. Sometimes I regret that lost time. Eventually, I decided to return to McKinley, so at the end of that summer, I again set sail for Honolulu. I registered at McKinley and became a freshman.

During my second year, I took up ancient history. The facts I learned under this subject were so contrary to what I had learned in the Sunday School that I felt I was lost. After much thinking, I went to my former Sunday School teacher for enlightenment, but I received no comfort because what she told me seemed untrue, and the problem of doubt kept me restless and dissatisfied. As I studied and learned more about sciences and natural history, I came to realize the dogmatism of my former teachers. In my third year of high school, it became necessary that I take up the household duties at home, for mother had gone to visit relatives in Korea. I took up cooking lessons in school and learned to love them. The result was my selection of the Home Economics curriculum at the Normal School.

When mother returned, she brought back poor reports of relatives and the conditions in Korea in general. She expressed that she would never want to leave Hawaii again. Both mother and father have become so changed that it would be unendurable for them to go back to our native land to live. For us children it would be impossible.

At the present, intermarriage is more prevalent than ever. To me it depends on the individuals concerned and not on public sentiment. It is a question I would think twice before taking any move on. I admire the American home life, and the American respect for women. They depict civilization and progress. I have come to the realization of the futility of my ambition as it is contrary to the present state of my mind. I have chosen teaching as my future profession, but I do not intend to be in that line for life. Traveling has always appealed to me, but I shall have to wait for it for some time. Maybe there is something better of which I am now unconscious. Why not leave it up to fate and let her decide?

Notes:

¹The state referred to is South P'yongan province in North Korea. When romanizing Korean names, the Reischauer-McCune system, as revised by the Library of Congress is used. Because this method is cumbersome, we use the method of replacing the diacritical mark on letters "o" and "u" with "e" preceding them. For example, "P'yongyang" is transliterated as "P'yeongyang"; proper names such as "Syngman Rhee" or "Seoul" are written with no change, however.

²The Ewa Plantation was a well-known destination for Korean immigrants. According to *Their Footsteps* (the Committee on the 90th Anniversary Celebration of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1993), the first wave of Korean immigration occurred from 1903 to 1905.

³The Korean Girls Seminary (predecessor of the Korean Christian Institute) was founded by Dr. Syngman Rhee in 1915.

Story Two

I was born in California, and have lived in California up to this time, with most of this time being spent in small towns. I have had all the educational advantages enjoyed by American children. By law I am American and by heart I am American, although I am not of the same color or race. My parents are Koreans who moved to America before Korea lost her independence, because of the educational and business advantages of America. Although they revere the old customs, they are not narrow-minded or bigoted in their views holding to customs and habits of the old country. Father obtained all the education possible in Korea, and is able to speak, read and write the best of Korean. He came to America to obtain a greater education, but was not able to do so. However, being a true scholar, he is broad-minded and has advanced with the times, and he is giving me all the education he was not able to obtain. He does not try to force his views upon us, but lets us see the force of his argument, and decide for ourselves. He rarely commands but when he does, his word is law, and never have I known him to err in his judgment.

Mother takes pride in the achievements of her children and has made possible the advantages now enjoyed by us. She looks to our every comfort and never stints herself if there is some work to be done to make the home a better place in

which to live. With such home surroundings, and the liberal education that is available in America, we children are having every chance possible to become educated.

I entered the Upland Grammar School at six years of age, and spent seven and a half years there. I went to the Willows Grammar School during the last half year. Upon graduating, I entered high school at Willows where I spent the four years of high school life, graduating with the highest honors last June. My school life might have been the school life of an American child. Only on rare occasions have I felt the racial differences which exist between myself and my schoolmates. I have had all the chances possible for succeeding in school, and the teachers took a great interest in me and my work because I was different. Studying was not difficult for me, for behind me lay generations of students and scholars. I studied with a sense of enjoyment and achievement. I knew a little English when I started school so I was not handicapped by having to learn the English language over again.

After my first two years in school, during which time I overcame my lack of English, I began to stay near the head of the class. For this, I won the respect of my friends. I took to athletics from the very first and soon became proficient in all forms of athletics. This enabled me to mix still more readily. In high

school, I made my letters in football, baseball, basketball, and tennis, and was made captain of several of the teams. The football team won three championships on three successive years, and won much fame in northern California. I and my brothers and sisters were the only Orientals going to school there, so there was none of the feeling of social differences. In my school work I was aided more than handicapped because of my racial differences. Even during the days of high anti-Japanese feeling, I received little of this feeling, for I was known for what I was.¹ It was only in rival towns that I experienced this feeling of ill will.

Although I may be more fortunate than other American-born Orientals, I have encountered the feeling of hostility or prejudice at times. During the first days of school life, children would call me "Jap", which was in my estimate an insulting term, and by other undesirable names. I would protest and sometimes resort to fists, but the most effective means would be total indifference. At any rate, they quit calling me names. One time, I was refused admittance to a barber shop. It made me mad, as well as gave me a jolt. I had come into so little contact with Oriental prejudice that I had quite forgotten about the racial difference, and had been used to mingling with the whites without comment. Although I was quite angry, I recognized his right, and for a while was shy about entering barber shops. At different times, I have had similar experiences at theaters, ho-

tels, et. cetera. But I take them philosophically, for I probably would have done the same if I were the proprietor. I sympathized with the feelings, and although there were things denied me, there were still countless opportunities and pleasures open to me, and I knew that I was better off than those back there in the old country under the oppression of the Japanese.

I have not tried to be a social equal with my playmates and fellow students. I am a little backward in such matters. I do not like to place myself where I am not wanted and I do not like to push myself forward. I never did care for social preeminence. I had all I could do with my athletics and studies. I never did have the gall or the boldness to become unnecessarily prominent and make myself abominable. I am also backward about making friends, and I have never made myself conspicuous, or bored others with my presence. Among the Koreans, I like the American-raised children better, which I suppose is natural. The older ones who came from Korea seem more narrow-minded and serious and share none of our views. I like the Americans for their love of fair-play, sense of humor, love of fun, and everything else which goes to make up the typical American. In every day meetings and in conversations outside of studies, I like to joke and have fun. These characteristics do not seem to be in the makeup of the older young men and women. There is, however, a feeling for

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horseplay and joking among the Koreans, for when they get together, they like to joke, and play. But I just can't seem to get along with most or them. Since I have associated with Americans far more, I suppose it is natural that inwardly, I have all their characteristics.

The anti-alien land law had no effect upon us, as we had already planned to give up farming.² Even if it had, I would still sympathize with

Californians, for California would become another province of Japan at the rate they were going—in reality, if not by law and government. Although this anti-oriental feeling against Japanese hit us likewise, I sympathize, for I know the land grabbing traits which seemst to be natural for them, and see that they have such a growing population and conditions in Japan are not ideal.

Notes:

¹The anti-Japanese movement was an extension of the earlier persecution of the Chinese. The relative success of the Japanese contract laborers, who quickly moved toward independence in fishing, farming, gardening, and small business entrepreneurship was feared and resented by the white communities.

²This is probably a reference to the 1913 Webb-Henry Alien Land Act which prohibited aliens ineligible for citizenship from holding majority interest in land, and limited the leasing of agricultural land by these aliens to a period of three years. Similar laws were passed in Washington state and Oregon in 1921 and 1923. No Asian immigrants, at this time, were eligible for citizenship. The Naturalization Act of 1790 specified that the privilege of naturalization would only be accorded to "free whites". The 1870 modification which extended the right to "persons of African nativity or descent", specifically excluded the Chinese, and by extension, all "Orientals". In the decades following, several Supreme court cases upheld the notion that Asians were not eligible for naturalization because they were neither white nor of African descent. The law stood until 1952 when the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act eliminated race as a barrier to immigration.

Story Three

I was born in Honolulu, Ohau at four o'clock in the morning on the nineteenth of August in the year 1905. I was born in a large red brick house, but I do not remember it. My early years were spent on the plantations, in towns, and in Honolulu, for my father was a Methodist minister who traveled from one island to the other preaching. I do not remember much of these places but, now and then, I recall the scenes of my childhood days.

I have a picture of a white-washed plantation house in the center of a group of similar houses which made up a plantation camp. I remember helping my mother beat the gong to announce that supper was ready for the Korean bachelors. I remember being very proud of myself because Mother said that I was very efficient in ironing. I remember being awarded prizes for doing very good work in the Korean language schools and I will never forget the delight that I took in the package of pretty glass beads that was awarded to me by my teacher. I remember how my father was very proud of me.

I remember once when riding on a donkey with three girlfriends, the donkey slipped and we tumbled down the grassy hill. I remember how coming home one day after a day's absence, I searched high and low for my little white and black dog and cried and cried when I found him dead under my little bed. I've

never had another dog that I loved so much as this. I can see the fields, and the pond where my little friends and I went boating on a great bundle of bulrushes tied together. I remember climbing great big trees for their pretty blossoms. I remember trying to locate the hiding place of the cuckoo. I was very fond of the open air, and loved running and playing. I have never outgrown the love for playing or for running in the fields. Sometimes I dream of the happiness that I'll find if I could wander in the fields with green velvety grass and lie among the wild flowers and gaze into the blue sky. My childhood memories are one of pleasure, love and comfort.

I cannot remember the details of the home and home life in my early years. I do not know if my parents, my older sister Mary, and I slept on mattresses on the floor or on the beds, but somehow I can see a bed under which my dog was found dead. I cannot remember the kind of utensils, furniture that we had. The dishes must have been unbreakable and solid, for my mother cooked for twenty or more Korean plantation laborers when my father was a minister on the plantations. I do not remember how my father dressed, but I guess that my mother must have worn the common white waist and skirt that Korean women love to wear. All my childhood remembrances are of the vague, fanciful, beautiful, incidental ones and I do



Women and children in typical Korean dress (Hawaii, 1905-1910)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 36 (Bishop Museum Collection).

not remember any details of the home or family life. I remember playing and having a good time the best.

My father was the head of the family, but the running of the family was in the hands of my mother. She looked after the material needs of the children while my father influenced my sisters and me through his personality, love, interest, and regard for us. My father was one that we children and even the others looked up to with respect. We wanted to please him, to be like him. He did not come into daily contact with us as he should have done, but still his personality, his manliness, his thoughtfulness, and purity seemed to guide us. Though my mother may be thought of as the head of the family,

still my father was the real head. My mother adores him, believes in him, and thinks the world of him as we children do. We have privacy in our home. My mother does not talk freely with members of the opposite sex. My father is never vulgar. He is the soul of honor.

My father, as I have said, was a Methodist minister. I do not remember him preaching as Methodist minister, but when he preached to us and to a few followers in his church (known as the Korean Independent Church), I used to be spellbound by his sermons. I can still see the flash in his eyes. I can see his handsome figure appealing so earnestly and sincerely to his friends. I thought him the most wonderful

man and I still think him the sincerest, the straightest, and the kindest man in the world except a few others. Everything that is good in me is the result of his love. Because of him, I believe in honesty, in sincerity and I try to live a fuller, all-around life.

My father and I love to read. In fact, all my four sisters and three brothers love to read. My mother can't read or write Korean or English. She wouldn't learn, but now she desires to be taught to read and write Korean. My father is well educated in Korean. I have heard my mother say that when my father was a young man, he loved to study, and to keep himself awake while studying 'till late into the night, he would bite his thumb until the blood came. My father believes in education. When he came to Hawaii, he went to night schools. He learned a little. He began buying grammars, histories, textbooks and studied diligently. He speaks English much better than the average adult Koreans from Korea.¹ He is always encouraging us to study and learn new things. He is very fond of histories. It is from him that I've learned to appreciate history. When about nine years of age, I began reading Greek and Roman histories. I found great interest in the Greek and Roman myths; in Hercules, Perseus, and Socrates, Demosthenes and in Alexander the Great. I read ancient histories when I was about eleven or twelve. But my greatest interest was in a little book, a collection of simple stories from the Bible written in a novel form for

children. I used to read the stories over and over. I never grew tired of them. They seemed new and interesting at every reading.

I attended the Wahiawa School, Maemae School, the Kauluwela School, McKinley High, and I am still attending the University. The greatest interest I found in my grammar school days was in the readings of stories and poems. I remember my English teachers asking me to read stories or poems to my classmates. I enjoyed reading to my classmates. I would read so long and grew so tired that sometimes my eyes would get blurred and I could not continue reading. Then the teacher would comfort me and then dismiss the class for the day. Another interest I had was in music. I was very fond of music. I loved to sing. I can sing for a whole day. When I am happy I always sing, and when I am blue, tired, and grouchy, I never would sing, for I knew that I never could be grouchy or blue if I sang. I believe in being happy and in singing.

When I was in McKinley, I began to be very fond of athletics. I like volleyball and prefer it to baseball or basketball. But the great interest I found in McKinley was in having a beau and in taking part in dramatics. I always do the singing part in the play and I really do enjoy singing on the stage for them. I never have stage fright, and feel at home for I love singing in the gloaming. It was in McKinley that I somehow fell in love with a boy who is five years older than I, and an upperclassman. He re-

turned my love and we became great pals. We still go together and are said to be engaged. We are engaged at heart but have never announced it publicly. We hope to do so this coming summer. He is a University of Hawaii graduate, and is now working to help support his family and himself. I have always thought of being a teacher but now I feel that I prefer homemaking. My father and he have been my inspiration, and I hope to pay them back by trying to be a fine woman, and making them happy. When I do a thing mean, I feel sorry, for it makes me that much farther from the goal that I am trying to achieve—to be a good housewife and live a fuller and more wholesome life. I am aiming to make my father and my pal live a happier life than they are having now. Their sorrows are my sorrows and their happiness mine. I think the world of these two and I am willing to give my life for them when needed. This all means that I love them dearly.

My ambition, as I have said, was to be a good housewife, but I have others also. I wish that I were rich so that I could do social work. I have been taught to help and aid our neighbors, and I see so much filth, sorrow, sordidness in the homes of my people. I long to help them, to make them see the brighter side of life. So many of them need comfort, love and advice. The work done by Miss Whang of the International Institute in Honolulu is insufficient. She can't do all the work; she needs helpers and I hope that I may help

my people in the near future. Also with this idea is my wish to go to Korea and work for my people. I hear that they are living in pitiful conditions. I hope that I can help them in some way, and my ambition is to do social work or teach in Korea.

But still I am planning to make my home in Hawaii, maybe a temporary one, but who knows! I would love to make my home in Korea, but I could never live satisfactorily under the tyrannical rule of the Japanese government. I am too independent minded—I love freedom and a square deal. If my country—for Korea is my country—becomes independent, then I would go to Korea and make my home there. I have never seen Korea but I can imagine the beautiful mountains, the Diamond Mountain, the great rivers, and the wooded hills covered with fruit trees, flowers, incense, animals and roots of all kinds. I would like to see the Hermit Nation and if I am not to live there, I hope, at least to visit her sometime in the near future.

I have had contact with other racial groups such as the Filipinos, the Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, Haoles, Portuguese, et cetera, but I have never been very intimate with them.² When I see them I do not ignore them. I laugh, joke and associate with them, but still I am not intimate with them. We different races may be said to be living in harmony, in brotherliness with one another, but still I feel the racial an-

tagonism. Even in our University, there is racial antagonism veiled behind smiles and friendship. We are mere acquaintances, not friends. The Haoles do not care a bit for the Orientals; the Hawaiians on the other hand, do not like the whites. Everyday, I hear remarks of racial antagonism. We try to mix socially but always the same small crowd gathers for a real good time. The great majority stays away and sneers at such gatherings.

I am really prejudiced against other races. It is natural. The Occident is so different from the Orient. We cannot adopt all that is Occidental, for it will mean family breakup. At home we are different. We speak a different language and live differently. At schools, we are Americans, we live and act as Americans. We Orientals cannot do two things equally well. One has to be sacrificed for the other, or else our parents must adjust themselves to American conditions and be Americans in spirit and heart. This is impossible, for one can never forget his [*sic*]country. He feels that he must be loyal and true to her. We may say that we are being international in spirit and in action but to me, we are getting to be very nationalistic. I allow that there are some who believe otherwise. They believe in intermarriage, in doing away with races. This is a Christian spirit. It is a very good one, but still we are very far from being a common race. Race prejudices and antagonisms run deep in the veins of racial groups. I am a

Korean; it is natural for me to be prejudiced against the Japanese. When I am fired by the spirit of patriotism and love of country, I hate the Japanese government, but when I meet my Japanese classmates day after day, I try to be nice to them. I do not snub them; I associate with them but still there is the prejudice. Some Japanese students are fine but some are unbearable. They bring out the bad that is in me. They make me unhappy; they make me hate them. I wish this hate could die, but it never will until Japan gives Korea her independence and a square deal. I am not so prejudiced against the other racial groups, for there is no centrally driving force of hatred for them. It may be because I have not been so intimate with them. If I were intimate with them, knew them and understood them, and seen the best in them, then I would never harbor any little bit of prejudice.

Now as to marriage, if I were to live here or in America always, I would prefer a Hawaiian-born Korean to a foreign-born, for then I would be an American citizen and enjoy her privileges. But I have never thought of this idea. In my case, I am soon to be engaged to a foreign born Korean. My marrying him will deprive me of my citizenship, but it does not matter greatly to me.³ I prefer anyone as long as he is the right man.

I believe in the freedom of women. I believe that home drudgery ought to be lightened for them. I believe that women should have the

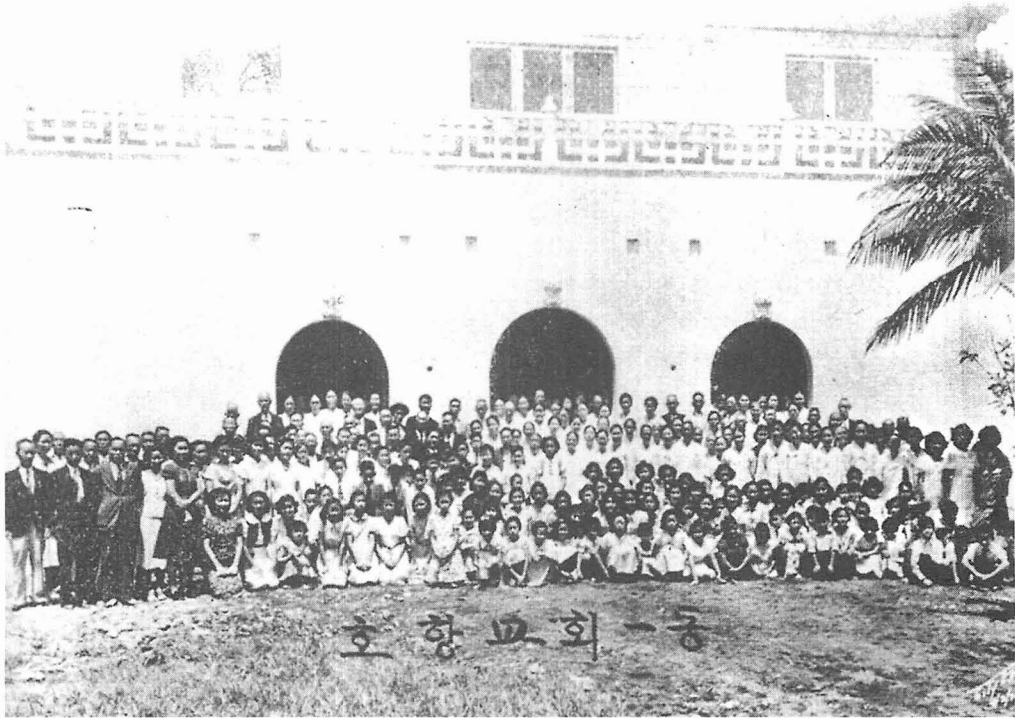
same educational, political, social, economic advantages as the opposite sex. I believe that a man and wife ought to be the very best of pals. There must be trust and love between them. I believe that the carrying on of home life should be the work of the husband as well as the wife. Their interests should be about the same. They must come halfway and work for the best.

Children should have independence, but before acquiring it, the parents should help them develop ideas that would make development for the best; they should teach children obedience, they should teach them to be self reliant. Children should not be kept at home. They should have lots of fresh air, meet friends and learn things from their contact with others. A good foundation must be laid in the child so that he will grow up to live a fuller and happier life. Parents must not be afraid to trust their children. They must teach children to meet the bumps of life squarely and honestly; children must not be taught that life is all love and comfort. They should be given all the love, comfort and inspirations so that they may not experience all the disagreeable things of life, but also be encouraged to understand them and try to live fuller and more wholesome lives.

My notion of an ideal American home is a comfortable, cozy and roomy home with attractive and suitable furniture; where cleanliness reigns; where children enjoy home life; where peace, contentment, and

happiness reign; where the parents are obeyed, respected and loved; where children confide in their parents; where understanding and love reigns; where the occupants are unselfish, and love, help, and aid those less fortunate than themselves; where intelligence goes with kindness and consideration for others; where anyone, in the home or from the outside, desires to come to; and above all, it is a place one can call home.

The Hawaiian-born Korean young are dissatisfied with their religion. For instance, let us take the Methodist young. They go to church because of mere habit. In some cases, they go because they have no place to go to on Sunday morning. Some of the girls go to church to show off their new dresses. It seems to me that the women folks love to wear new and pretty things to church. It seems to me that the young foreign-born married women go to church wearing fine apparel while the young girls wear simple, inexpensive dresses. I have heard comments after comments on this by the young men. The Korean Methodist Church in Honolulu is known by the young Koreans as the church of the educated, the well-dressed and the conventional people. This is true. There seems to be a lacking of wholesomeness, of sincerity. Everything seems to appear as a sham. Comparatively few come to this church, but this is not so with the Korean Christian Church, or the Korean St. Luke's Church. Here, great multitudes of



Honolulu Korean Christian Church congregation (1938)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 161 (n.s.).

people gather and there is the atmosphere of comradeship, of sincerity and of real religion. The young take more interest in Church activities and they enjoy the companionship of the old. I believe that a church is where anyone can go and find comfort, love, understanding, and religion.

All problems that arise for the young come because of the transition stage that the Koreans in Hawaii are in. This is unavoidable, and the prospect will be bright if the parents maintain their moral authority over the young. Otherwise they will come under the bad influence of the bad that is in American civilization.

Notes:

¹Although many Koreans came to Hawaii with dreams of education, there was in actuality, little opportunity for even the study of English. Long, arduous hours, minimal pay, and the social isolation of plantation life, made the pursuit of education virtually impossible.

²“Haole” is a native Hawaiian term referring to Caucasian.

³Anti-miscegenation laws existed in various states through out the nation until 1967 when in the case of *Loving vs. the State of Virginia*, the US Supreme Court ruled that laws against the marriage of whites and non-whites violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION

Yoosun Park

From the Treaty of Kanghwa (the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1876), which forcibly ended Korea's 250 year long history of isolation, to the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the economic and political control of Korea, or Choson, as it was known then, was bitterly squabbled over by three major powers: Russia, Japan, and China. The 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa was followed in the subsequent decade by similar treaties which opened up diplomatic and trade relations with the United States, Russia, France, and England. The rulers of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), caught in the complex political maneuverings of these powerful foreign forces jockeying for primacy in Korea, became increasingly enfeebled, and fragmented from within.

The Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 accomplished two ends. It effectively terminated the decade (1885-1894) of Chinese political dominance in Korea, and established Japan's future as a rising military and political power in Korea as well as the rest of East Asia.

In 1896, the increasingly threatened Korean monarchy invited the doubtful protection of Russia and its Tsar in a desperate attempt to counterbalance the encroaching Japanese might. Their period of influence was brief and ineffectual, ending with the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) that resulted in the Treaty of Portsmouth.

Japan's subsequent uncontested domination, culminating in 1910 with the formal treaty of annexation, took place with the tacit approval of both the British and U.S. governments both of which, even before the final end of the Russo-Japanese War, evidenced their support of the Japanese suzerainty as a means of limiting the Russian expansion of power in East Asia. The "secret memorandum", an agreement reached between William H. Taft, the American Secretary of War, and Katsura, the Japanese Prime Minister, ensured Japanese non-interference with American imperialist policy in the Philippines in exchange for the guarantee of American non-interference in Korea.

The economic structure of Yi dynasty Korea began to disintegrate under the influence of Japanese and Western imperialism. Native industry and agricultural systems deteriorated while lucrative timber and mining conces-

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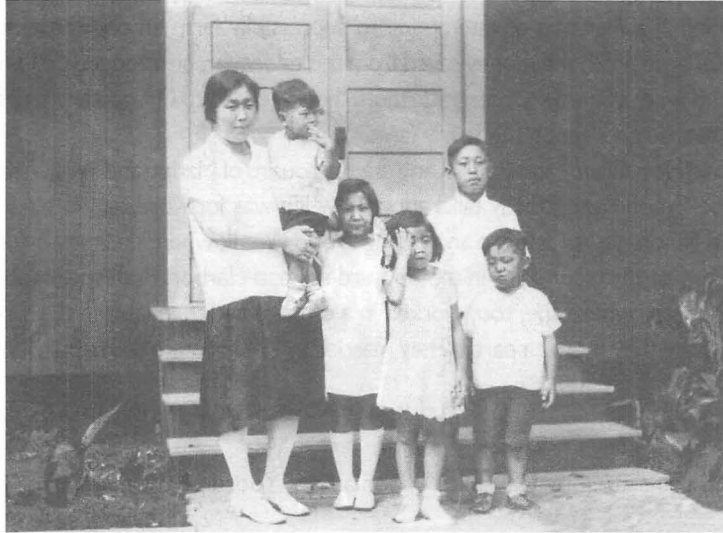
sions, import & export businesses, and communication and transportation contracts, were taken up by foreign interests. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894 ravaged the countryside, displacing thousands from their rural homes to congregate in the urban centers. Growing political instability and resulting social unrest evidenced in the revolts of 1882, 1884, and 1894, did nothing to improve the already impoverished economy. To make matters worse, in 1901, a long period of drought followed by devastating floods brought on a nation-wide famine. The government's relief efforts were ineffectual in stemming the widespread starvation and the heightening discontent.

This was the critical juncture at which time the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association requested the immigration of Korean laborers. The 1882 treaty between the U.S. and Korea had already opened the avenue for travel between the two countries, and Hawaiian sugar planters were in need of a new source of cheap labor.

To the consternation of the planters and the white citizens of Hawaii, the Chinese, the first of the Asian imports, had quickly abandoned the canefields for the opportunities of the towns and the cities. The Japanese, imported to replace the deserting Chinese, not only left the plantations quickly, but fomented trouble while still on them. While Japan's proximity to Hawaii meant that they were the cheapest to import, their penchant for strikes branded them unreliable and troublesome. The growing imperialist might of Japan, poised solidly behind its sojourning citizens, was yet another motivation to curtail the number and the influence of Japanese immigrants.

The Koreans were imported to offset the Japanese, as they in turn had been imported to offset the Chinese a decade earlier. The practice of pitting one nationality against another, keeping workers of diverse nationalities and languages on the same plantation, was an effective tool in discouraging collaboration among the workers and an obvious means of preventing a labor monopoly by a certain group. The first shipload of Korean laborers landed in Honolulu on January 13, 1903.

THE KANG FAMILY



The Kang family (left to right): Sung-Hark, William, Vivian, Marion, Karl, and Mooney Kang (Hawaii, circa 1930)
Printed by permission (Marion VanDeel Collection).

An Oral History of First and Second Generation Korean Americans during the early 1900's*

The story of the Kang Family in America begins with **Sung-Hark (Lee) Kang**, the daughter of a Silk merchant in Pusan, who left her hometown for Japan in 1917 to fulfill her dream of "seeing the outside world." Disowned at the age of 17 for this act, she became the picture bride of Chi Kwon Kang to come to America. The two were married in Hawaii, where they lived for the next 27 years. There, she had five children, Karl, Vivian, Marion, Mooney, and William, and later graduated from a school of seamstressy. Her husband, the son of a wealthy family from Seoul, originally moved to Hawaii with his older brother, Ch'oe-hyeon Kang, in 1904 to make money to "raise [their] family up again." After sixteen years of hard labor in the fields, he became a carpenter for the Ewa plantation and later worked at the shipyards in Honolulu. They divorced, and after moving to California in 1944, Mrs. Kang and her children resettled in Oregon to farm. Mr. Kang later retired there as well. The story of the family continues through her two remaining children, Marion and William, and is paralleled by her brother-in-law's son, Hamilton and his wife, Ruth Kang. Sung-Hark Kang died in Tacoma on February 12, 1996, at the age of 95, and is buried at the family farm next to her husband and three children.

Marion VanDeel (Kyung-Hee Kang) speaks of the family's life in Hawaii, her relationship with her mother, her marriages, and her life in Korea, where with her second husband, she taught English to Korean businessmen and their families, and also served as a secretary to former President

KAHS Oral Histories

Chung-hee Park's wife. She is now retired and lives with her third husband in Washington state.

William Kang, Marion's younger brother, talks about his parents and siblings, his life as a football player for high school and college (he was All City for two years in San Francisco and later received scholarships and for various universities in California and Oregon in the 1950's). He later chronicles the family's hardship of attempting to successfully farm among the emerging Korean community in Oregon. With the money saved from this endeavor, he attended Columbia University where he met his wife, a Swede. Upon graduation, they returned to Oregon and taught high school. They are now retired and live on the family farm.

Hamilton (Hor-Choo) and Ruth Kang are the cousins of Marion and William Kang: Hamilton, the son of Choe-hyeon Kang, briefly talks about how life was for Koreans working on the plantations, and about life on Hawaii prior to and during World War II, where he first worked in a cannery and later designed air ducts for ships in the shipyard at Pearl Harbor. Ruth speaks about her life on Hawaii as a schoolgirl, where she, too, worked in a cannery and then later in the same shipyard as her husband, where they met at a party. They married in 1943 and are still happily living together in Hawaii.

Notes:

*Interviews and translation by Daeshik Yu, Sonia Kim, Yoosun Park, and Hye Kyung Kang (no relation).



Sung-Hark Kang (Washington state, circa 1990)
(KAHS Collection)

Sung-Hark (Lee) Kang

I was born in the city of Pusan on July Second of 1900, the third of five children. My father, the late Mr. Ik-seon Lee, was a stern and upright Confucian gentleman of the old school. My mother, the late Mrs. Eun-sun Kang was a kind and affectionate woman who loved to study and learn even though she was an old fashioned person too. She was very good at calligraphy.

There were no real schools when I was a little girl. There was this small place similar to today's kindergartens called the Yang Jung Girls' School, and I attended it from when I was young child. But eventually, public schools were established and I graduated from one of those four year Normal schools and entered the Il-Shin Girls' High School around the time of the Japanese annexation.¹ A couple of alumnae from the High School were studying in Tokyo at the time. They were among the first women to go abroad to study. Their letters made me so very curious. You see, from the time when I was a young girl, growing up in a refined and genteel home, for some strange reason, I was always plagued with the thought that over those mountains a whole different world existed. I constantly wanted to go somewhere. Call it a romantic childhood dream...although in the end that dream turned out to be the cause of all my troubles.

My father was so strict that he was nicknamed "Tiger". I couldn't

even bring up the topic of going to Tokyo at home. My oldest brother did go over to Tokyo for a little while, but got into so much trouble that he had to come back without even beginning his studies. My second brother, on the other hand, used to get up to study every morning at three. He worked so hard at reciting and memorizing the Chinese classics that once, a gentleman scholar who was passing by heard him and came back four mornings in a row to listen to him. He later even requested my brother's hand in marriage for a girl in his family.

Going out and seeing the outside world was my dream. I heard from an older friend who had gone to study in P'yeongyang that it was a wonderful place, but it didn't seem likely that my father would give his permission. My father deplored the idea of women running around. The Normal School was built right next to our house, and you just had to turn the corner behind our house to get to the high school. I was only allowed to attend these schools because they were so close. But only a few months before I was to graduate, I ran away from home.

I used to correspond regularly with the girls who had gone to Tokyo, and they wrote me amusing letters about life in Tokyo and urge me to come study too. So I made the decision to run away from home. I say that I made up my mind to go, but in reality it wasn't as if I had any solid

plans or knew anything about how to get into school or how much it would all cost. It really wasn't anything but the naive determination to study somehow. I was so innocent. Having lived up to that time under my parents care—always loved and lacking nothing whatsoever—I simply assumed that the whole world was like that. I made that dangerous decision to go, thinking that wherever I went things would happen just like I wanted them to—the way they did at home—and that everyone would love me just like my parents did.

I left in January of 1917. We needed permits to go to Japan in those days. There was this Japanese policeman who used to come to our house all the time. Whenever he came over he'd pat me on the head and praise me. So even though I was afraid to ask my own parents, I told him the whole story and he got me a travel permit. That's how I left without my father finding out. I didn't have the slightest inkling of all that lay ahead for me.

Everything about that time...it's all still so vivid before my eyes. I had so many dreams back then. You see, I left with a heart brimming over with the ambition to study and live out a brilliant, shining life. In retrospect now, I see that all of my life since the moment I left my parents' side to walk outside that front gate, has been a life lived in tears.

In Tokyo, the two alumnae women I knew were living in a single rented room. As soon as I walked

into that room, I started getting depressed. How was I going to do this? How was I going to eat? What was I supposed to do? I was seeing reality for the first time, and the future looked grim. I had only been able to scrape together about 300 Ryang to bring with me.² My friends were attending only a technical school, what influence did they have? I didn't have a recommendation or an introduction from anyone, and on top of everything, I didn't even have a high school diploma. They pleaded with their teachers and did everything they could to get me in to their school, but it was no use.

I spent three months like that in Tokyo, anxious and dejected. Eventually, feeling that I just couldn't go on like that anymore, I wrote a letter to my family saying that I wanted to come home. My mother's hurried reply told me not to come back. On the night I ran away, my father had told all his friends that his daughter had died the night before, and for the sake of his good name I couldn't come back. Everything looked even bleaker now that even that last hope of going home was gone.

Seeing me so despondent, my friends advised me to go to Yokohama. They thought things might go better for me there since there were a lot of Koreans living there at the time. Tokyo was one thing, but when I landed in Yokohama where I didn't know a single soul. (This really is the first time in my entire life that I've talked

The Kang Family

about all these things.) I had heard that there was a Korean inn, but I couldn't find it and eventually ended up following a hotel boy to a Japanese place called the "Dai-Sa-Ya". I was brazening it out by myself.

I remember a pastor's wife in LA once said to me, "You should have been born ten years earlier or ten years later, why was it that you were born in such an in-between time? She was saying that if I'd been born ten years earlier, I would have been really old fashioned, and if I was born ten years later, I could have carried the sky on my head and shaken the world, but that I was stuck in between. When I was young, it seemed that I could live so brightly, but then in Hawaii...

When I got in the hotel room my heart was racing. I was so scared and sad that I couldn't even think about touching the food they sent in. A hotel maid came into the room and noticed that I hadn't touched any of the food and asked me why. When I heard those kind words, I started crying and just couldn't stop. That's how I spent my first night in Yokohama.

She kept asking me what was the matter, but I couldn't even answer and just kept on crying. I guess the maid must have gone and told someone that a guest wouldn't stop crying, because the owner came up to the room. So I ended up telling him the whole story of how I ran away from home without telling my parents because I wanted to come to Japan, and he told me to stop worry-

ing, that he would find me a job.

I had never worked before in my entire life. So I worried about what kind of labor I would have to do. There were a lot of America-bound picture brides coming to Japan at that time, and there was a western style shoe store next to the hotel where a lot of these women came in to shop.³ They were mostly lower class women, and since they weren't educated, they couldn't speak any Japanese. The job that this hotel owner arranged for me was doing interpretation at this store. These women weren't marrying Japanese men but picture brides going to Hawaii stopping in Yokohama on their way. They'd come wanting to get at least a pair of shoes from Japan be-



Picture Brides before departure (1914)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*,
p. 17 (Yun Hee Chun Given Collection).

fore they went on to Hawaii. I worked there for just about two months. I was so immature then. It's like waking up from a terrible nightmare when I think about that time. I was seventeen years old.

I was living like that when something happened that changed the entire course of my life. A gentleman who had been living in Hawaii for a long time stopped in the store on his way back to Hawaii from a visit to Korea. When I was young, I was very neat looking and made a pretty good impression on people. Now, well... I've gotten so old ... Anyway, he

kept on talking to me and asked me why I didn't go to Hawaii myself. "How do you get into Hawaii?" I asked him, and he asked me if I wanted to go. So I said, "Yes, I really have to go somewhere since I couldn't keep on living like this," and he told me that in Hawaii they paid ten cents just for washing a single undershirt, and also that American money was double the worth of Japanese money.

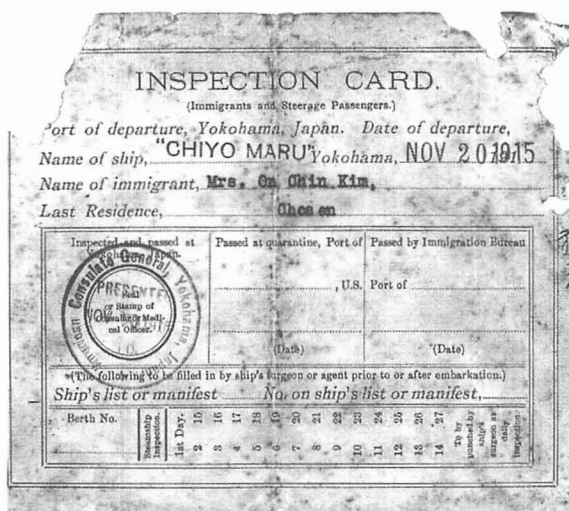
I got to thinking that if I could make money like that in no time at

all, I'd have enough money to study. So I begged him to tell me of a way to get there. "Should I tell you?" "Yes, please tell me how." I left about two weeks after meeting him. He told me that he'd go back to Hawaii and introduce me to someone, and that I should come under the pretense that I was going to marry him, but that I could decide what I wanted to do once I got there. Ah! Even that way was okay, I said, just to make it possible for me to go.

I didn't know anything about it at that time, but now that I think about it, I was going through what you call fake marriages

nowadays. The idea that I would get married when I got to Hawaii wasn't even in my dreams. I'd tell them I was getting married just for the paperwork, but I'd study once I got there... So when he got to Hawaii he immediately sent a picture of Mr. Kang and sponsorship papers for a picture marriage, and Japan quickly processed me a travel permit. I probably still have that permit somewhere. I was going to throw it away but saved it as a keepsake.

When you got off in Hawaii, you



Inspection Card of a Picture Bride (1915)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 59
(On Chin Kim Hong Collection).

The Kang Family

had to pass a physical in order to go through immigration, and I failed it the first two times. That was 1917. Mr. Kang had come all the way out to the immigration center because they'd only let you out if someone came and got you, but I had failed the eye exam. Mr. Kang gave me some money. Since I had to go back to Japan, he told me to use the money to get my eyes treated and then come back! They told me that there was too much blood in my eyes and that you couldn't have that in the tropics...So I went back to Japan and came back two weeks later. I had the original travel permit and the money Mr. Kang had given me...If you failed the exam, they sent you back without taking the passage money, so it was only the money for the medical treatment. It wasn't a serious eye disease or anything; they just told me that there was too much blood and told me I was cured. So I went back in two weeks time.

Ah, but I failed the eye exam *again!*⁴ But this time with the help of a Mr. Oh, a prominent figure in the local Korean community, I was able to stay and get treated in the immigration center. It really didn't take that much money, but I was penniless and Mr. Kang paid for everything. So I was treated there for two months, locked up at the immigration center. It was like being in prison. Visitations were limited and the immigration doctor treated me. You could say that life in America which began with that tense and anxious time of imprisonment has been

the same right up to the present—a life lived without choice or meaning.

After two months, they discharged me saying that my eye problem was cured. As far as the immigration papers were concerned, I was a picture bride. So I came out and Mr. Kang took me to a Korean owned inn, and the first thing out of his mouth—what do you think the very first thing he said was but, “Do you want to get married or do you want to study?” I was already feeling so bad about all the money he spent, which for him was a lot, as well as the fact that the fare to Honolulu from Kauai where he lived added up to quite a bit, and that he wasn't able to work all that time. I just couldn't say that what I wanted to do was to study. So I told him that I'd leave it up to him, and before I even finished saying the words, he said, “I want to get married.” My heart dropped. I couldn't beg him to let me study after already having said what I did, and that's how I ended up getting married.

At the time we got married, Mr. Kang told me he was twenty-nine years old. He had immigrated in 1904, the last year immigration was allowed.⁵ He was either seventeen or nineteen...He had also come from a good family in Korea. But because his father was a scholar who couldn't do anything but sit at his desk all day, he had frittered away everything he had inherited from his father and had nothing but a big empty house left. My husband's aunt was apparently a very wealthy woman in the area, and

she supported her brother's family.

Mr. Kang looked very neat and clean-cut in his picture. That family was not a rough looking family. In fact, when he was a child, he was so bright and lovable that his aunt really doted on him and took him to raise at her own house. But he started going bad as he got older and it got so bad that he even tricked his aunt's son into selling off some of the aunt's land. Gambling, opium addiction, and so on, until he fell out of favor with his aunt and decided to try immigrating to Hawaii.

When he first got to Hawaii, he was so good looking that people didn't call him by his name, but always referred to him as "the pretty young bridegroom".⁶

There were a lot of cases of old bachelors sending younger pictures of themselves when they were looking to get picture brides. It really did happen. When you talked to the young women in Hawaii, you'd hear everything from how their husbands sent someone

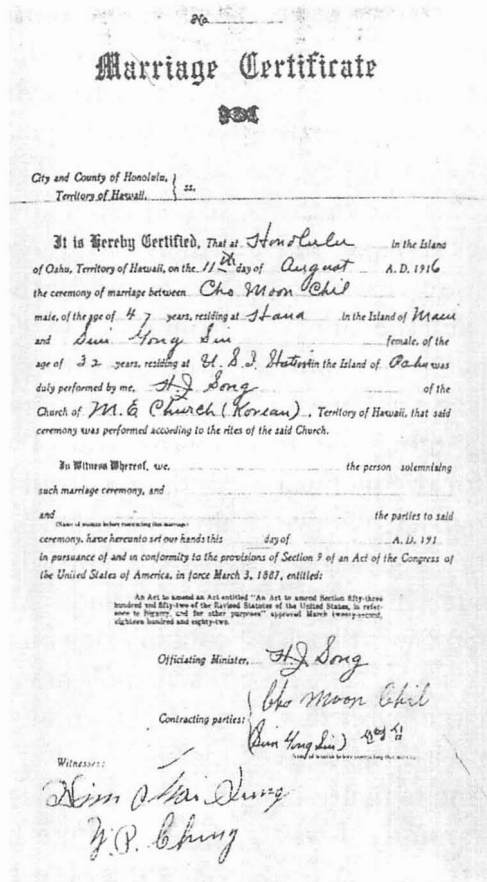
else's picture or how when they got to Hawaii, they found they had married someone entirely different from the picture they'd gotten.

When I was young, I had heard people say that in four years of open immigration, all the beggars in Pusan

disappeared. So all those immigrants looked like beggars to my eyes. In Korea at that time, everyone believed that only poor people immigrated. It was said that beggars, degenerates, thugs, and people like that were the only ones that immigrated. I found out later that there were a lot of other kinds of people, like a son of some noble family who'd gotten in trouble, mixed in with the rest.

I was married in December of 1917. There was a place in the

immigration center that did weddings. We got dressed at the hotel that morning and went to that place to get married. The wedding was your basic American style ceremony. The hotel gave me a bunch of lilies to hold...So we got married like that



Marriage Certificate of a Picture Wedding (1916)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*,
p. 59 (Rev. T. Samuel Lee Collection).

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and left for Kauai the next day. Wedding or whatever...probably because it wasn't something I wanted, but I got married without much thought and went on to live the same way.

Why do I say it was such a senseless life, since I at least got to go to a different country, marry a good looking husband, and start a brand new life? Well, he actually wasn't as good looking as the picture, and he really wasn't much to talk to. The only thing he ever talked about once in a while was his degenerate life in Korea, and I guess I never really asked him much of anything. In any case, we lived somehow or another for two years in Kauai then came out to Honolulu.

He would sometimes cry and tell me about how hard it was when he first got there in 1904. How he'd look at his soft hands, hands which had once been smoother than a woman's, and see them bleeding all over from the sharp sugarcane leaves. They had to do all their own cooking, but of course he didn't know how to cook anything. When you first came over you had to go to the plantation you were contracted to. I think you had to stay for two or three years. After that, you were free to go wherever you wanted.

After I got married, I found out that Mr. Kang had an older brother in Hawaii. How the brothers ended up immigrating together is a good story. Mr. Kang didn't come home one night and when his father questioned his friends to find out what happened to him, they asked him,

"Don't you know?" "What are you talking about?" his father said, and the friends told him that he had left for Inch'eon saying that he was off to Hawaii. You had to catch the boat in Inch'eon. So the father ordered Mr. Kang's brother to go and get him immediately, and the brother ran like mad to Inch'eon and caught up with him. But Mr. Kang pleaded with his older brother, saying, "Brother, our family wasn't meant to be like this. It's only since our father's time that things have been like this. Let us go to Hawaii and just clamp our eyes shut and endure it for a few years so that we can make the money to raise our family up again." My brother-in-law, Mr. Ch'oe-hyeon Kang, who was three years senior to my husband, was convinced enough to follow his younger brother to Hawaii.

There were some couples who came over with their children, but it was mostly unmarried men. Picture marriages were prohibited in 1924. Some people say that picture brides deserve a lot of credit, and I guess you really could say that it's true. All those single men would work for a whole day only to empty out every penny they made on the gambling table, then the next days money too. But when they met a woman and started a home and a family, they would automatically start saving their money and start living like human beings. With all those lower class people living together, there definitely were a lot of incidents. Why would any good family send

their child off as a picture bride? Especially with all that talk about beggars and degenerates.

We suffered a lot of abuse from the vicious Germans on the plantations.⁷ Those Germans...every morning at five they'd come riding into the village center on huge horses and start snapping their horsewhips. They'd just start beating with their whips. Men who weren't used to that kind of endless back-breaking work got exhausted quickly and would keep missing days. So in order to get everyone out in the fields there was this law. You had to work at least twenty days out of a month. If you couldn't, you'd get thrown off the plantation, and would have nowhere to go.

They'd give you seventy-seven cents per day. For a whole day. For working ten hours. Even if you worked thirty days without missing a single day, you'd still live in debt. We always owed at least a few cents to the plantation store. Since you only made seventy-seven cents a day, even a few cents of debt was a lot in those days. Not only that, it was World War I time, and rice wasn't coming in from Japan or anywhere else. So rice price was higher even than it is today. Even soy sauce had to be imported and cost over two dollars a gallon. There was meat once a week. The plantation would kill a cow, and if there was one worker in a family you'd get a pound; if there were two, you'd get two pounds. That's all you'd get. And after you took out the cost of four weeks, four

pounds of meat, there was nothing ever left. So we lived on things like dried shrimp flakes and dried vegetables from the East, and once in a while five or ten cents worth of vegetables from the Japanese farmers.

It didn't happen after I got there, but I heard that some of the earliest immigrants did go back to Korea after only working a few months because they couldn't endure it. My brother-in-law too...My husband did have some determination. If he said he was going to do something, he would do it. But his brother was a true old fashioned aristocrat. He'd just sit and "hurrmph!" never even questioning where the next meal was coming from. After working for a few months, he told his brother, "Hey, I really can't do this work. How am I supposed to do this?" and kept asking him to go back to Korea. Mr. Kang would beg him to be patient saying that they couldn't possibly just go back like that.

Mr. Kang's brother was an educated man, though Mr. Kang being such a troublemaker, never got any education. So his brother stopped working and started studying English at a school called the "Boarding School", and now the younger brother even had to pay for his older brother's tuition. Can you imagine it? So Mr. Kang was working by himself. He told me that one time he was coming home from work carrying a bag of flour on his back. His hands were bleeding all over, and he was so weak and worn out that he threw

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down the bag of flour down in the middle of the cane field and wept and screamed his heart out for sheer frustration. Eventually though, he got so hungry that he had to pick up the bag again and trudge back home. He talked about things like that sometimes.

Three years after we got married, we came out to Honolulu to the Ewa plantation, and my husband started to do carpentry work. That was around 1920 or so. His brother, who had come out earlier, was married and living with a woman from Masan. So the brothers worked together. In Kauai he was doing harder work, clearing trees, and got paid a dollar and a quarter per day, but at Ewa doing carpentry, they paid about three dollars a day.

In Honolulu at that time, there was a really rough place called Waimanolo that was just starting to be developed, and he worked there too. The natives lived in hut-like places and it was so deep in the jungle that even before the sun went down, the mosquitoes swarmed in so thick that if you took a breath, you'd get two or three mosquitoes in your nose and mouth, no matter how careful you were. It really wasn't a place fit to live. We lived in a one room hut where we put up a huge mosquito net so that when you opened the door you'd have to open the net to get in. It was unbearable because of the mosquitoes. The jungle wasn't trees but thick brush, and because the sewers never got cleaned, they were infested with mosquitoes.

A lot of people were gathered there to develop that place, but my brother-in-law didn't go and only my husband went and built a house. And eventually he started to make decent money there so that life did get a little easier. We lived in that old hut while we were building a house. You couldn't budge once the sun went down. Even with the mosquito net up, we'd light coils in all four corners. The kitchen was a little bit off so we'd light ten coils there, but it was no use at all. I'm only slightly exaggerating when I say that the mosquitoes were as big as flies. If you opened your mouth they'd fly in and sting your tongue... You can't imagine how my heart ached to see the kids so swollen and raw from being bitten. Even the adults were infested with bites, so you can just imagine what the kids were like.

All four of my children were born in Hawaii. We lived there until 1943. At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, I was living in Honolulu working as a seamstress, making dresses for the wives of military officers. Around 1926, after I had had all five kids, I found out by chance that a private sewing academy from San Francisco called the Royal Ladies Sewing School had opened a branch in Honolulu. Even before that, I had had an interest in needlework and made all the clothes for my family, but I started thinking that this was my chance to quit this Hawaiian life that I'd never wanted. I could learn how to sew and take my kids and go back to Korea and open

a sewing academy of my own. I finished the fourteen month course and even went on for four months of teacher training and graduated in 1928.

Of course, going to school while the kids were still so young was very, very hard. Especially worrying about home when I'd be at school... everytime the phone rang at the school I'd start panicking, thinking that there must be something wrong at the house. I can never forget the kindness of my neighbors, a Japanese woman and a native Hawaiian woman who used to watch my kids. It was because of their goodness that I was able to finish.

I graduated in 1928, and even though I didn't have any money, I bought a big trunk, thinking I was going to take all the kids and go off to Korea. But how could I? I hadn't even talked to my husband about it—not that he would even have let me go. I just brooded on it by myself and was getting myself ready. I never did go in the end. When I graduated from the school, I opened a dress shop in Honolulu for a while, but then I got an introduction somehow to open a shop at the barracks at Pearl Harbor to make dresses for the Navy officers' wives.

The night before the attack on Pearl Harbor, a soldier we knew well from the barracks—he used to fix the lights at the shop and things—came over to our house to borrow our car. He had come out to town and it had gotten late. So we lent it to him and he was going to pick us

up in the morning in time for us to get to work. But the next morning, he didn't come. My oldest daughter [Vivian] was coming with me and the rest of the kids were all dressed and ready for school. We were standing around thinking how strange it was that that he didn't show up, when all of a sudden we started hearing airplane noises from somewhere. There was big gun sounds, then something white like fog started covering the sky. It wasn't exactly like clouds, so we were staring at it wondering what in the world it could be, when airplanes started crossing the sky.

I was getting nervous and stomping my feet, and wondering why the soldier didn't come back with the car, when my youngest started complaining, "Everything's late this morning!" and turned on the radio. As soon as the radio was on we heard the sounds "WAR! WAR! WAR!" War? My heart dropped to the ground and I started shaking, but I did manage somehow to grab the kids and run into the house. Out of the windows we could see Japanese airplanes whizzing by and heard guns everywhere. Japanese, Koreans, Americans, people were crying and running around every which way. It was so noisy outside that we were too scared to even go back out into the alley.

It all happened so suddenly and I was so shocked that I didn't know what else to do but sit and wring my hands. I wasn't even thinking. A couple of hours passed like that and it was almost afternoon when some

Korean people came over screaming that this was the end to everything. They were crying and carrying on. But it just didn't seem possible to me that it could all end so senselessly. By the time night came, airplane noises started to die down a little and the smoke started to clear too. We heard that the Japanese had hit the naval station. I guess all that smoke was just an attempt to hide the planes from below, but the thought of that black, smoke covered sky still chills my heart.

There was a strict blackout rule from that night on. In that hot tropical place, we had to keep the windows completely covered with tar paper. The soldiers would shoot if any light as small as a match showed through the windows, so we couldn't have any bright lights at all. I guess they were worried that we might be signaling the Japanese with the lights. Four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, someone gave me a ride to the army base to go see my store. Even though for all those years I'd been going in and out that place like it was my own house, that day the guards made a huge fuss, glaring at me like they wanted to kill me. It was so embarrassing. I wasn't Japanese, but they couldn't tell the difference and it made me feel so bad.

I'd worked there for eight years, and never once had to show a pass. But they told me that I couldn't get in without showing them a pass. When I got to the shop, the steps and the doors were all broken up, and there was a big bullet lying on top of

the cutting table. A major lived in the house right behind the shop, and the stairs to his house were ruined too, and the mess hall had been knocked flat by an airplane crashing on top of it. Some soldiers followed me in when I walked in to the shop and they told me that most of the Japanese pilots who flew the planes were wearing rings from Hawaii's McKinley High School. They came over not just to tell us stories like that but to bring these alcohol bottles full of cut-off Japanese soldiers' ears to show us. It was revolting. When we said that we didn't want to see things like that, they'd get all aggressive and ask us "Why? Because they're oriental ears?" Those ignorant bastards used to carry cut-off noses in alcohol bottles too. They said Japanese bastards couldn't be trusted an inch, that even the ones who were citizens went off to fight for their own country.

It was true that some of the pilots were wearing McKinley rings. A lot of Japanese people sent their kids back to the old country to study back then, saying that raising kids only in this country made them less patriotic. Japanese people were really very patriotic back then. I don't know how many of them were wearing McKinley rings, but I do believe that it is true that some of them were. There was this other thing the people were saying, that on the night before the attack some Japanese who were either influential in politics or had big businesses, invited American officers to a party and got them re-

ally drunk. The rumor was that the next morning, the guards posted on the mountains heard far off airplane noises and kept calling the base to wake-up the officers, but that the officers were so drunk that they just yelled at the guards for talking nonsense. The rumor was that those Japanese men were accused of throwing the party in order to help the attack, and that some of them were even killed that morning, put in bags and dragged around the barracks.

Maybe it was because of all this but after that the discrimination got bad in a lot of ways and the friendliness disappeared. The Japanese weren't ever interned in Hawaii like in other places, but there was severe discrimination. There was a lot of anti-Japanese sentiment among the Koreans. People were very happy that America destroyed Japan and that our country finally got a chance for independence.

As for me in 1943, a little while after the attack on Pearl Harbor, I left Hawaii for the mainland. That was before Hawaii became a state, and moving to the mainland was a little complicated, but both my eldest and the second sons had already come over to the mainland.⁸ My oldest [Karl] had joined ROTC when he was at the University of Hawaii, but because he's somebody who hates being ordered around, his behavior was a little bad there. But then the war broke out and it looked like he would have to go in the army, so he came over to the mainland and

joined the merchant marines to avoid being drafted. He didn't end up having to go in the army...he would have caused some sort of trouble if he had gone in.

After the eldest went over to America that way in 1942, a year after around April or May of 1943, my second boy [Mooney] also went over to join the merchant marines. So I put in an application to follow them over to the mainland, but got turned down by immigration. Back then, you couldn't just go back and forth from Hawaii to the mainland anytime you wanted, and you had to get permission from immigration. They said they wouldn't send me—especially since it was wartime and the army needed skilled people like me. So I was really in despair because I had already gotten rid of the shop and was settled on going, but for no apparent reason at all, about ninety days later, they sent me the permit. So in 1943, I came to San Francisco. When I got there I saw that Korean people went around with badges that said "KOREAN". I guess they were afraid that they would be mistaken for Japanese. The discrimination must have been very bad.

Soon after I came over, my oldest daughter who had recently gotten married, followed me over with my youngest son, who was still in high school. So leaving only my second daughter Kyung-Hee [Marion] in Hawaii, we all came over to the mainland. Since they were born in Hawaii, they didn't have to go through immigration like I did. I

only got my citizenship recently. My second son used to tell me before he died that even if I gave up Korean citizenship, I could be a citizen again if I went back. It wasn't that I was being patriotic or anything, I just didn't like America all that much. My life in Hawaii was so unlike the life I wanted to live, that I just couldn't like America.

Back then, you just had to answer a couple of questions to get your citizenship. There were people who said they didn't want to bother with questions or anything else, and others who said that citizenship papers weren't going to make Koreans become Americans all of a sudden anyway...the talk back then was all like that. I know the people who come over these days take a lot of pains to get their citizenship, but I wasn't interested at all.

My youngest son [William] came to Gresham, Oregon on April first of 1950 on a scholarship to the University of Oregon. At that time, with both my oldest boys off in the merchant marines, I only had my youngest son to rely on, and I expected that during Christmas break he would come back to San Francisco. But you know, he didn't come! Instead, he was going to go visit Canada with some friends. So my decision to go to Oregon that winter in order to reprimand my son was how I ended up moving there.

It snowed so much that winter...What do you think I found when I got to Gresham in all that snow but friends from back home,

from both Pusan and Hawaii? I was so glad to see them that staying at their houses and remembering old friendships, I really didn't even notice the time passing. There were a lot of Koreans living in Gresham at that time. After the year's harvest was all in, they'd make rice-cakes and sweet liquors to share with each other, just like in a Korean farm village, and they'd go around from house to house and meet to visit and socialize. It all looked so nice and heart warming to me. Seeing them live so warmly with each other even though outside, the snow was piled up like mountains, I decided that I'd gather all my children and make a place for myself there.

I never liked my kids being on ships, and it seemed so good to think of us all living there together. My dream was that on the twenty acres of land I bought, my three sons would build houses, with my two daughters wedged in there too, and in the middle of it all we'd build a tennis court or a swimming pool, and make a Kang family village.

But had my kids ever done farm work in their lives? Had I? We didn't even have the faintest idea how to begin. Since we got there in the winter, no one in the neighborhood was working. I bought the land because it looked like such a peaceful life. But do you think that we could make a living? We soon realized that twenty acres was nothing. We ended up renting a hundred acres of someone else's land, but even with that, it was hard to make ends meet. It is so hard

to make a living off farming.

First of all, the inspection to get the crops on the market was incredibly strict. Where in Korea would you find summer vegetables without a few aphids on it? But here, if there was one single aphid, you had to throw away the entire truckload. It was *that* strict. To us, any normal-sized cabbage is good enough, isn't it? Well, if it went beyond a specific size, you'd only get one dollar for a ton. So you had to get them a precise size—twenty-six of them had to fit in one box. They couldn't be too small either. Since you only got a dollar for the stuff that didn't pass inspection, we'd give it all away to the neighbors to feed their cows with...no one would even cart it away. And even though the crops made so little, labor costs were very high. If you hired men that is; women only got paid about seventy cents an hour.

Until my second son retired from the merchant marines, my youngest with the university scholarship helped me with the farm. He lived in the dormitories when we worked only twenty acres, but afterwards he had to give up even that comfortable dorm life all paid for by his scholarship and attend school from home.

After he graduated from Oregon, he went on to Columbia University. He worked 'till the evening of the day before he left. He had to spray the fields, and his shoulders were so burnt and blistered from the sun that he couldn't even put his coat

on. I was so sad and sorry for him that I wept my heart out at the airport.

I once had my fortune told when I lived in Korea. What they said was that even though I wouldn't be much to my relatives, I'd get a lot of love from strangers. I remember thinking, how could strangers possibly be better than my own children? But I am realizing now how true that was. I got much more love from other people than I did from my own blood. I loved to entertain when I was younger. I even received an award once from my church for always being so hospitable to other people. Now that I am old and can't get out to church with my body always uncomfortable, the church people's visits and calls have become a big solace.

I used to work as the secretary for the Korean Women's Relief Society in Hawaii—there was no Korean Women's Society in Hawaii, only the Korean Women's Relief Society. Originally, there was this Relief Society whose goal was to help the homeland, then later a Women's Society, called the Yeoungnam Society, was also organized. The two used to work together. When Mr. Ch'ang-ho Ahn died, we sent off fundraising letters and went around everyday to collect donations for the independence movement.⁹ We worked like that for quite a while, and things went relatively well. We used to also work for Dr. Rhee whenever he came on tour to lecture or attend conventions.¹⁰



Korean Women's Relief Society, at the Honolulu Korean Christian Church (Hawaii, 1939)

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(Yun Hee Chun Given Collection).

We used to also put on a lot of plays. I still have the photos. We did a show in Honolulu and collected some money, and we went around to all the regions to put on shows and made money and sent it all off to the government-in-exile in Shanghai. The fact that the two societies were able to mix and work together is still a heart warming memory for me. Relief Society members were also members of Yeoungnam, and vice versa, and when one didn't have enough money for a project the other would make up the difference and so on. It's only now that there's so many people in Hawaii, this place the size of your hand. Back then there weren't so many, and we were always so happy to see each other, and we were always helping each other.

It truly was wonderful.

My husband was a supporter of Mr. Yong-man Pak, though I supported Dr. Rhee.¹¹ It wasn't to the degree that we fought about it or anything. He did come over to the National People's Party later on, but I was always an NPP member.

Around 1910, before I came to Hawaii, there was a military unit formed by Mr. Pak in a place called Nuano-Pali. By the time we lived in Hawaii, the government had laid down roads everywhere, but they weren't very wide. They were full of cliffs so bad that if you slipped, no one would even be able to find your bones, and Mr. Kang used to transport supplies to this remote place on these roads where a single truck could barely fit without falling off.



Korean Women's Relief Society drama (Hawaii, n.d.)
Center (seated), Sung-Hark Kang.
Printed by permission (Sung-Hark Kang Collection).

The cars back then didn't have tops or windshield wipers, of course. The rain would be pouring in from the top, the front, the side, the road ahead would be pitch black, and the truck would be so overloaded, that he always went knowing that he might not make it. I guess he was pretty close to Mr. Pak back then.

When he'd get there, Mr. Pak himself would come out to greet him and pour him a beer with his own hands. My husband can't drink at all. Neither can any of my sons. If they drink even one glass they suffer for at least two or three days. So my husband would tell him that he couldn't drink, and Mr. Pak would say to him, "What do you mean, a man who can't drink can't be involved in politics!" and would press him to accept it. I never met Mr. Pak but I did hear a

lot of stories about him.

Looking back on my life now, if I was to be born again, I wouldn't want to walk the same roads that I walked for the last eighty odd years. I never could raise my kids the way I wanted, and I have so few grandchildren. There's nothing but emptiness in all those years. I never managed to accomplish anything I wanted to do. Maybe because I had so many dreams, I dreamed about things beyond my lot in life, and never was able to accomplish anything.

All my life, I've regretted leaving my parents' home. Even now I could beat my head, scream and cry, and not feel it any less for it. My biggest sorrow, more than anything, is knowing how I hurt my parents. Even though he was such a strict man, my father did have a lot of love.

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Just because he was severe, it doesn't mean that there was no love between us. When my father died, I got a big bundle of the letters he wrote to me as he lay sick. Every day as he lay in his sickbed, he'd pull something out from under his mattress and write a few words, and eventually he put it all in an envelope and told them to send it on to me. I wept when I got them. He wrote that even with all that had happened, it wasn't that he hated me, and that of the twenty-four hour in a day, he never once forgot me except during the few hours of the deepest sleep. He said that never being able to see me, with me so far away, he missed me more than he could say. I guess before he died, my father forgave me for leaving home. He begged me to stop breaking my mother's heart and come back to see her before she died. But there were five children in front of me. There was no way for me to go. Even when I received notice of her death, I couldn't go.

I always feel so bad about my kids. Maybe it's because I was never able to raise them as lavishly as I wanted to, but I would always get so sad watching them sleep, stretched out in their pajamas all in a row. I used to cry and cry over them. And if my kids ever did anything wrong or didn't listen to me, the thought that it was all because I was such a bad daughter to my parents would always come to me. I believe that you are always punished for your sins. That's why I try so hard not to not do wrong anymore. I live every day

with the feeling that I am being punished for my sins against my parents.

By eating a single forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve caused their children to suffer such deep retribution. So having pained my parents' hearts so badly, how could I be allowed to live without punishment? When you think about it, how could there be a greater sin? I know that no child grows up without hurting their parents at least a little bit. But I really did so much harm. Think how they must have suffered, never once being able to see me after having raised me so lovingly. It tortures me to think about it.

The young mothers here raise their children in such a Korean way. When their kids fight with the neighbor's kids, they take only their children's side and yell at the neighbor's. I wish they wouldn't be like that. I know that people will say, "What does she know?" When I say things like that, but I say it a lot to the young people close to me. The way they live is so different from the way we lived. We didn't learn all those things in Korea before we came here...we learned etiquette but nothing about how to live out in the world among other people. And when our children grew up we learned about American life from them, so that even though we never experienced it, we could guess what it was like. I even learned a lot about cooking from my children. The things I knew I taught to my children, and learned what I could learn from them. That is what I want to

tell the young Korean wives.

There were always a lot of guests at our house. Among the old-time Koreans in Portland, there probably isn't one person who hasn't had at least a cup of tea at our house. When I was growing up in Korea, my mother was always serving guests and there were so many guests coming and going all the time that I thought that that's how you were supposed to live. Being female, if I'd stayed in Korea I would have had to leave my home when I got married, so I don't know how I would have lived. But being a woman, never having lived among my husband's family has always been a big regret. Whenever I would say that, my husband would

tell me, "Ai, you never would have lasted a day under my mother," and tell me that my mother-in-law was a formidable woman. But I always thought that even if I would have been thrown out in the end, I would have liked to have had the chance to live with them. I do realize of course that it was something I wanted simply because I never had the chance to do it.

Even though I always wondered about far away places when I was young, even now, I am more of a conservative than an open minded person. And I don't know why, but I like Korean customs. If there was a single close relative living in Korea, I would love to go, live, and die there, even now. I still miss Korea.

Notes:

¹A two-year teacher training institute.

²About thirty dollars.

³Between 1910 and 1924, more than eight-hundred picture brides came to Hawaii from Korea. A hundred or more also went to the mainland to places such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Portland, Oregon.

⁴Unless otherwise indicated, italics, where they appear, have been added.

⁵The Korean government abruptly stopped emigration to Hawaii in April of 1905. Although opinions vary, many historians agree that increasing Japanese influence in the Korean government was the primary factor. Japan's desire to discourage Korean immigration was based in its desire to protect its citizens in Hawaii, whose growing numbers and rebelliousness, the plantation owners tried to combat by importing Koreans to replace them. About 90 percent of the first immigrants were male.

⁶Koreans, as a rule, do not address each other by their given names.

⁷The plantation referred to was probably one owned by H. Hackfield and Co. headquartered in Bremen, Germany. Hackfield was one of the "Big Five" corporations which dominated the Hawaiian economy. The company also owned and operated several steamship companies which specialized in transporting immigrant labor from Asia. Hackfield is said to be the first man to suggest importation of Korean labor.

⁸Hawaii became a state in 1959. The U.S. annexation of Hawaii was effected in 1898.

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⁹Ahn Ch'ang-ho came to the U.S. in 1902 to study, but instead became a community organizer and leader. He established the first Korean American social organization, called the Ch'inmok-hoe (Friendship Society) in 1903, and in 1905 established its first political organization, the Kongnip Hyeophoe (Mutual Assistance Association). In 1913, he established the Heungsadan (The Young Korean Academy), and devoted the remainder of his life to the Korean independence movement.

¹⁰Syngman Rhee, a member of the Korean upper-class, was educated in the classical Confucian tradition. In 1905, after seven years in prison for his participation in the reform movement against the Yi dynasty government, Rhee emigrated to the U.S. as a student, receiving eventually, a Harvard M.A. and a Princeton Ph.D. in Political Science. He was one of the prime movers of the Korean independence movement, and became the first president of the Republic. He died in 1965 in Hawaii, where he was exiled following the overthrow of his government by the student uprising of 1960.

¹¹Pak Yong-man also spent time in prison for his part in the government-in-exile. After receiving his degree in Political Science from the University of Nebraska in 1910, he established a military academy for Korean youth in Hastings, Nebraska. Several other military training centers sprouted up subsequently in California, Kansas, Wyoming, and Hawaii. He later established the Korean National Brigade, a consolidation of the various training centers, headquartered on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The ideological disputes between the militarism of Pak and Rhee's belief in the efficacy of education and diplomacy splintered the efforts of the Korean independence movement. Pak was assassinated in Beijing in 1928.



Unknown Photo (Hawaii, circa 1930)

Third row, second from right, Sung-Hark Kang; first row, fourth from right, Marion VanDeel.

Printed by permission (Marion VanDeel Collection).

Marion VanDeel (Kyung-Hee Kang)



Marion VanDeel (Washington state, 1990)
Printed by permission
(Marion VanDeel Collection).

Mother had five children, and I was the middle one. My oldest brother Karl lived in Hosmer, Oregon and later in Gresham, Oregon. My sister, and she passed away two years ago—She had open heart surgery, and she had amputated both of her legs, and she had, you know, what do they call it, I don't know these medical terminology but, colostomy?¹ She was diabetic, and she had...Every other day they had to come in and change her blood, and she died about two years ago. Oh, she was a wonderful woman! I guess the good Lord, always takes the good people first. Isn't that true? Uh-huh. Because she could cook! Wow, the cuisine, the Korean cuisine was just, oh! Oh, could she cook, and she

could bake! Her daughter lives right down the road here. Boy, I'm telling you, their pastry come out so fluffy, and she made a rocking horse you know, out of pastry, cake! For a birthday! Oh, it was beautiful. And every year, like Easter, Christmas... she's got talent to, to bake cakes, or for some kind of cuisine...Oh, *akkaun saram kasseoyo*.²

She sewed for all five children she had, you know. And they were always the best dressed. Oh, I loved her so much. I miss her. I have two younger brothers, and one of them, the one right below me, passed away.³ He died, oh, when he was in his forties. He had an open heart surgery too, and he was taking medication, and he had water in his lungs, and he just keeled over and died. And his wife is still living, and she married a German guy, you know.

Oh, I love Hawaii. My two boys are still living there. I went to school there. From Waimanolo we moved over to Palama. From Palama you know, we went around with all our friends, and had an exciting life, but all work and no play! When we did the laundry, we had a whole tub, *full* of laundry. We would go outside, and boil the heck out of it, you know, bring 'em inside, and we'd beat on 'em, and everything, and...It took more than a day to get it really...Yeah, for the whole house. The girls and mother worked on it, and my brother, oh, he worked his butt off for us. And that was just the

laundry. So my mother is...she doesn't know how to clean house. She's just a...a seamstress...go out and do all that and she opened up stores and everything, and so I did the housework, so you notice that, you know. Very neat! Because mother, oh, she was a mean, ornery mother, to *me* now. She was goody-goody with my sister. She was goody-goody with her oldest son, because you know, that's tradition. You get what I mean? We're nothing, the middle children. So I cleaned house. My sister did all the cooking, you know, and I did the ironing. To the tee! I do it very well. I even used to starch my husband's underwear; iron it. All my bedding is crispy clean, um-hm, ...Trained well!

Oh, my mother, like for example, you know, if we wanted to go to a dance, a school dance, on a Saturday, do you think I was able to go with a "Yes!?" So come Monday, I'd clean up the whole house, *to the tee!* I cleaned up the whole house, and then Friday come, I says, "Mother, tomorrow's the dance, am I able to go?" Because I have to tell my friends I'm going or not! She says, "Boja", you know, "We'll see." Ah dear, come Saturday, all my inner clothes are all prepared, and all I have to do is throw my clothes on and *take off!* And so finally, she looks in the drawer, she pulls out the drawer, and one of the clothes was undone. She pulled the whole thing out and threw it on the floor, and she said, "Do it again!" Hm! So I had to fold it all up and everything and then she looked

at it, and she said, "Okay." So I went to the dance, but my friends, they all liked me *very* much, you know. I was very amiable. And they said, "Oh, Marianne, let's go to Kau Kau corner" In Hawaii, this is, and she says, "We'll go have an ice cream," and I said, "Oh, no." I hesitated because I knew my mother was gonna wait for me and..."Only one ice cream and we're gonna come back!" And I couldn't be a wet blanket so, I said, "All right, let's go." I went. Boy, I tell you, when I came home, took off my shoes and quietly go into the house, from nowhere, she grabbed my clothes and *ripped* them! I was so scared. She said, "Where've you been? What man crawled on you?" I said, "Nobody!" I was so beat up that I said, "Mother, please, take me to the doctor to see if I was raped or not." Oh, and she beat us! She kicked me right here, and I passed out. And then later on she got some ice and revived me.

Oh, she was...but you know, frankly, I couldn't blame her. You know what Korean fathers are like. They come home, take a bath, and *out they go*; fool around, and do all kinds of things like that. Mother was never happy, and she took it out on us. That's the kind of a life we lived. But on the other hand, we were very happy. We always piled up on her bed, Sunday morning, and read the comics to her, and she looked at it, and oh boy! She would giggle and laugh and everything. And she held the family together. Really. She supported the family too, with her

seamstress work, oh yes! And we were always dressed so nice that everybody thought we were *rich*! But frankly, we didn't have anything but all this material that comes over. Mother still has shelves full of material, oh yes, she's kept it for years and years, you know. And she feels it is such a waste to throw them away because all her life that's what she's been doing.

It's a melting pot there in Hawaii. We had all kinds of friends. So you can just imagine what kind of friends we had. I went to my fiftieth reunion, and ah, see, this is a melting pot, Farrington High School, Class of '41, *Fiftieth* Reunion. Filipino, Japanese, Haoles, you know what is a Haole? A white! And ah, where was I? [Pointing to her picture] I'm on the top somewhere... there you are! See, lots of them were on wheelchairs and walking canes, and I was pretty frisky those days, see that there? And I'm seventy-three! But you know Koreans are funny that way, you know, they always, what shall I say, they always want to be senior, and when they're past sixty they're bent like this and they're walking, and I say straighten up!

Well, I did have some good Korean friends, like Alice Kim, and a few of them, but...one dear friend that I had was Chinese, and another one was Japanese. She's living in San Jose. So we really had a nice time. So I had friends of all different races, here too! Hawaiians too. I still have two boys living in Hawaii, and ah,

two each, grandchildren. So I have six grandchildren. We never were segregated—maybe the Blacks—but those days, everyone got along.

I was born in Waimanolo, and when my father and mother first went there, they were just starting to develop the place. You know, they had floors that had cracks in it, so when you sweep, everything falls down in-between. I don't know Waimanolo much better than anything else. I know just the island Oahu, and ah!...it's a beautiful place, because we know, the nooks and crannies of those places. So when we go over there, we don't go to the tourist districts. We go to the places we know, and uh, we know a few Hawaiians so we get along real fine.

You know, I married my husband, in 1974, and being that I was born in Hawaii, my husband had a tour of duty there. So we went there and, the Hawaiians don't like the Haoles, because they say they're "Pilao Haoles." "Pilao" means dirty. They always think, oh they're the great ones, and "You just listen to me! We are the superior ones." So as soon as I walked into that place where we were gonna live, in Radford Terrace, and they knew I was a local. By jiminy! I had new counters. I had a new icebox, rattan furniture, you saw that rattan furniture there?...I got it all free! And then whenever the taps were leaky they would come and put a new one on, *everything*! And uh, the Haoles around there, they were angry because I get the choice of everything,

The Kang Family

you know, the privilege of all.

Every time, that woman would come over and take a nap at my place and go back. And when we had *bulkoki*, I'd take it over there, and they would say, "That's our kind of people." They don't take advantage. So we really, I like Hawaii, anyway. When I get really old, I would like to go back and live there, for the rest of my life. Not only because of the climate—the climate I don't care for—but the privileges that they have for the senior citizens, *wonderful!* I've never seen *anything* like it. They teach you how to do the hula. They teach you how to play the ukulele. They make your life busy. They are really, really wonderful.

I have a cousin living in Hawaii, and he's uh, Hamilton Kang—Hor-Choo Kang, that's his Korean name. And he's got a *beautiful* wife. I don't mean pretty, but she's got a beautiful heart. She just loves everybody, helps everybody, and does everything, you know. My mother—excuse me for saying so—maybe I should shut up. She thinks that she's the only one that's elder. She's the only one that is sick and capable of being sick. She's the only one that everybody has to cater to, you know. And actually, if she was an actress, she'd have the biggest Oscar. She called me up today. Selfish! I don't know maybe it's a Korean custom, or something that they know they are seniors and we have to cater to them, but I don't think that's right! I'm *seventy-three* and she thinks I'm about twelve years old. "Come here!

Do this! Do that!" And she hates my husband's guts!

My husband is the best man I could ever, ever get. He goes to work. He's retired navy now, see that there. He retired Navy, and double dipping, he works at Puget Sound. He's a nuclear man. He comes home and does the housecleaning for me. Of course, I put away and do things like that, but...*Eight years younger than I am!* Eight years younger than I am. And every two weeks, on a weekend, he cleans the *entire* house, and I mean dusting and everything! But right now, you know, we're still in the process of rearranging things that he doesn't do that. And uh, every other weekend he cleans the entire yard. Every night he comes home, and he does the dishes. All I have to do is cook for him. I don't know why mother doesn't like him; I guess it's jealousy, or what, because he caters to me so much. So he tells me, "Honey, you can beat on me, you can tell me anything, but don't tell me to get the hell out of this house."

I don't think it's because he's white. My sister's husband is white; my youngest brother's wife is white. I don't know. I can't understand her. My first husband, he was an Englishman. He was a good one. I mean he was good looking. I don't mean like this husband here. But really intelligent. He had three hundred people under him working in Hickam Air Force Base. He was a supply man. I got two sons from him. And oh, was he strict! He never liked me to write a check! I was supposed to be a

homebody, and of course I cleaned the house immaculately! At that time of course, I was still young. But he drank every night. I don't drink at all. So we didn't have communication. So one day I told him, "I don't like it." He looked at me, and he said, "We got three doors, get out any one of 'em." And as proud as I was, I went. I'm still proud, even if I'm seventy-three and I've got nothing to be proud of. So my second husband was Korean. That's when my daughter was born.⁴ I couldn't take it. Oh, he was... Shut that tape off a minute and I will tell you what kind of a husband he was...

I lived in Korea since 1953. We lived in Susan for a while, and then mother came, and uh, we moved to over to Seoul, and through word of mouth, all those nice big-shot people wanted to learn English from me. And I didn't know how to speak Korean at that time. I couldn't even read. Until this day I cannot read! I can read just a few characters, but that's it. So I taught them typical American language. And I taught them idioms, like "stop pulling my leg", or "go fly a kite somewhere else" [*sic*]. I told 'em "No, I'm going to teach you idioms, what we converse with". So they said, "Fine, what is 'pulling my leg'?" They looked at me, "Pull my leg?" "No, no. It says, 'stop fooling around'! Don't kid me, all right?"

And then I used to teach Ehwa girls, in Korea, Ehwa girls.⁵ And uh, I always wore Korean clothes there, because even if I speak Korean, they

know I'm a foreigner, and so they come after me. You know, those beggars would come after me. And they got sweet potatoes, and they would come after me and they would want to throw them at me. Those days, they had lots of beggars, and I was, for sure had some money, and I threw it at them. So they would run away that way, and I would run away this way. And I used to call the policeman, you know, and I would say, "take care of them!" and I couldn't speak Korean then. So I made it a point to wear Korean clothes and nobody would bother me.

You know, when I first landed in Korea, I had a white linen dress and a white hat. I was still young. I was thirty, thirty-five I think at that time. With high linen shoes and everything. And God Almighty! The children in Korea, they called me, "*Yangkalbo! Yangkalbo!*"⁶ And I thought they call me a Yankee woman! So I was so nice to them, and I kinda loved them and everything like that. Later on, I found out what that meant. Ha ha ha ha!

And you know what? Someone was supposed to meet me at the airport, and ah, they didn't have radar to bring us in, so all our communication was topsy-turvy. So finally, it was raining, raining. Oh! My linen shoes were all in mud and everything. So a little jeep came up there and he was some kind of corporal or something like that, a Korean fellow. But he happened to speak English. So, I wanted... If there was another plane, I would have gone back home, *just*

like that, because the minute you opened the door of the airplane, the *gochujang* smell, oh it was overpowering!⁷ So anyway, I finally got to Bando Hotel at that time. You know the Bando Hotel? They destroyed that place and built something else, I think, I don't know. I went to the Bando Hotel, and then, no, let me say it this way...

I was in Japan and ah, because they didn't have radar, they brought us back to Japan, and I stayed at the Prince Hotel. So at the Prince Hotel, they had western facilities for us to use. Then just to kill time I went to the movie house, and I saw these small little basins, all one after another, and I looked at them, and wondered, "What are those basins for?" You know, I couldn't quite understand. They had a little water. Then I finally...that was their toilet, and then they wash their bottom with the water! You didn't know that? So finally, you know they have the kimono, and all they do is flip it on the side, do their business, and wash it, and they get out. But it was so clean, so spic and span. So anyway, I walked up to the very end, and there was a western commode that I used, and then after that we took the plane. Again we tried for Korea and that time it was little better but the mud and everything, you know, and then the people calling me "*Yangkalbo*". So like I said, if they had another plane, I would've gone right back home.

Why did I go to Korea? Well, because of my divorce from my hus-

band, and I know if I went to America, to San Francisco, my mother would give me hell. And I was so scared of her! So they had two ships that came into Hawaii; they were destroyers. And I fell in love with a Captain, a Korean captain of that ship. And he loved me very much and we had a good time for two weeks there. But when I entered Korea, he told me he was very sorry but he was the oldest one too! So he said that the family was against [marriage]. And being that I was oriental, I understood. I said, "Okay, we'll be friends, that's all." So anyway, we became friends and, then I taught the custom officers there and everything. Oh, we had a wonderful time. I think since after thirty-five, the best part of my life was in Korea, I really think so, because everybody took care of me with *kid gloves*. The rich people send their limousine to pick me up. I went to concerts, and operas, and oh, God, *red carpet treatment!*

I was Park Chung-hee's wife's secretary for two years.⁸ What was she like? At that time, she was really "country-hickey," and then I read her letters, you know, and had them translated so they can write it; things like that for two years. And then I taught the uh, Park Chung-hee's bodyguards English. They were very interesting too. Interesting people. They were very courteous. If you get to know the Korean people, they are very loving people. Really, they are very loving people, but to be a husband, I don't know. But *anything* I

said was gold! Oh yes, I met Park Chung-hee too. He was very stern. He wanted to play the big shot, you know. But I didn't see him much, because, well...he was very stern. And then his children played with my daughter; they were about the same age.

And do you know Kim Seong-geun?⁹ You don't? Oh, he was famous guy too! They had a school, they had the orient newspaper and everything. He was a big shot. And you know what they did to him? Threatened him: they pulled his whiskers all off, and they almost killed him. He died of course from all that suffocation. Yes, torture, um-hm, the government. Really, God almighty they were bad. Look at how Park Chung-hee died! He was shot to death that way, and oh God! But the people below him, they really liked him. Because they knew him. Nice guy. But like I said, he was working too fast, and they didn't like it and shot him. Um-hm. And oh, those big shots like Lee Byeong-ch'eol, he was a sugar tycoon. And his children below him, I taught the whole family. Kim Sang-kun family, I taught the whole family.¹⁰ You know nowadays, this Ssangyong? The company...But anyway, every time he comes to Seattle, he looks me up. And ah, he's got a lot of bodyguards around him but he still comes in and gives me a big hug. We go to lunch or dinner together and in a short time we separate. So now I hear he's running for senator, or some kind of a...He's in politics

right now. He married a nice actress.

Oh yes, I knew a lot about the political scene. And all the banks! Seoul Bank, The Small & Medium Industry Bank, The Agricultural Association Bank; all of those. I taught the big shots there too. So you can just imagine the life I led there. Oh God, I didn't have a spare moment. When I did come home, my mother was so jealous of me. And you know those days, the last "*Hapseung*"; you know what a *hapseung* is? A *hapseung* is like a, oh what do you call it, a jitney bus! You get on the bus to get home, and twelve o'clock was curfew time. We had curfew, so I'd break my neck trying to get on that bus to go home, because from one class, that company would chauffeur me to the next class. I had eleven classes a day! My throat was so parched, *really* parched. So when I get home, and it was after twelve o'clock because I had to walk, [my mother] says, "Where the hell have you been? What man crawled on you?" You know. Yeah! Still at time...So my daughter would close the door, you know, and push me in my room and she would say, "Don't say anything!" And she was only what, five or six years old. She was such a bright girl!

How long did my mother live with us? Almost twelve years; all the time we were there. And then, I was there fifteen years, so in the beginning I lived alone, and at the end, I kinda lived alone, you know. No, I never met my grandmother. She passed away long before. Oh yes, we have a very, very large family there. I

would say about, now, a total of more than thirty-five, from my father's side and my mother's side. Um-hm. Very interesting people, and like I said, you know, Koreans are funny that way. When you're a big shot, no matter how poor they are, you know, they always put out a table, *full* of food, even if they're in debt for about a *whole* month or so, they put out the food. And that's how they treated me. That's why the Korean greeting is "Have you eaten?" Really, and I tell you, I really was taken care of with kid gloves, so whenever I go to Korea, when the bankers find out that I came you know, I just have to give 'em one buzz, word to mouth you know, "Hey, Marianne's in town!" And they treat me so I go to big hotels to eat. "We went to the Korea House; the entertainment there; the [Sheraton] Walker Hill—God almighty! I went everywhere. Oh yes, they just began the Walker Hill at that time. Now, it's more elaborate though, but then those days, it was really exclusive. You had to be somebody to get in there. Oh, it was terribly expensive, oh yes.

About my father's family? My father's family was very...ah... *annyeong*¹¹ to us, you know, just, "hello." And that kind of thing, you know, *eoreun noreut handa*¹²...But oh, my father was one sweet man! My mother just didn't understand him. My father came from a very nice family, but, there were fourteen years difference, so my father was very jealous of her. And she was a beautiful woman, oh *beautiful!* I'm telling you,

with her high heels, and her overcoat, and a big hat, you know, everybody thought she was a white woman! Oh, she was lovely. And then on top of that, my father liked to gamble, and that wasn't... that wasn't my mother's cup of tea. My father was really a good man, but she was unhappy about that, and they didn't communicate well. They didn't understand each other. My mother didn't try to understand him. She wanted only people with prestige, or people with money, or something like that. Until this day she's the same. You know, as long as you've got prestige, or you...I don't know, I don't go for that.

At the end of his life though, he was working on the Madsen line, on the ships. Oh yes, he was making some of the best money out there. And what do you think my mother did? All she did was spend the money and didn't even cater to him. Oh! He was a carpenter on the ships. He cannot read blueprints, but you tell him what to do, and he does it *perfectly!* Very talented. And in the old days we had washboards. He made them. He soaked them, and he cut them, and all the Korean families used them. And you know the *bangmaengi*, he made it perfectly!¹³ Everybody like it because the grip was good. And you know the *ibulchang*, oh, I think today still, lots of people in Hawaii have his, lots of people have that still.¹⁴ My father passed away when my daughter was four years old. I was still in Korea. He was still living in Hawaii. I don't blame my father for

having liked to gamble, because, that was his only pastime! I like to gamble too. I like to play poker. My brothers play poker. Every holiday we have, after everything, the singing, the carol, is done, okay, it's time to play poker. I like to gamble. But my husband is such a poor loser, I don't dare do anything in front of him. He gets bored. And I'm pretty good in my poker playing, you know. He gets so jealous. He throws the cards down and he says, "You're always winning!" I can't help it.

You know, I've got really an intelligent family, but the problem is they think they're too great for everybody. I'm not like that. Oh yes, my mother was unusual. Everybody was sort of country-hickey, but my mother was so...what shall I say... really intelligent for her age. And she was way beyond the people of those days. That's why if she was born, let's say ten years before, or ten years back, she would've been a very happy woman, but in between that way, she couldn't release. Even today, her age, she should be an old, decrepit woman or something like that, but *no!* In that place she lives, people look at her and say, "God, remarkable!" Leader, yes, and how! My father too, but on her influence though. Yes, they belonged to those Korean clubs, very active, and lot of fights too. And my mother is "*Kyeong-sang-do*".¹⁵ Oh, she can really let out! You know, one day—we were living in Seoul then—mother and I went to a tea room. You know they have lot of "*Tabang*". So we went

to a tea room, and evidently, I misplaced my umbrella. So we went back there for it, and uh, asked her if they found an umbrella, because it was a set with my raincoat, and I valued it. And she, the madam says, "What're you trying to do? Are you accusing me that I lie about it?" Oh, they got into a tussle, and oh boy, that was the first time I could hear my mother pour her cussing out! She could really do it. My mother was not the kind of woman who worked in a kitchen. She was too uh...uppity-up. You ever sit down and talk to her about Korean history? Oh, people just gathered to listen to her. She's really talented, you know? She can speak Japanese too, very fluently.

Oh yes, my parents always tried to raise me as a Korean. She looks at me, she says, "You look in the mirror. *Geoul bara! Miguk saram inya? Hanguk saram iji!*"¹⁶ We always had conflicts, especially since I was the third one in the family. Mother always catered to the oldest one and to the oldest daughter, and because he was the youngest, the baby. All my life...God! you don't know. You don't know how much...my mother was *so* beautiful! In school, on a rainy day, I would think oh, my mother's gonna come down and pick me up with her umbrella. I waited and I waited and I waited, but she never showed up. That's how much I loved her inwardly. But I...all my life. I never really had a mother and daughter connection, never. That's why I wanted to do it with my daughter, but look at how far she's away. So I

said, well, I have no luck being a parent. My two boys are in Hawaii and my daughter is over there!¹⁷ Without my husband, I think I would've gone crazy. You know that's why they say the third one is a charmer.

I got married to *him*—look at that picture; I was fifty years old then. And nobody, nobody tells me that I'm older than him. Nobody believed it. I met him in Oregon. We were in Gresham, Oregon then. My second brother has a cabbage patch, and he has a *great* big strawberry farm. So we worked around there picking strawberries and selling them by the crates and all that. Oh, we worked from morning to night! And uh, naturally, I'm not a farmer, I don't go for that. I worked at Fred Meyer, because for the simple reason that I was too long away from America and they told me I had no—what shall I say, uh...in other words, within five years, you had to be in America and work before you got all that experience and things like that.¹⁸ So I worked at Colonial Manor, Colonial Manor is like a nursing home, and I worked for a dollar and twenty-five cents a day. Ugh!! Oh, I saw all those pity things. You know, they don't scrub them. They don't bathe them. They fool around with them and everything like that, so I didn't go for it. So I got away from them and I went to Fred Meyer to work as a cashier.

At that time, I was still very...I think I was rather pretty at that time. So this Chinese boss, Mr. Chen, he says, "Why don't you come and work

for me as a cashier?" And it was such an *exclusive* Chinese restaurant that we all had to wear gowns. So with my nice figure—I had waist twenty-two, even when I was fifty years old! I had twenty-two, just about the size of a man's collar. So he told me to come and work for him and I fixed up the girl's schedules. I was the head cashier. Of course, my manager, he died several years ago now. But these Haole white people used to come in and say, "Oh you have such nice skin!" I had such a fair complexion. Look at me now of course, liver spots all over. Look at my mother! You know in Korea, we would go to the bath house, and oh they would touch her body; she's like milk! So white. Then they would touch me, but they would *never* touch my daughter because...She's a little darker...but still more on the fair side.

So in that restaurant, I had a Korean girlfriend, and she had a sailor friend. So the sailor friend went back and talked to *him* about me. So he brought his laundry in his bag, thinking that I was a mama-san that would do his laundry and everything. But when he saw me, he walked right out of the restaurant. He said, "Look, she is a *lady*. I cannot reach her with a ten foot pole! She's elegant!" Anyway, so they came back in again and they sat *way* down there where the waitress take a rest. I didn't know that he was my blind date. So after two o'clock we close up, see, because then we relax, and we go to a...they call it the "Flower Garden", and they

have dancing until four o'clock in the morning. So anyway, we danced, and we had a little bite to eat and everything. So I took him over to my home, and I was living in Boring, Oregon then. So, I made some hotcakes and breakfast for them and everything, then he came back again. I guess he was interested in me at that time. So he says, "You know within six months you're gonna get married." So I says, "Not me!" At that time I had lost two husbands, right? So I replied, "No, I think I'd rather be alone and go on life that way." He said, "No, you're gonna be married within six months." And so he called me *every* night. Every night! He ran up a bill of *eight hundred dollars* on telephone bills. And he was already in California, because the ship, after repairs, was down there. And everytime I says, "Look, J.J., I'm not interested. I'm so much older than you are and maybe now you think I'm all right, but later in life, I don't want to be cast away, like I was nothing." And he says, "No!" and would fly over. He flew over three times. God! So I said to myself, "Look, this man must love me." So we got married and until this day, he's treated me very well. He gave up smoking; he gave up drinking; all for me. Every morning he leaves little notes to me, you know, "Love, J.J." and all like that. And we've been married twenty years!

I was born in 1923—that makes me fully seventy-two years old, but you know the Korean age is seventy-three. What was it like

growing up in the thirties and the forties? Well, we liked Shirley Temple, and all those. Clark Gable...when he died, I cried and I cried, and I cried. I had a picture of Clark Gable on my ceiling. We'd go to movies, and we'd see "Our Gang" comedy, and all of those "Little Rascals" movies, what they call today, and ah...Really, people don't believe how we lived. My brother, he goes down to the bakery and steals some bread, and we'd have it nice and piping hot. We didn't live like today's kids. Today's kids are so boring. They look at you and they say, "What am I supposed to do?" Our days, when we were young, we mowed the lawn for people and get money. We made deliveries for them and made money. Ah dear, those were good days, I think. Sure, we were more motivated. More energetic than these kids! Oh, we used to...Yet we had time for the family. We had more time for the family, in fact. Not today's kids. Today's kids, all they want to do is go out and smoke pot and all like that. Gee, I look at 'em and I say, "Isn't there anything for you to do?" They say, "What?" Well, in our days, we did lots of swimming; I'm a good swimmer. We snorkeled, and we'd come home and clean up the house.

Those were good days. After I got married, we were one of the first ones to get Magnavox for a TV. Then, they didn't have programs all day long; just a spurt here and a spurt there. It was black and white, and all my children would gather their

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friends and come and watch the television. They were all favorites. Like Liz Taylor, Joan Fontaine, Tyrone Powers, you know, I mean they were all good actors, but most of them have passed away now. I liked Claudette Colbert, oh! She was beautiful. Do you know she'd take a bath in milk? For her skin. I got pictures of it. And ah... there was Debra Kerr...Have you seen the movie "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"? He was a married man and he loved this other woman, like a concubine you know, and everytime they'd meet, he would put two cigarettes and light it, and give one to her. That was really romantic. I guess in our days, people were more romantic than today. I think so.

And then, in our days too, we dressed to the tee! I owned a lot of hats, red hats, blue hats, white hats, and you name it, and we had gloves too. We were *dressed!* We're not the kind to wear t-shirts, or lingerie, or jeans or anything like that. Never. All long stockings, and we didn't have pantyhose then. We had it up to our knees, and we'd make a garter, and put it on. Pantyhose is something new. The men would always wore suits, and we always matched out things. Like, if I had a white dress, and my shoes were black, then my belt would be black, my bag would be black, and then my accessories would be black. To the tee! We'd never go out of the house without curlers on. We'd never go out of the house without makeup. *Never.* The first thing I do, get up in the morn-

ing, I put my face on. It's still a habit for me. People today don't know how to dress—either that, or they don't have a mirror in their house to see how they look.



Marion VanDeel, age 23
(Honolulu, 1946)
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And back then, we had to be so secretive about dating—God! If my mother knew about it! I used to like a Japanese fellow—wait, no, my first boyfriend was Korean. But like I said, he thought he was so superior, and ah, he dropped me like a hot potato. Then my second boyfriend was Japanese and he liked me too, but didn't want to think of marriage, so

I dropped him. And then we'd just go out on dates until I went to Korea, until I married my husband. We couldn't afford the movies so much, so we'd just go out to Waikiki and spend the whole day there, if we could, otherwise I had to run home and clean up the house before my mother came home from work. Oh! I was so jealous of my friends who didn't have it so strict at home. But you know, I don't know why, but they all liked me. Marion this, Marion that, Marion this, you know. I do. I do have a very sunny disposition, I think. I like to laugh. Uh-huh.

I like to entertain. I like people to come over, and things like that. But lately, I don't go for it because I'm not young anymore. I fractured my back, say about four or five years ago. You know the vertebrae just collapsed on me. So since then, I lost two inches. I was five feet five tall. I was in pain. I'm still in pain. They wanted to take a knife to me, and I said no. Once they take a knife to you, it will never get healed up. So arthritis set in. When it's a rainy day, before it rains, I already know it 'cause I feel fidgety about it. Otherwise, I would've been perfectly okay. *Don't ever get old!*

Notes:

¹A colostomy.

²An idiomatic sentence which is very difficult to translate. "A very dear and talented person has passed away too soon" is an approximation. Unless otherwise indicated, italics, where they appear, have been added.

³Mooney Kang

⁴Jeanie Cho.

⁵Students of Ehwa Women's University.

⁶An extremely pejorative term referring to women prostituting for American G.Is.

⁷The ubiquitous hot bean paste used in Korean dishes.

⁸Park Chung-hee became the de facto ruler of Korea in 1961 through a military coup d'etat. He served three consecutive terms as President until his assassination in 1979.

⁹A politician and industrial magnate influential in Park's ruling party.

¹⁰The chairman of Ssangyong and his family.

¹¹The implication is that they were very formal and distant.

¹²Literally, "Acting like one's elders".

¹³A slender wooden club used to beat cloth.

¹⁴A chest for storing bedding.

¹⁵A province in Korea that includes Seoul.

¹⁶"Look in the mirror! Are you American? You're Korean!"

¹⁷In Indonesia.

¹⁸Fred Meyer is a discount store franchise.

William Kang



Left to right, Karl and William Kang (circa 1940)
Printed by permission
(Marion VanDeel Collection).

We were all born in Hawaii, and I was the last of five. I was born April 7, 1927. So we were all raised there until I was sixteen years old. I went to grade school there, in Honolulu, on the main island of Oahu. Of course, my dad and my mom migrated from Korea. My dad was from Seoul, and my mom from Pusan. Of course, we didn't get any family history until we went to Korea, let's see...about nine years ago. We went to Korea, my wife and I, and we stayed in Korea for about a month. I didn't even realize at that time that I had relatives in Korea. So prior to going to Korea, my mother made some phone calls and wrote some let-

ters and so when we got there we had nephews and friends waiting for us. We couldn't speak Korean, but my sister [Marion] went along with us, and she could speak Korean because she was there for about ten years or so.

When we went back there, [Marion] already knew some of the relatives. And they were so gracious. We just loved Korea. You know, it was really something! It was unusual, because I wasn't raised in a Korean world. Even in Honolulu, I had some Korean friends, but it was just a mixture, even when I was a child. And then in my adult life, I was never raised in a Korean community. So my Korean is very meager. The only person I can really understand is my mother. Other people that come from the mainland—I mean Korea—I can hardly make out.

I went to high school in Honolulu. I went to Roosevelt High School, up to my freshman year. It was during the War. My mother had come to San Francisco by then, because both of my brothers were seamen in the merchant marines. They were both based in San Francisco. Both of my sisters were still in Honolulu. I left the islands in 1944. In '43 I was in Roosevelt, playing football, and when I came to the mainland, I went to Polytechnic High School, in San Francisco. Now it's closed.

San Francisco was very different. Very different. 'Cause you know, in

Honolulu, you have an amalgamation of almost every race under the sun. For example, some of my friends that I played football with in Roosevelt, were named Taylor, Junie, Ryner, and they were not Caucasian! They were part Caucasian. They had the names. But some of them looked *real* Hawaiian. Some were dark; some were lighter. You know. And some of them didn't know what their ancestry was. They *really* didn't know. Junie found out. He thought he was Swiss, and he found out that "Junie" was an Italian name. It was one of those kinda things.

About my mother...in Honolulu, there's a lot of Korean people, so during grade school time, she wanted me to learn Korean. So she sent me to Korean school—my brother Mooney and I. But we'd never go. We'd always play hooky from Korean school. We couldn't see—understand—why she would do that to us. We go to English school all day long, and then in the afternoons, she wanted to send us to Korean school. So we never would go, we always... We maybe get a ruler across the palm of our hands when we go real late or something like that, but that's about it. I regret it now. I wish I had gone to school. I wish I had learned.

When I came to San Francisco in 1944, I didn't know what school I was going to. Then I finally decided on Polytechnic, because at that time there was a Korean family, the Kim family. Of course, everybody's a Kim, and Roy Kim had attended Poly-

technic. And he said that Polytechnic played real good football. My primary interest was football, not school. So I said I'd take his address and go to Polytechnic, not knowing that Polytechnic was one of those technical schools where anybody can go. But anyway, I went to Polytechnic and the transition was very different. Where I was living, like if I had gone to Commerce High School, there were a lot of Orientals—a lot of Chinese. But that wasn't the difference. At Polytechnic, there was only a handful of Orientals. I was from the islands, but I was always in with the in-group. The thing that really helped me was that I could play football. Anytime you play sports, it helps. But it took me about an hour to go to school and hour to get home. By the time I'd get home, after football practice and everything, it's dark. And I never did really mingle with the kids in school because I was out of the district. *That's* what made it difficult; it wasn't a racial thing.

I have never encountered any racial difficulties. Never. I was always invited to go with them. Even the vice principal at school—who was my real savior at Polytechnic—would always want me to join clubs. At that time, Hy Wy was real big, but I would never go 'cause I lived so far away from there. Polytechnic was close to Golden Gate Park, and I lived way up on Russian Hill, which is on the other side. It's just on the outskirts of Chinatown, and the Barbary coast. So where I lived, I had to take the cable car down, and get to

Market Street, and then from there transfer, get onto Haight Street, and go all the way to Polytechnic. No subway system then! So it was really a long distance. During the war, I heard stories of even the Chinese people getting beat up because they thought they were Japanese, but that was during the war. But like I say, I never had problems with that. I played football, and I did well.

When I was in Honolulu, I played Halfback. But when I went to Polytechnic, the second week of practice, this vice principle, he was an ex-coach, he was watching us practice and he saw me. And I just had a good day. I was catching everything, catching passes and things like that, so he talked to the coach and the coach asked me if I would play End. And I said no, 'cause I was only what—five-seven and a half. And all the other Ends were six-three, six-four. Those Haoles, they're big! So the coach said, "Do you want to play End?"! The vice principle, Mr. Hungerford, had a lot of influence at the school. He was "Mr. Polytechnic". He asked me why [I refused] and I said, "I've played Halfback all my life; I don't want to play End." And he said, "Why don't you do this; you try at End for a week, and if you don't like it, I'll switch you back." So that week, you know, he elevated me up to the first string and from there on...It was exciting playing End. So I liked it. I was all-city for two years in San Francisco. So that's why like I said, I never had any difficulty, with that

environment or anything. It was just the distance. A lot of times, let's say, you take a kid, from Portland, Oregon, and put him in a total Caucasian atmosphere, and he has sort of like an inferiority complex, but I never felt that. In fact, I would have to say that I had a superiority complex. Because I was raised in Honolulu, where it was an amalgamation of all different types of people, and when I came to Polytechnic, I fit right into the football team.

In San Francisco, at that time, we didn't have too many Koreans. Not too many Koreans. A lot of Chinese, and the Japanese were all gone in the internment camps, which was a sorrowful thing. But Chinatown was big, and the Chinese kids were different in San Francisco. 'Cause when they're out of school, or even in school, they speak Chinese. Only in the classroom would they speak English. Some of the kids that are born and raised in San Francisco, you'd think they were from mainland China. They have thick Chinese accents, you know, 'cause all they speak is Chinese. So really, you know, I didn't mingle with those kids. And if I lived in that area, near the school, I would've been in the Hy Wy club. Of course, I was in the letterman society. Hy Wy, at that time, it was a Christian youth club. It was really big, although you don't hear about it anymore. Only the important kids got to join the club. I'm not religious either, but it was a youth club—social, very social.

I dated Caucasian girls. Never

had any trouble with their families. In fact, there was one Korean family that was very close to us. We just lived a block away from each other. My brother Mooney married Pearl. And her sister Ruby was going to Commerce High School in that area. Both of them were real scholars in High School. Pearl was very, very bright, and so was Ruby. In one of the large high schools in LA where they grew up, Pearl was valedictorian. And Ruby, in Commerce High School, she was also valedictorian, or salutatorian. She was three or four years younger than Pearl, and I took her out a few times, but Korean girls really didn't interest me at that time. So I had, sort of like, a city girlfriend. She was Italian. I made a tragic mistake two years ago. I went back for a luncheon for athletes from the San Francisco area, and I saw her brother, and I asked him how she was, how was Dolores. And he told me that she passed away about six years ago. I felt so bad, asking a question like that because I didn't know.

I went in the service after high school. When I was in high school, I had scholarships to play football, at St. Mary's in Santa Clara, a little school, but then I went in the service and I joined the airborne, the 82nd airborne, and I didn't like service life. I thought service life was prison without walls. Some people liked it, but I just didn't care for it. I took my jump training in Georgia, and I was stationed in Fort Benning, in North Carolina, and I wanted to go overseas to Germany, but the war

was over and I got stuck in the deportation center in New Jersey. I stayed there for a couple of months, and I got discharged and came home. I wanted to go to Germany. The war had ended, but I wanted to go as occupation force, and the only way I could get there was to reenlist. But I didn't want to reenlist so I was discharged and went home.

When I came home, I went back to see my coach, and he sent me to Menlo Junior College. I went to see a coach there, and just on my high school coach's word, he gave me a scholarship to play football. So that was my life, really. When I was a kid, and when I was growing up, football was everything, school was nothing. I played there for one year and didn't do anything. So I was kinda peeved, and he told me that he'd give me another scholarship for another year if I came back. And I wouldn't because I didn't think he played me enough. So I went back to San Francisco, and I went to San Francisco Junior College, just to pick up some credits, and I went to summer school at the University of California. And then I found out that my high school coach, Joe Feducci, went to St. Mary's. So I went there in March and went for Spring practice for football. He gave me a scholarship just for Spring so I didn't have to pay any money and I picked up a few credits there.

Then one day, I was walking in the streets with one of my friends, Al Junie, and we met another friend of ours who played football in Hawaii, Dave Costello. Dave Costello

said, "You wanna come to Portland University?" And I said, "Where's Portland?" I didn't even know. We're in San Francisco walking the streets. And he said, "In Oregon. It's beautiful country!" And you know, he was just a good football player, in the islands, and he was of course at the University of Portland. So he asked us if we wanted to come out and play football. And we said, "Is it nice up there; how is it?" And he explained the campus and everything, that it was really a beautiful campus. So we said, "Yeah, if they give us a scholarship, we'll go." So he called his coach up, long distance, and said he had two fellows that played football with him, and would the coach give us a scholarship if they came up? "Well," his coach said, "Practice a few weeks here, and if they can make the team, we'll give 'em a scholarship." So up we went, Al Junie and I, and we had maybe thirty-five cents in our pockets plus train fare. So on the way, we had to buy one pancake or something like that and split it, between us. We had suitcases and no money. Nothing. When we arrived, we got on the phone, called the school, and just happened to get a guy who played high school football with me, Ron Pereira. I asked him if he had any money, and we said we wanna catch a cab to get to the University of Portland, and he said, "Okay, I'll be waiting for you, and I got some money." So we went to University of Portland, and we played, and when we practiced he put both of us on scholarship. So we

got full scholarships: room, board, and tuition.

My mother came over from the islands about six months before I did, and I was living with my sister in the islands. I was going nowhere in school there, and all I wanted to do was play football, and in fact I would not go to school, and just make sure I was back there in time for practice. That's how bad it was, really. When I left Honolulu, I was expelled because one of the teachers...it was almost the last day of school, I was looking at our Annual, and she snatched the Annual out of my hands. And I said, "For Christ's sake! What are you doing?" And she just flipped, and said that I swore at her, and she took me to the vice principal's office and I got expelled! It was almost the last day of school and I got all F's for that year. I wasn't doing all that great in school anyway—I got D's and C's—but then I got all F's.

So then, my mother wrote and said, "You better come out to San Francisco." So I did. I had my transcript with me, and I went at the last minute to register at Polytechnic, with all these F's, and underneath, it said reason for leaving school, expelled! And this Mr. Hungerford, he looked at my transcript, then he looked at me, and he didn't say a word. You know what he said to me? "Can you play football?" I said, "Yes sir." And he said, "Report Monday for registration." And up to this day, for all these years, he has never asked me why I was expelled. He was al-

ways the one that tried to get me in all these different clubs. The difference between Roosevelt and Polytechnic, was that the faculty at Polytechnic loved football players. At Roosevelt, they could not care less. So at Polytechnic, I didn't do anymore studying or anything, and I got straight A's just about. And my teacher, Mrs. Rowdy, who taught Civics, was the head of the CSF, the California Scholarship Federation, which goes up and down the coast. You had to have a certain grade point average to get in this club, and she made sure that I got in the club. Every time my name appeared in the paper, she would cut it out, and it was on my desk.

So it was a change, completely. When I got out of high school, I had enough good grades to go to school. My mother didn't mind me playing football. She'd go and see the ball games, at times. And I would be the last one out of the tunnel and the last one in the tunnel after the ball game, so every so often, she'd buy me vitamins so that I wouldn't be the last one out and last one in. You know, she was very supportive of that. She couldn't—they couldn't speak English. My mother can, but she won't, you know; if she doesn't like something, she says she doesn't understand. But she does. So even when I was in the service, she'd send me vitamins, 'cause I played service ball also.

My father lived in Honolulu all his life. You know, my mother came as a picture bride. When I went to

Korea and met all the cousins and heard the stories. One of my nephews—nephew! He's about fifty, also retired. He came to see his daughter who lives in Atlanta, Georgia. So I wrote them and told them, they were so good to us in Korea, if they ever came this way, please come and stay with us as long as they liked. So finally, I think it was three years ago, they called from Atlanta. They said they were gonna come to Oregon. When they came we went and picked 'em up, and came over here and they stayed with us for a week. And they really loved it. We took 'em all over. Everyday we were in different places, and of course we sat down to eat, and then he'd tell a good story. And I found out that my mother left a home that was affluent—affluent!

My grandfather—my mother's father—in all probability had several wives. You know, in Korea, that was permissible. So my nephew told me that my grandfather was the richest man in Korea at one time. That's what I can't understand. When I look back—of course women in Korea were not that significant, especially at that time, but when you're from an affluent family like that, it doesn't matter! You're not gonna do anything! You have everybody else doing everything for you! And that's what he said. He said that my grandfather was at one time the richest man in Korea. He was a money lender, which today would be a banker. So sometimes, I sit down and think how could she leave an en-

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vironment like that? To go to Yokohama? To want to be a nurse? Because Korea at that time—for women—education, after sixth grade or something like that, you're done. And she wanted to, so when she left her home, the story that I hear is that she was disowned. They don't allow things like that in Korea at that time. So she was disowned so she couldn't really go back home.

So when she came to Hawaii, she was a picture bride. She said the Hawaiian people, when she first came (she realizes now they were trying to be friendly), they looked so different, she was scared to death of them. She was afraid, so she'd go in, close the door, lock the door and wouldn't come out. They terrified her because they looked so different from what she was used to. Well, you know, they were scantily clothed, they had dark skin. And Koreans are very prejudiced too. Very, very prejudiced. Especially against Blacks. There's even a Korean lady living in an apartment next to my mother. Her daughter, I guess, is married to a Black person. The kids are half Black. The kids can come to the house, but the husband cannot. Koreans are terrible that way. You talk about Caucasians being prejudiced about them marrying Orientals, Blacks or whatever. Koreans are just as bad, if not worse.

Anyway, from the moment she saw my dad, they were not gonna get along. I can't imagine how they had five children together. Well, I think my mother thought that my father

was beneath her dignity. And of course I don't know my father's...he's a Kang, and he's a *chebi* Kang so his ancestry couldn't have been that bad.¹ I guess there's *mool* Kang, and *chebi* Kang, and the line of *chebi* Kang would be...not peasants!² But of course, during the time of the occupation and everything else, they were poor, and they didn't have anything, so they left. He and his brother left for Hawaii, for work. So when she came, she thought the Hawaiians were savages. She went to Kauai, lived in shacks, because they were working in pineapple and sugar plantations. So from there on, you can almost see the handwriting on the wall. They weren't gonna get along. She said she was way above him.

Even today, my mother, she would say, a lot of people are uneducated, and they're ignorant. But mother! You don't really have any education yourself! But she's self taught I guess, reading and all that stuff. And she puts so much emphasis on people with—in Korean style I think—money, prestige and all that stuff and not on how good a person is. I don't care. If a person's good to me, I don't care how ignorant they are. They're gonna be my friend. I don't care how a person has all kind of money in the world, it's not gonna do me any good, and I don't care about that. But I don't know, it's Korean style, I guess. You gotta have class, family, all that stuff. That was her driving point. And even right now, at her age, she has not mellowed at all. I don't know how many

workers she got rid of, simply because, she says, "Oh they're so ignorant, they can't do this, they can't do that, they can't read, somebody can't write." And I say, why? If somebody is good to you, why? But they're born and bred like that.

I guess when I look back, I think, I could've been the richest kid in Korea! If she had stayed there! Like I said, she has such a will. She has been the boss, as far as I'm concerned, all my life. In Honolulu, when my sisters were growing up, in high school they would work in the summer. They would work in a cannery and things like that, but they couldn't go on dates on their own. My mother approves it, or they have to sneak out. They get a paycheck, they don't even open it; they give it to my mother. Even my brother, Mooney, he quit high school and he was working in Hickam field. Even he would bring home every nickel and give it to my mom. My mother was the controlling interest in my family.

My dad, I never saw him hardly. My dad was very talented. My son takes after him. See that deck in the back? He built all of that. He built his own house, without any experience. So that's inborn. My dad could do that. My dad couldn't read English, he couldn't speak English. In fact, my mother was about a thousand times better than him in English. But you give him a blueprint, and he builds something for you. There was nothing he could not do. And he lived on very little sleep. I

need a lot of sleep; I doze all the time. But my son is like him. Always constantly doing something. He gets it from my dad. So evidently, the genes skip one, I think. So every other, like that, see. My dad was very, very talented like that. Everything you ask him, can you do this? He'd say, "Eeji".³ And he just doesn't talk, he *does*. When he came to Honolulu from the plantations, they moved from Kauai to Honolulu, and he became a carpenter, and he worked for the Inter-island Steamship Company—that's a Madsen company. He worked there and he made his foreman rich, because during the weekend, the foreman would take him out to his place and he'd build things for him, repair everything for him, and not a penny! They just took advantage of these guys. My dad didn't think anything of it.

We were never hurting when we were kids. He was a good provider. Very good provider. We didn't have plenty, but we were never worried about food or the necessities. When you talk about automobiles or something like that, that's another story, but I'm talking about the necessities, so he was a good provider. My mother was a seamstress, and she was really good so she had shops when we were kids. My dad was a tiger. He must've been about five-four or five-five at the most, and he had a temper. A quick temper, a real quick temper. Koreans, if you have two factions, they're gonna fight. Churches, even churches, for crying sake, you can talk about religion! One church

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over here, another church over here, and they're fighting about something. The ministers don't get along; the congregations don't get along. I've known that for years and years. So my dad now, when he was younger, if two factions would have a fight or something like that, they'd go get my dad first, at five-four.

He was wiry, and very strong. When he was forty-five, or fifty years old around there, all the kids, in the yard were playing, in the housing area, and he would come by and we would all be doing pull-ups and my dad would look at us and say, "What, how come you guys can't do that?" in broken English. So we asked him, "Can you do that?" And he says, "Eeji". So he jumps up there and does fifty of them, just like that, you know. He always complained, he comes home and says, "Oh those big Hawaiians, they good for nothing! 'Laji' body."⁴ Because sometimes they would have to use that big old sledgehammer, and pound spikes and things like that, and they can't stay with him. You know, they'd be two hundred and fifty pounds and he's hundred and twenty-five, thirty-five dripping wet, and he was just...

When I was a kid, we had no real association with our dad. He'd come off on a street car about six o'clock, and in the small backyard we had, we were always boiling water for him in a big tub. We didn't have hot water system at that time. He'd come home, get a big bucket of water, in the tub, wash up, get another bucket

of water, and take a bath. It was just routine. And then my sister, Vivian, she took care of the family. She would cook and stuff like that. So he'd eat, then he'd get out and get the board he'd been soaking in the wash tub all day, and make a wash-board out of it. He'd get a chisel and chisel it, then he'd get his saw, and sharpen the saw—stuff like that for a little while. He'd stick around the house, oh after dinner, not even an hour. Then he'd be gone.

He loved to gamble. Loved to gamble. And so, I didn't see him again till the next day when he came home from work. I didn't hear him when he got up in the morning. He would make his own breakfast, and go to work. So if he's going out gambling and he's out with his cronies, he would have to come home about one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning. And he gets up maybe four o'clock, five o'clock in the morning.

When I was in the last year of junior high school, my mom moved us out to Hickam housing, right next to Hickam field—not a military base, but military housing, because my brother was working at Hickam field, and he could secure that housing. So we all moved, and my poor dad was left alone, I guess my mother and my dad they had such separation, when we were growing up... and he had his girlfriend I guess. He also made her rich. She owned about a city block in the middle of Honolulu. Koreans, you know, when they buy houses, the first thing they do is partition. So that's what she did. All dif-

ferent partitions, and my dad would do it. She liked my dad, I know that. She wasn't a raging beauty, but they got along fine. My mom knew about her, and couldn't care less. They were divorced by then anyway.

When we left the island in '44, he was still there. He was happy with what he was doing, then something really tragic happened to him. They had something like a boarding house. People would come in, and one day some sailors came into the place, into the room, and they were drunk. There was a scuffle, and a gun went off and shot her, the woman that was my father's friend. And so she died, and there was an inquiry and it was ruled accidental. By that too, he lost a lot of things because she was sole owner. She had said they shared everything, but of course this tragic accident happened. And so he had to come to the mainland because there was nothing there left for him. When he came to the mainland, he came to my brother's farm in Gresham, and he lived there for a little while. Of course he had an awful time acclimating himself to Oregon weather. He'd always have these long johns. It would be a hot day, and he'd have these long johns because he'd lived, really, all his life in Hawaii.

We had hardly any contact with our cousin. Now at home—I always call it home. Oregon is really my home, but I always refer to Hawaii as home. We have a cousin there, a first cousin, which is my dad's brother's son.⁵ We had lost contact,

and then later in life, we got real close. In fact, we went and stayed with him for about a couple of weeks when we went to the islands. When my first son graduated from high school, I took the whole family there and we went to Hawaii, Kauai, Maui...But like I said, when we were kids, Ham was our cousin. We knew that, but...Ham, I guess he had a tough life too, away from his dad, and his family. But our mother just couldn't stand his dad, my father's brother. And you know, in Korean style, the oldest brother is king, and Ham's father is the older brother, so when she first came from Japan to Hawaii, he was the head of the household. He controlled everything, and my mother, really hated that my father couldn't do anything without his [older brother's] say so. That was a bitter friendship, if you wanna call it friendship. So growing up, we had no contact with him. Must have seen him once or twice, but I never sat down and talked to him. Just passing by.

My oldest brother [Karl], he was much older than me, but it wasn't like that in my family. He wasn't a king. See my older brother, he just passed away this year; he was nine years older than I was. That's a vast difference. And he was seven years older than my other brother, Mooney. We had five in our family, so it was every two years, Karl, Vivian, Marion, Mooney and myself. Now there's only two of us left; the others have passed away. And in the Korean way, my sisters couldn't do

anything, until they got married and moved out of the house. Of course, we had a little more freedom; being boys, we could go.

When my father and mother separated, we were still young. My brother, my oldest brother, well, he had nothing to do with us, because he was way above us, and so when—don't get me wrong—when we needed discipline, my mother could do it. But when sometimes she would complain, and say, "You gotta talk to your brothers" or something like that, he'd give us a beating. He would whip us, if we misbehaved or something like that, so there was a vast difference, and we didn't have any real association with each other, until later, again.

Now Mooney and I were very close. We were only about a year and a half apart, so we were very close. Of course, anything he did wrong, he would never allow me to do it. He still took care of me. We were very close. Now my sister and I, the one that lives in Tacoma [Marion], we always fought like cats and dogs, and we always will. My older sister and I, we got along real fine. Vivian was the...she took care of the house. When we were kids, she'd give us baths—she was about what, seven years older than I was, so still a big difference. She'd take us out, cook the meals, and stuff like that. On the weekends, when we had chores, like polishing the furniture, sweeping or mopping, she'd always delegate the chores. She was sort of the leader in the house, but she never disciplined

us. My mother would have my older brother do that.

My older brother was really a rebel too, yes he was. In fact, he'd run away from home. I can remember when he was about seventeen, eighteen years old, Honolulu was a rough place then, during the war. He'd be driving cabs. He'd do things, you know. He'd tell us about...I couldn't believe it. He'd run around with these...these women that were, well, really whores. He would drive them. Some of them would be his customers. His word was law—but I mean he wasn't king in the house because he never was around! But sometimes, he'd come back when my mother was staying over in her dress-making shop, about two or three miles down the road. She had a place to sleep in the back, and sometimes she didn't want to go back and forth back and forth and walk, 'cause we didn't have a car or anything then. It was a long walk. So when he knew she was there, he'd come home. And Mooney and I would be at home, and he'd tell us, "Get me up at two o'clock, you know, I'm gonna take a nap, get me up at two o'clock." And we wouldn't dare leave the house. We'd get him up at two o'clock! Even if we had something to do, he'd say, "Never mind, get me up at two o'clock." And sometimes, he'd bring some of these gals home. Of course we were young, he'd say, "Okay, run down the store and get a case of Coke or something," and we'd run and do his errands for him, the go-

pher kids. I can remember some of the things like that.

He always was with a rough crowd, and he was the first one to join the merchant marines. He wanted to join the Navy. He enlisted, and they said, "Okay, you can join the Navy but you'll never be on deck." See at that time, Blacks, Orientals, Pacifics, et cetera, can't be on deck. You gotta be Caucasian to be on deck. During the war. Even when I was in the service, there was segregation. Blacks were with Blacks. They didn't even sleep in the same dorm with us. I was in with the White soldiers, but the Blacks had their own regiment, their own battalion. We were segregated. Then when we went down south in 1946, they still had black and white drinking fountains. Blacks ride in the back of the bus. It was still there, and I was surprised, because I'd never seen anything like it.

In Hawaii, of course there's prejudice, but we never understood what prejudice was. I didn't like it, but still, I'd never been in a Korean environment. Even today, I live in a White environment. I have nothing in common with Koreans, except food. Because I don't speak the language. I don't go to their church. I'm not religious, and all my friends are not Koreans, they're White. I only dated two Korean girls in my life, but the rest of them were all Caucasian. I lived in a White world. For me, it's not that I didn't want to affiliate with Koreans, but I had nothing in common with them.

When I came out of the service, and went to University of Portland, that was in 1948. Then my mother came up, and she knew some Korean families in Gresham. I should never have allowed her to come up. But she came up to visit me and at the same time, she wrote to these people. So when she came up, she got an apartment, in fact the same place I was staying. At that time, I wasn't staying in the dormitory. She cooked a couple of meals for us, and I had this old jalopy, and I drove her out to Gresham. By golly, they had a lot of snow that year, 1949. A lot of snow. I don't know how the car made it to Gresham from Portland, but we made it to the Hwangs, in Gresham. And all the Korean people she visited had nice homes, nice cars, and they were telling fabulous stories about farming, which was all lies. And she said, this is the life for us, farming.

We're city boys: never ever touched a cow; only saw tractors in pictures. At that time, Portland University had dropped football, and I was ready to leave it to go to another school, 'cause I had two more years of eligibility. But she came up and bought a farm—just like that. And when she bought the farm, I was stuck. Who was gonna run the farm? Me! 'Cause Mooney was shipping out, and he had to support the family. He had to send money home, 'cause he had a son then, named Steve, and Pearl was on the farm. So I commuted back and forth and had to move out of the dormitory that

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was paradise. I had room, board, tuition, and seventy-five dollars from the government every month. I was living the life of ease. And my mother comes out here and buys a farm!

On the farm, we had a cow. Never touched a cow, never mind milked a cow. We gotta have pigs; gotta have chickens. Never drove a tractor; plowed the fields. So, oh my goodness, the first year was just miserable for us. We never had any money; only the money Mooney sent home.

And we never saw the money, because my mother had controlling interest. Even Pearl didn't see the money, his wife! So we had to work like dogs,

really. Pearl, she was really a dainty type girl from the city too. [Mother] just literally worked her...Now today, she's much older of course, and she has Parkinson's disease. And she can't do too much and she's real thin now. People just can't believe that she was able to work like she did.

So for two years, and I'm telling you, I hated it. I'd commute every morning and go to Portland University. After class—sometimes I only had one or two—I'd have to rush

home to help, to do whatever had to be done. And I couldn't even do activities at school. I was president of the monogram club there, and I was on full scholarship, and I had to give everything up. I had maybe a buck a day or something like that to buy gas for the old jalopy that I drove back and forth. It was really...I tell ya. We didn't know how to plow! The ground was always wet in Oregon. Every time I took the tractor to the field, I got stuck. So I had to call the neighbors,

and it was just miserable. In fact, I was plowing and one day, I got stuck so many times, my mom says, "Let's go call the Robinson fellow; maybe he'll

come and plow the field for us." He came and looked at the field and said, "I can't plow that ground. Why? Because if anyone saw that I did it, they'd never hire me." That's how bad it was.

Everything we grew, just didn't grow. We had strawberries in the back field. Mr. Hwang told us how to fertilize. He said, "Get the fertilizer and throw fertilizer like this, on every plant." Now we only had two acres in the back, and it must have



Koreans Farming in Oregon (n.d.)
(Shin Suk Kim Collection)

taken us four or five hours. Norman and I—he was one of the fellows who shipped out to Portland University with me and was living with us—would be in a drenching rain, fertilizing. And we didn't come back for so long, they said, "What in thunderation are they doing?" They came over there, and there we were, going one plant at a time. And we found out later that you don't do that! You know, weeds would always overcome us, and we couldn't understand why the other farms didn't have weeds and our farm always had weeds. And Mr. Hwang, he's Korean old, so he holds his hoes like that. So we cut all of our hoe handles. "Why did you cut the hoe handles?" Because Mr. Hwang told us.

Our strawberry plants would be huge; this tall, and no berries. And all those Korean guys would come back and say, "Oh, we picked about five tons an acre." At that time, five tons was really tremendous. Five tons an acre! Mooney and I would look at each other and say, they gotta be lying. We got nothing. Our foliage was huge but we got

nothing because we didn't know how to farm. We didn't know how to give 'em the right things. So really, it was really terrible. We had a tough, tough couple of years. You know Mooney eventually left the merchant marines to farm.

Let's see, the family moved to Oregon in 1950 from San Francisco.

Mooney, he had a truck, so he came up with all his furniture. And at that time, there were just a handful of Koreans in this area, in Oregon, period! Now I think in the metropolitan area there must be at least ten thousand Koreans. But when we came in 1950, there were only four Park families; two were related, two were not. There was a Kim family, and we came, so that's six. There were the Hwangs. The



Koreans Farming in Oregon (n.d.)
(Shin Suk Kim Collection)

only family that we knew of in Portland was the Chars. One family was in Camby, we called them the "Camby Kims". And one family—didn't have any kids, just the husband and wife—the "Salem Kims".⁶ That's all I know 'em by: Salem Kims; Camby Kims. The Salem Kims had kids, so occasionally, we'd go over

there and swim in the Mallala river. But that's all the families there were.

There was also the Harry Park family, the Alice Park family—no relation—then Rosella Park, her husband was Harry's brother. Then there was Joe Kim's family. Joe Kim was the oldest son. Those people can tell you a lot about Northwest history. Harry, Joe, and Alice Park's dad and mom came from Montana. They were farming in Montana. Harry Park really is well known in this community. Even in the Korean community, because he married Rock-sun Park, and Rock-sun was always active in the Korean community. She was born and raised in Korea and she came over to go to school. She's fluent in her English too. She's active with the Oregon Korean Society. Unfortunately, most of the time we see each other now at funerals. But when we get together, we do reminisce about all the times, the good times we had.

So inevitably, what kind of exposure did we have with five or six families? In Portland now, every time you turn around, there's a Korean church. I don't know, I think Koreans are religious nuts or something. But then I don't know why they pray, then talk behind people's backs. So that's 1950, and for a long period of time too. The Chars were the only family in Portland. Her dad, I think, was a draftsman for a big engineering company, but the rest of them were farmers. Like Harry now, he has a big nursery there in Gresham, and his son is kinda taking over. And

they're having conflicts because it's the computer age versus the old time, you know, do it by memory, and a handshake. And Joe, his kids are all grown up of course, and he's retired, living in Gresham. But like I said, those guys could tell you about the Northwest. How they came over. I don't know how they got to Montana. In Montana, there's half a season; over here there's one season. Montana's half a season 'cause it's so cold. They really did help us. Every time I got stuck, Joe would come over with his tractor or I'd have to call Harry.

By the time I graduated from University of Portland, we kinda knew how to farm a little bit and we had some cucumbers. Five acres of cucumber fields. That summer as we were picking cucumbers, I decided I wanted to go to Columbia to get my Masters. So that summer, we really worked ourselves to the bone. It was Pearl, Norman, and myself, who were the pickers. Only three of us. My mother was the sorter. Now cucumbers, when you take it down to Libby or wherever, this size, about two inches, to two and a half, three, are pickling cucumbers, so you get a \$189 a ton for it. Little bigger ones like this you get \$80 a ton. Little bigger ones, not too much bigger, you get \$50 a ton. Big ones like this, or monkey peeces, all wrapped around, you get a dollar or two.

So what we did is we picked, gosh, almost fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds a day. Just the three of us, but we worked long

hours. We didn't have any help. Nobody wanted to pick cucumbers. And so we put 'em in buckets, and as soon as we got all the buckets filled up we would bring them in with the tractors. Then we have these plywood boards, and we dumped them on the boards and my mother would sort them. Put all the good ones together, the bad ones there. People would come to our cucumber field and say, how come your cucumber fields are so clean? Because when you pick, you throw all the big ones out. You don't keep them. We kept them. You go to anybody else's cucumber field, you see cucumbers all over the place. Not our field. We'd take them all in. We were gonna cheat now. We put all the good ones in one box, the next grade in another box and so forth and the big ones in the lower boxes. Everyday, I would take the cucumbers down to the cannery. And when I took the thing down there, the superintendent on the platform and I became very good friends. He liked me for some reason. And every time I got to the platform with the truck, he'd say, "Aw, they'll unload the truck," and wave "C'mon, let's go to the cafeteria and have coffee and pie." Well, if they take the two top boxes, we get \$189 a ton. If they take the bottom boxes, we get a dollar for it. Because we were cheating now.

The reason we cheated is because I said I was gonna go to school. What money they could afford to give me, I was gonna go to Colum-

bia with it. So I'd take the thing everyday to the platform, and this guy would always take my two top boxes. They're not stupid, those guys on the platform. I was standing on the platform one day, and there comes a pick up with about fourteen cases. So this superintendent looks at the guy on the platform and says, "See that guy coming in there, break his boxes down. He cheats." And I'm standing there getting *that* small. So he and I go in the cafeteria, they unload my boxes, and he takes my top. The other guy they break everything down. He had better stuff than we did, 'cause underneath, some of 'em were watermelons!

So one day I came in about three quarters through the season. He knew I was going to Columbia. And one day I came in with the truck, and he said, "Willie, come here, I wanna show you. See, if you have a new idea, the company will give you money." He had an idea. He derived something to make labor easier for them. So he got the truck and he got a stack of my boxes and wheeled them over. I didn't know what he was gonna do. What they used to do was get the boxes and throw it in a vat, and all around filled up first and the middle didn't have any cucumbers. What he did was, he had a conveyer belt that brought them right in the middle and dropped the cucumbers. So he says, give me a hand, put the conveyer belt on, and we got the two top boxes, all beautiful cucumbers, then we got to the third box and I started to die. The third box was all monkeys and

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watermelons. And you know that guy never said a word to me. Oh, when I walked out of there, I was an inch high. Oh, I was red from toe to head and I think we dumped in seven boxes, and when we dumped in the last box, oh god, some of those were *that* big, and some were all crooked and everything else. You could see the conveyer belt going very slowly. He never broke my boxes down. He really wanted to see me go to school I guess. He never broke my boxes down. We always got top grade.

I swear after that, I didn't wanna go the next day to deliver the cucumbers. I was so embarrassed. But he never said anything to me. I wanted to hide from him but I couldn't. It was still, "Hey let's go to the cafeteria and have coffee." So that's the way I got to Columbia. So when I got to Columbia, I had a thousand dollars in my pocket and plane fare. That's all I had. And at Columbia, a thousand dollars doesn't go far in New York City. So I got to New York, got a cab and went to John J. Hall. This was in 1952. So I went to this hall, that's the men's dormitory. They told me that they were filled up. I didn't even have a reservation, just three suitcases I had lugged up. Here I'm stuck, and they said, "Here, why don't you try Whiter Hall? It's down a block right on Amsterdam." So I lugged my suitcases there. You know, New York blocks are very long. I got up the steps and went into the entrance, and I looked in there and right in the middle they had a pin cushion seat. Didn't look like a

men's dormitory. It was a women's dormitory. See, they had so many men that they put them in this women's dormitory. It was the first year. I thought that dirty bum was playing a trick on me. I looked around and it was all women. In the office it was all women. I found out later that they called it the Menopause Hall because all the students were so old. Well, they were all graduate students.

I met my wife at Columbia; she lived in the same dormitory. She used to stand in the stairway and wait for someone to pass by so she could tell them to go and knock on my door and wake me up. You know, 'cause there were separate floors, and you weren't allowed in the other ones. I remember, she took me up to her parents house in upstate New York, and her father said to her, "What are your intentions with this fellow?" But they were very, very warm to me. No trouble that way at all. Of course, New York was very, very different from Oregon, but for some reason people were good to me, everywhere I went. There was this Greek restaurant that I used to go to all the time, and they would always save the leftovers for me. Of course, I had to work while I was going to school. Tuition at that time, I think was about three-thousand dollars. There was this insurance company that hired any body who went to Columbia. If you were a Columbia student, you could go there at anytime and put in a few hours, filing and things like that. My wife always said that

after she met me, she never did anything in New York again. Because I never had any money! Before that, she used to go to shows, plays, and things like that, but afterwards, nothing!

I didn't know any Koreans at Columbia University. Actually, Georgie Hwang was there. He played football with me in Hawaii. Georgie was always a good student, and he was studying law there at Columbia. I know he's back in Honolulu, and I know that whatever he is doing, he's doing very, very well. He's a bigwig somewhere. In Honolulu there are much better chances for Orientals to climb up than in the mainland, because they're not the minority there. So even in teaching and things like that, a lot of them are principals, superintendents, in the legislature, and everything else, but here, it's very difficult because of the minority status.

I came back to Oregon when I finished at Columbia, and I had sent out a bunch of applications for teaching jobs. You know, one day, I was coming home from working all day, covered, covered from head to toe in dust and dirt, and they told me that I had an interview, and that the guy was here, at the house, right there. So I walked in the house. I was wearing these black jeans, covered in dirt, and you know, I think that's why he liked me. Because he was that kind of a guy. He was the superintendent of a school out in Central Oregon. We talked, and he said that if I wanted the job, that it was mine.

This town of Mitchell had a population of about five hundred people, all in an area about twenty-five miles around. It was so different, it was like going to another country. There were forty-two students in the entire high school. That year, I guess, in 1953, there were two graduating seniors. One was the valedictorian, and the other was the salutatorian. So I taught all the science and math classes, and coached football. We played six-man football 'cause there weren't enough kids. You know, in Mitchell, you were either a rancher or a logger. So you either wore a cowboy hat or corking boots. And when we played a game, the whole town would turn out to watch us play. All the loggers would start work two hours early, at four in the morning instead of six, so that they could finish up and come to the game.

There was this girl, Julie, she wasn't really a teacher, but she was teaching all the English classes. But she wasn't working out very well, so the superintendent called up Lee, my wife and said, "Hey, why don't you come out here and get married and teach at the school." Oh, we had already been planning to get married, of course. But so anyway, she came out to Oregon. I taught the math and the sciences, she taught the English and the art classes, and the superintendent taught the Social Studies classes. That's it. That was the whole school. I think she came out on a Friday, and we had to drive to Washington to get married, because Or-

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egon had a three-day waiting period before you could get married. So we got married on Saturday, drove to Mitchell on Sunday, and started teaching on that Monday!

Before she came out here, I guess her parents worried that she might not be accepted. They said to her, "You know we accept Willie, but his family might not accept you." But she never had any trouble with them. In fact, she knows more about my mother than I do, because she's always talking to her, when we go there. And we never worried about our kids growing up half Korean, half Swedish. They are proud of what they are. You know, because they have something that other people don't. They never felt inferior in any way. They are very proud of their Korean heritage, and they're more interested in Korean things than me. You know, my wife cooks *kimchi*, *chigae*, and all those things.⁷

We lived in this small place, with a Daveno in the living room that folded out, and that's where we slept. I remember one morning, we were lying in bed sleeping, and we realized that the whole house was shaking. So we got up and looked outside to see

what was going on, and it was three bulls—you know—cows. They were rubbing up against the side of the house, and making the whole house shake and rattle. We stayed there two years. They offered me a two hundred dollar raise to stay another year at the end of the first year, and I didn't want to stay. So the superintendent asked me what could they do to keep us there. I told him to get me three hundred dollars. So he went back and they said yes, They'd give me three hundred, and my wife a hundred! See they were gonna give both of us two hundred each, and now they were gonna give me three by taking one from her. I laughed so hard I was crying, and we stayed!

We came back this way after that and taught school all these years. I coached football out here for many years too. We retired a few years back, but I'm so busy resting that I don't miss it at all. I enjoyed it very much when I was doing it, of course, but now I don't miss it one bit. I don't understand these people who retire and then complain about having nothing to do. I had a good time working, and now I'm having a good time not!

Notes:

¹"*Chebi*" means "sparrow." Unless otherwise indicated, italics, where they appear, have been added.

²"*Mool*" means "water".

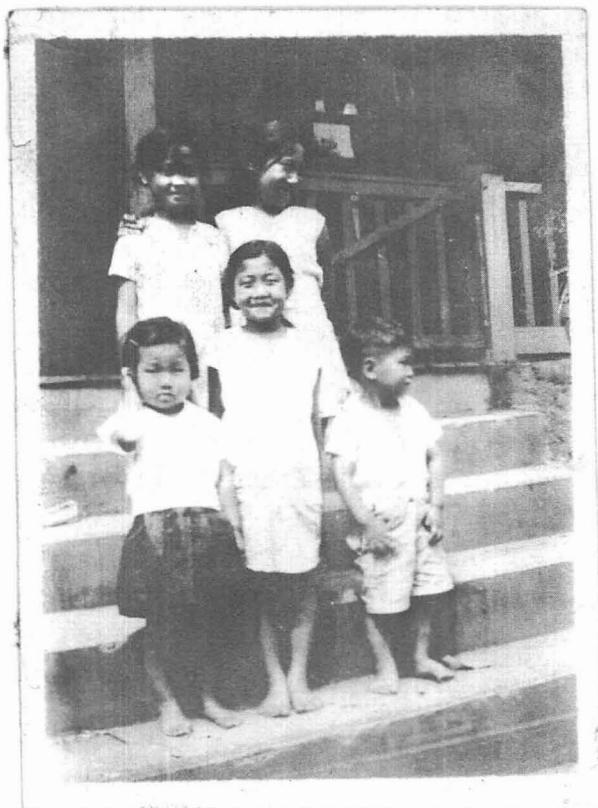
³"Easy".

⁴"Lazy".

⁵Hamilton Kang.

⁶Named after Salem, Oregon.

⁷Korean pickled dishes and stews, respectively.



*Front, center and right, Marion and William Kang
(Hawaii, n.d.)*

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(Marion VanDeel collection).

Hamilton (Hor-Choo) Kang

I guess my parents came to Hawaii because—well, they were really poor, and they got information that they could come to Hawaii, and maybe work, make some money and then go back home. So my father and his brother came to Hawaii in 1904. But they never went back because for some reason. And about 1918-17—around that time—the bachelor Koreans in Hawaii wanted woman companionship I guess, and so they had this picture bride system. You would send your picture, they would send their picture, and then they would say, “Okay, I’ll marry you”. So that’s how my mother came to Hawaii, in about 1917 or `18. Then I was born in 1919 and that’s about it!

Mostly all the immigrants to Hawaii came to work in plantations, because the Hawaiians didn’t want to work there. So the Haoles, which you call Americans, wanted laborers, and so they imported people from China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. I lived on a plantation for quite some time. Oh the plantations! I don’t know. Well, my father, he didn’t like to work in a plantation, so when I was about five or six, he left. In the meantime, my mother passed away when I was about nine-months old. So he and I went all over the place. But he didn’t like to work in a plantation so he became a carpenter. My father liked to move around, I guess, so he and I went all over the place. At that time when I

was born was the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. Oh! It killed a lot of people, and my mother was one of the victims, so that’s why I don’t have any brothers or sisters.

About the only thing I can remember is...see, my father and I were living together alone you know, and sometimes he would go visit his friends and take me with him. But always, when it was time to go home, I’d pretend I was asleep so he could carry me home! Well my father didn’t have a steady job so sometimes he would open up a small little carpenter shop and make furniture. Oh, he was very talented with his hands. One time he took me over to this place we call Hakalau. It was a small Korean camp, where may be about fifty or so Koreans lived in a camp and they went out and worked on the cane fields—Hakalau Plantation. But my father, he didn’t like the plantation so he told me, “You stay here and I’ll go out and work in carpentry.”

So I stayed at Hakalau for about three years. I was about, let’s see...six, seven, eighth, or sixth grade—about eleven or twelve years old. So I just stayed there. I did whatever my father told me. My father told me, “Stay here,” so okay! My father told me, “Come on over,” so okay! Prior to that we lived in Honolulu, and then he decided to move to the big island, Hawaii. And then from there he went to Hakalau to work in the

plantations, but like I said, he didn't like it.

When my father and I went to Hakalau, that's when I started to learn to speak Korean because it was a Korean camp, and it had a small Korean school in there, maybe about ten or twelve kids, and that's where I learned how to write, what you call it, "*kukmun* [*sic*]"¹ And uh, that's where I really learned how to talk a little Korean. I'm kinda glad that I went to that Korean school, 'cause at least I know a little. Not too much "*hanmun*" but...²

The people in the camps worked in the sugarcane fields, and most of them were bachelors. But if they got hold of a married man, then they would try to get that family to come and operate what they call a "*kuksan*," which means kitchen. This woman and her husband would do all the cooking, and all of them bachelors would come and eat. In the morning, they would come and pick up their lunch cans. This couple would do all that, and thinking about it now, I think it was a lot of hard work for the woman. They gotta wash the cans and cook, and fill 'em up!

Two or three or four bachelors would live in one house. I stayed in one of those wooden houses. In that camp where I was in Hakalau, there were only two women in the whole camp. That's all. They were mostly bachelors. I think most of them intended to go back to Korea, but I don't think anybody did. Somehow, maybe they just didn't have enough money or what—all of 'em had the

intent of going back—but I think hardly anyone went back.

Yeah, my father took me all over. And I always listened to him. He'd say, "You stay here, I'm going way over there to work," and I said okay. Then he tells me...One time, he was way over, working at a place forty or fifty miles away from me, in Hakalau. So he got word to me to go over there to that place called Pauilo. So I said, "Okay." I went to the train station, got a ticket, and got dropped off at Pauilo. I didn't know where he lived. I just walked and walked and walked and I found him. And thinking about it next day, I thought, that's pretty remarkable! Yeah, he and I, we got along pretty well. My father!

At that time there were buses and trains in Hawaii. At the Big Island, on the coast there were a lot of plantations, plantations like Wainaku, Poilu, Hakalau, and all the way down, so there were trains. Those days, along the coast of the Big Island, if you ride a bus you gotta go down and up along the coast, but the last time I was there, they got rid of all those hills and valleys, and they just... a brand new highway! You can get to Pauili in no time.

The Hawaiians, now, they didn't work on the canefields. They worked in government jobs. Or they just went fishing, or didn't work. They had preferential treatment. The Asians, you couldn't work for them. You couldn't work for the county. Oh, the Hawaiians, they just accepted us. In a way, I gotta be thank-

ful to the Hawaiians because they didn't want to work in the canefields so they brought us over—I mean they brought my father over.

Hawaii was a real melting pot, and people, they got along pretty good! But if you're in the minority, then there's always some people who pick on you; tease you. Mainly the Japanese. They call you "*dongarashi*". "*Dongarashi*"? "Chili pepper". It means "chili pepper". My school, it was just an ordinary public school, and we had all kinds of students. Not too many Koreans though; mainly Hawaiians, Japanese, and Portuguese. Oh, it was all right. I stayed three years in Hakalau and went to Hilo, which is the main town of the Big Island, Hawaii. Then I went to Hilo Intermediate School and Hilo Highschool. Graduated in '37. It was before you were born! Ha ha ha!

When I graduated from high school, I and several boys got together and decided to come to Honolulu, so we started to work in a cannery, and things like that. In the cannery, I was first a dumper. You know, boxes of pineapples, five high, they'd truck it down to the machine, and me and another guy dumped the pineapples. Hard work! There were three pineapple companies then, but I worked for Dole. When the cannery work was over—cannery's just for the summer, and then no more work. So at that time, the U.S. government had this projects going called the CCC's—the Civilian Conservation Corps. And so I joined that and it paid thirty dollars a month. So

I was in that for a while. In the CCC, we went up on the hills and made little trails and dug holes so they could plant trees. So when I see that now, I say, "Gee, that was pretty good!" And I see all those trees, and they're pretty big now; over fifty years ago.

After that, I applied for work at Pearl Harbor. So I got hired there as a helper, and that was where I worked for thirty-four years, working on the ships. I did sheetmetal work. On a ship, way down, all around there, you have to have something to bring air into the ship, and so I made these ducts, then later on, I got to designing them. I drew the plans so the shop sheetmetal workers could make the things and install them.

Of course, I remember the attack on Pearl Harbor. I got up, looked around and said, "What's this?" And they said that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It didn't mean anything to me then, until later, and then that night, you know, it was scary. I was starting to walk in town and a guy, he was a military guy, "HALT!" "What's this?" I asked. "WHAT YOU WANT?" "Oh, I'm just walking around" I said. "Well you can't do that; go back home!" He ordered. So that was on the night of the Seventh, and then the war came about.

Just before the war, I got a notice from the military saying for me to report to the headquarters in Scofield barracks, which is the Army military. So I gave it to my boss

in the sheetmetal shop, Rob, who looked at it and said, "Oh no, you can't go." So he did something with it and he told me, "You stay back." I guess at that time, anybody who worked in Pearl Harbor didn't have to go into the military. In those days, Pearl Harbor, if you were Japanese you couldn't work in there. They were discriminated against. But then towards the end of the war

they hired Japanese, 'cause uh, Japanese distinguished themselves as 442nd Infantry Battalion, and you know, they made a name for themselves in Europe. They really discriminated against the Japanese.

Where did I meet my wife? Oh, I think I met her at a party. So I said, "You want to go out?" "Yeah," she replied. So we started from there. I was twenty-four; she was nineteen. You can ask her yourself.

Notes:

¹The Korean writing system. Unless otherwise indicated, italics, where they appear, have been added.

²Chinese characters used in the Korean writing system.

Ruth Kang (Wife of Hor-Choo Kang)

You know something? You know, when we were growing up, we didn't foresee where today we would try to go back, talk to our parents, you know, talk to our parents about why they came...in fact I didn't ask her too much, and it's only today everybody's trying to go back and find out. You see, like even my daughter-in-law, with the twins, you know, she gave me this book here, that I was supposed to write in all the things what I'm telling you. You know, until today I haven't even put a word in it, because I'm so busy. She bought it for me, I think, four years ago, but I haven't put a word on it, because you know, something always come up. And you always put that back. Even my daughter too, she says, "You gotta do it." Even putting pictures in the album, it took her to put the pictures in the album. I just...I just don't have time.

I was born in Lilihua, Oahu. It's in the countryside, and my father was a supervisor. Those days they were considered as "Luna", of a pineapple plantation. And my mother used to run a boardinghouse for the bachelors. She would prepare breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For lunch, she would pack the lunch in containers. My mother was a picture bride. She had never seen my father before. See, that is the thing, why we didn't ask our parents about it? The reason to me, the reason why she came is because, I think the men came first. The men came first, and it's just like

Adam and Eve, right? Adam was put on earth, and then the Lord said, "I think he's lonesome. I'm gonna have a woman for him." And it's just like our parents too. I think the men came first, and then I don't know who instigated it, but someone said, "Hey, men cannot live alone," so and then I guess somehow somebody went to Korea and they advertised and maybe they had a hard life, and maybe they came out here and found that maybe that life is a little easier. I think that's one reason, cause the men came first, and then the picture brides.

But I look back at my childhood, and it's nothing like what today kids are entertained with. Ours was...whatever you see, that's about it. We used to play house, you know. We would get all the cans and then the tops of the cans we would bend and use as knives, and then we would dig holes and put the sticks over there and put cans and pretended we were cooking. Those plantation days... come around New Year, every ethnic group would wear their costume, and then you know, those days, it's not like today. You went to every house 'cause everybody is so neighborly, so friendly, no such thing as crime, you know. So we'd go visit every house, and then help ourselves with the food, what they had...that's one thing we did. Everybody worked hard. Everybody lived the same.

And as far as activity, we didn't have too much. There was not much

to do. Not like today. So whatever activity we were involved in is whatever we could find, like catching grasshoppers. Catch the grasshoppers, put 'em in the bottle. And then we would go up to the mountain, and we would pick those...they call it "*poba*". It's a small tiny fruit. Even today they make jelly out of it. We'd go pick that; we would go pick the mountain apples...We would do that and we would catch bees too. You see, our house was like a steeple, and then sometimes you know, the bees would mate, yeah? Bright yellow is the male and the dark color, more on the brown side is the female. So you know, they would come down together, and you know, we would catch them too. And we would go in the river. We would catch fish. They call it a mosquito fish. And sometimes when a hard rain came, then sometimes the stream would overflow. And with the water, the fish would come out, and we would catch that.

Another thing was we didn't have theater. We would have a movie... there was a movie house at that time. That was on Lanai. But before that, we used to watch movies in the stable. They would put up a white cloth, and we would all sit with our own mat or whatever. You'd sit down and watch the movie. And sometimes, you know, when there was a wind or something, it would kinda move the cloth around. And then I think we went to school on a truck, a plantation truck. And as I grew older, we moved to Lanai, so

just two years over there, and my mother used to take in bachelors' laundry.

I spent fifth and sixth grade up in Lanai. I would help her. As young as I was I would help her. There was one *ajumeoni*, and she had all sons.¹ She had two daughters, but the oldest ones were all boys, so you know, there was not much help. But like for us, my mother had daughters. There was a big area where they did laundry. They had laundry trays you know, and you see, we used to boil our laundry those days. We had four burners, and... there was another Korean girl, her name was Doris Han. They had a big family too and we too, so... whoever got to the laundry area first, they would reserve that boiler so you got to boil your clothes first. And they would rotate whoever came second, or like that. We would scrub the laundry with brown soap first and then after that, we would boil the clothes and we would—I don't know why—but we used to get this broad stick and hit them. Did they do that in Korea too? Anyway, we did that, and then we would scrub and rinse and squeeze it. And they had a beautiful area where you could dry your laundry.

Come delivery time, my sister and I would walk from distance to deliver the laundry. Carrying it all. You see, in Lanai they have sections. They have the Japanese and the Korean sections. We had two Korean camps. I remember we were...I still remember mine was block forty-two. It's not a separate neighborhood, just

The Kang Family

sections; camps. Even where my husband was born, in Ewa, they had this Korean camp. The plantation was right next to these camps. Even the Caucasians—they were supervisors—had their own area. They didn't mix with the ordinary people. Once my sisters, had their tonsils removed, and I had to run to the store to get ice cream for them. Of course in those days, we had no running toilets. We had those outside toilets. Everybody had to use that, you know, and nobody thought about it differently. We did have running water in the house. We were—I hate to say it, but we were poor.

I had two sisters. There were actually three boys and three girls. My oldest sister is deceased. I'm the second, and I have my youngest sister. She's in San Diego, and my brothers ...my first brother, he was four. He died when he was four years old. The fourth one died from...you see, those days you know, people were not

aware. They don't know too much about medical...as to illnesses and what you can do for it. It was really the dark ages. So he died from lock-jaw. He stepped on a kiawe, [and did not receive treatment] until it was too late. So right now it's just my sister and I, that's all. A *kiawe*? They don't find it out here. You only find it on the islands. It's a hardy tree, that's what he stepped on. They burn that tree to make charcoal—that's the best, that kiawe charcoal, in comparison to the American charcoal.

So we saw those things. And I worked in the fields too. We worked in the pineapple fields. What we did is you know, from the mature pineapple plant, there's little things,

they call it the "slip"—so we would cut that small pineapple off, and that "slip", that's for the next planting. They used that to plant that.

But all in all, my childhood, you couldn't improve it, 'cause you didn't



Ewa Plantation community laundry (Hawaii, 1908)
Reprinted by permission from *Their Footsteps*, p. 37
(Kelly Yoon Ook Kim Collection).

have the means of improving yourself other than what you have available. And I think it was okay. To me, compared with today and those days, I prefer those days, not like today. Today, to me, there's too many things going on, you know. It's hard to raise children. You have all these gangs, drugs. Our days, we don't even close our doors. We were free. You know, my years, as I was growing up, I didn't hear or experience any crime. But not today, every night when we go to sleep we make sure all the doors are locked up. I enjoyed my childhood. You know, you go to the mountain and pick up this "*poha*", but today you cannot do that! Passionfruit, guava, pineapple...

After we left Lanai, we came to Honolulu. Of course, when we went to the island, we went on one of those slow boats. We traveled by steorage. We were poor. Father went over there to find work. I started my seventh, eighth, ninth grades, and then I went to Farrington for high school. Going to high school for me...those days you know, even today too, when you go to school, you either gotta be bright, or you gotta be beautiful. You gotta have talent, and I have none of that, so I just went to school because I had to go to school. Because you're poor, somehow you feel insecure, you do. Because you see that other children have things that you can't, and especially, you know, when you have immigrant parents. So that was the hard part, you know. They could not help us with our schoolwork, either. We

just had to paddle on our own as best as we could. I went to school with mostly Hawaiians—Hawaiians or a little mix of a kind. I never mixed with other Korean girls. I detested them because they thought they were so high and mighty. When I was young, I used to go to church and Korean school too. I forgot his name, but one thing I remember about the teacher is he taught us how to fold a Korean flag.

Of course, I worked in a cannery when I was only twelve years old. You see, those days, work was hard for my parents. My mother now, she worked for the military laundry. She ironed trousers; ten cents for one. She'd leave at dark and come home at dark. So I was the one that did the laundry, all by washboard...did the cooking, you know. So like my father now, he was a good father, but, he was more the happy-go-lucky type. You know that kind of Korean man? Happy-go-lucky type? They like to go out and drink...He was one of them. So my father worked hard, but to me, my mother worked even harder. She was more that kind of a...obedient wife, you know.

My father died when he was sixty-two, and then my mother passed away when she was seventy-two. You know, my father went to Korea during the depression? He went, on the boat, and my mother didn't go back. My mother didn't go back, although she did visit my sister in the mainland. But my mother really worked hard, and sometimes I do look back and I feel

kinda sorry that I didn't do this, I could have done this, but you see, it was hard, 'cause when she was sick, I used to work eight hours. I worked eight hours and at that time, my mother and my sister, they were sick together, and I worked eight hours. And then I would cook dinner for them. You know, once you come home you're drained, so while you're out you might as well go and visit. So I used to visit both of them together and then come home. She was in a convalescent home and she was in a hospital. She had cancer of the pancreas and my mother had a stroke. I was the only one.

Anyway, I graduated from high school in 1942. Afterwards, I worked in a shipyard, and then I met *him*. I was a clerk in the planning section. That's where they kept all the plans. So when the Draftsman or whoever wanted to come look at the plans, we would go up and give it to them. I met him...his godson—that was his birthday celebration, and his auntie and I were friends. So, she said, "Hey, you want to come down and help me?" So I said, "Oh, okay," so I went down to help and I was in the back of the house, and he was there. Oh, he was so funny. So there was this other fellow, he had asked me for a date, but he was drunk. He drank, so I said, "Oh, no, no," 'cause you see my father used to drink, and I said I swear, I'm not gonna marry... You know, because my mother had a hard time with my father too, verbal abuse, and bodily abuse, you know, I saw that, and I

swore that I was not gonna marry somebody who drinks. And I told him to even today, "You're not gonna get intoxicated; if you were, absolutely no," but uh, he wasn't. So, come September and we'll have been married forty-two years. No, no, fifty-two! Fifty-two.

Those days, in our era—it was during war time too, actually—people gossiped those days. They gossip that—you know, oh their daughter's going with a soldier... all those things. So my sister married... unfortunately—married a Caucasian man, so I told my younger sister, I said, "You know between you and I, we have to marry one Korean." I was thinking more of my parents, because I know that they're ashamed, that is the word. Shame, that's right! It's not only my mother, it was the others, the Japanese too! Intermarriages were unheard of. Really unheard of. It was more shame so, I told my younger sister that one of us has to marry a Korean, so I married him, and my younger sister married a Caucasian, so I'm the only one! Yeah, I was thinking of my parents, I know, because, you know they talk! And then those days, you know like today, my children are pure Korean, but I know for certain that they're not gonna marry Korean. I say whoever you marry is fine with me, you know, but uh...I told my daughter, only one thing—yeah, I'm prejudiced—"Don't marry one black!"

When we first got married, we started out with my mother. My mother used to live in one of those

public housing, and my mother is... *staaay with the laaaw!* Don't break it! We were not included with my parents, so right away she found us a room. One room! And we shared a bathroom. We had one double bed, one crib, one chiffonier, one tiny table with two chairs, and one kerosene stove. I don't know where he got it, but it was a recycled one; he cleaned it up so we could use the two burners, and we had a washbowl, like in the bathroom, and that's where I did the dishes. So we stayed over there, and then—I don't know—maybe two three years we stayed there, and then moved to a better place.

My parents didn't like [my husband]. My mother said, "You're gonna be married to him maybe ten years, 'cause you know, his father was a widow and he has no family." So she didn't like him. She told me that, she said, "You're not gonna be married to him for very long." Well, you know married life, it's not easy. It's hard! 'Cause the personalities are different. Like him, he retired after working thirty-two years, and went to college with four kids, so he says he worked hard! I say, "What about me? I'm still working!" See? The Koreans call it "*bujirun-bee*".² I'm that. I can work from sun up to sun down. Yeah, sun up to sun down! But him, he couldn't care less. He can sit over there and fall asleep and think nothing of it. When we were growing up, my mother would say, "The sun is up!" in Korean, "And you are still sleeping. Get up!" Another thing

with her is that, like I'm doing for my daughter, she and I always sew the *ibul* together.³ I have three sisters, but I'm the only one that sews the *ibul* with her.

So like [my husband] now, he's just like uh—this is the truth you know—he is just like the Tsar. No, really, he is just like the Tsar! Breakfast, lunch, and dinner is set for him, and he just comes and sits and eats. Because in the morning I get up. I have mine whether he is there or not and then he can come after, but lunch and dinner he's a Tsar, he just sits and eats. For instance, when I came to my daughter's house, I came in and said, "Wow! This is a big place for you; you're so busy, you need a cleaning lady, you know." So she says, "Why don't I kidnap you?" I said, "You kidnap me, and what about him?" At home, if I'm not around, he looks in the icebox, you know, and says, "What am I gonna eat?" When I come home, he says, "I find nothing in there, but when you come home, I always have something." I ask him, "Oh can you go get something for uh...Ah," I say, "I'll do it!" He can't find anything. So if I go out and I know that I won't be home in time for lunch, I make everything for him and I tell him, "This is your lunch."

Oh, another thing, the reason he's treated that way is because his mother died when he was really an infant, and there was nobody to care for him, and then I came like a young bride, trying to please her husband, you know, so that's how I started.

When he worked in the shipyard when we were first married, come Sunday I would have all this clothes laid out for him. And I felt that we were poor, but I had my mother, which he didn't have. So I feel that I had Mother which he didn't have so, even though I was poor, I was lucky.

I guess I thought of myself more as a Korean than an American when I was growing up. Of course, those days, you know you're in America, but you think of yourself more as a Korean. I mean, that's the way I thought. I don't know, because of my father, my mother, you know, they come from the Old Country, and then they spoke only Korean, so at home, we spoke Korean, because they couldn't speak English. Ate Korean food. Like [my husband], now; he's absolutely Korean. You see Americans, they display their affection, which Koreans don't. Because my mother and my father, I never saw them hold hands or hug, or anything. So we were brought up under that condition. But today, they say that soon as that baby's born, you have to start right away.

My parents, they didn't speak English. We spoke Korean at home. As long as my mother was living, when I stayed with her, she and I would talk, but the thing is that [my husband] and I, when we watch Korean television, you know there's few words we understand, and they speak differently from the local Koreans. They do, you know. And then they speak so fast! With my mother, I can converse in Korean with her, but if I didn't know the Korean word that I wanted to say, I used English, and even my mother too. Well, you know she's gone, so there's nobody for me to speak to, so eventually, we lost it. So with my twins over there, I told my daughter-in-law that if they stay with me long enough—because I do have a dictionary, and it has English and it has the translation—I could teach them the simple things. So occasionally, I would give them a bath, and then I would tell them “*anja*” and they sit; “*ireona*”, they *ireona*—they stand.⁴ But those two words, they know, they understand. So hopefully, I'd like to teach them more; the simple things.

Notes:

¹Literally, “Aunt”, used when referring to middle-aged or married women. Unless otherwise indicated, italics, where they appear, have been added.

²Literally, “To get busy working.” A “*bujirun-ban*” person dislikes wasting time.

³A Korean bed comforter.

⁴The Korean words for sitting (*anbda*) and standing (*ireoda*), respectively.

KOREANS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

The following two short essays were collected by Professor Songmoo Kho before his untimely death. We have decided to include them in honor of Professor Kho, who contributed to our own understanding of the Korean minority in the former Soviet Union. A resident of Norway, Professor Kho was a research associate at Helsinki University, and was well known for his book, *Koreans in Soviet Central Asia* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1987). He died in an automobile accident while conducting field research on Koreans in the former Soviet Union.

Paradigm and Problems of Nationalist Movements: A Social–Philosophical Analysis*

In discussion of nationalist movements, we should distinguish between problems facing the “native” populations, which are the ethnic base of the new national governments, and national minorities—especially those which do not have state representative institutions of their own given territory. In addition, it is necessary to distinguish between the problem of national *revival* and that of national *survival* of small ethnic groups, although the two are closely related. One such group is comprised of ethnic Koreans.

On the subject of national survival of the Koreans, a topic emphasized by all existing Korean movements and organizations, discussions usually begin of reviving national traditions, customs, culture, and language. This can be seen by turning to the bylaws of various Korean cultural centers and associations. The process of this revival is viewed *a priori* as necessary and positive. In addition, it is immediately and directly related to the social consciousness and the revival of the spirit and national consciousness—the very essence of the Korean ethnos.¹ A similar approach simplifies the essence of the problem. Unfortunately, its treatment in government institutions is similar to that of the nationalist movements. The essence of the problem and the path towards national revival of small ethnic groups has not received much careful scientific study and has heretofore been discussed in lay terms. Let us then pose this question, “What is [national revival] and why should we revive it?” As long as this question is not answered, we risk the chance of remaining in an area of conjectures and illusions and only moving forward by trial and error.

The traditions, customs, and the spiritual culture of the Korean deportees, the predecessors of today’s generation of Soviet Koreans, were a

type of “village culture.” They reflected an agricultural orientation, a historical period, a way of life, a suggestive construct of the very way of existence of Koreans at the turn of the 20th century. In traditional society, the matrices identified with culture—customs, rituals, beliefs, moral norms, etc. fulfill the most important exemplary function in supporting the level and structure of traditional society, the regimentation of social life, normative guidance, and a world view. But, culture does not stand still. To the extent that the irreversible process of internationalization has created a “socialist consciousness,” it has also impacted upon the lives of separate ethnic groups. In the present case, the “village culture” has been transformed into an “industrial-city” type culture. [For these groups,] Korean traditional national culture has acquired the status of folklore.²

The actualization of traditions can be preserved within the (matrix) of culture. This can be observed in those situations where the given nation is made up of the ethnic base in the government; when the nation is separate and tightly-knit; or when strong ties are maintained with the mother country, et cetera. The Soviet Koreans do not fall under these situations. The process of assimilation has proceeded so far that a new international culture has developed, having within it layers of traditional Korean, European, Russian, and Central Asian culture. In relation to this, the question as to how to understand the notion of national revival is not trivial. Let us examine several possible variations.

National revival can be best understood as the revival of old traditions, rites, customs, and etiquette. This version is based on the conscious association with a specific ethnic group. This paradigm prevails over the national cultural centers and associations, for example, “as Koreans, it is our duty to [participate in national revival]” (of course, both parts of this paradigm are not discussed). But the principle of a postulated obligation leads to revived traditions only on the level of external attributes, and not in the content of lifestyles. This is not coincidental. In some social measures, today’s generation of Soviet Koreans considers its traditional, “village” culture as having an exotic character. The examples are numerous. In order for a given project of national revival to be accomplished (it is not enough to learn this or that song, or to observe some elements of traditional rites, et cetera), it is necessary to undergo a wholesale change in the mentality, psychology, and the internal orientation of Soviet Koreans. This seems utopian and even superfluous.

National revival could also be understood as the adoption of the contemporary culture (for example, behavior, personal relations, activities, et cetera) of Koreans in North or South Korea, or other countries. But without mastering the matrices of reproducing this culture, this process of borrowing will differ little from the external, and is therefore an empty imita-

tion. However paradoxical, Koreans of other countries are more foreign to Soviet Koreans in current traditions, mentality, lifestyle, and etiquette than are Russians and Uzbeks.

In addition, national revival could be understood as the creation of conditions, such that Soviet Koreans as a national group would be more fully and freely able to realize their potential. The national culture of the Soviet Koreans could *itself* have a synthesized character, making a unique and original contribution to the world culture.

What can explain such a persistent struggle of the Koreans to emphasize their belonging to a particular ethnos, to find a national consciousness, and to hold onto their traditional (although foreign) rituals? This phenomenon is characteristic of many national minorities and is referred to today as “ethnicity,” a reaction to the global internationalization of the world. “Ethnicity” is one of the ways that a minority group prevents itself from being submerged in a majority setting. Here, there arises the other problem, that is, that of the national survival of a small ethnic group.

For Koreans and other national minorities who do not have their own national state apparatus in the republic—or in any territory of the former USSR for that matter—the problem of preserving themselves as an ethnos is more urgent than for those nations that have a national government made up of its ethnic base. These nations always have the opportunity to preserve and realize their potential as an ethnos.

New situations unraveling in the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Uzbekistan, are giving rise to new problems for these national minorities. Koreans have already twice (first in the Far East and second in Central Asia) adapted to new environments. The result of this adaptation and assimilation has given birth to this ethnic Russian-speaking group, the “Soviet-Koreans.” After the adoption of laws in the republics concerning state languages and the establishment of national governments, the rights, freedom and opportunities for the Russian-speaking population was sharply curtailed. Koreans have faced not only the problem of national revival as Koreans, but also the problem of preserving their ethnic group as Soviet Koreans. As a matter of fact, in the context of ethnic relations, Koreans view themselves as a Russian-speaking group. Formerly, within the limits of the USSR, they viewed themselves as an ethnic community even though they lived in many different regions: the Russian Far East; the republics of Central Asia; Kazakhstan; the Northern Caucuses; Ukraine; Moscow; et cetera. A new geopolitical situation could lead to different developments. For example, Soviet Koreans could lose their identity and start to form new ethnic identities such as Koreans of Tajikistan, Koreans of Uzbekistan, et cetera in accordance with the region of assimilation. Of course, the development in the evolution of the soviet Koreans as

an national community could take many forms and proceed along different scenarios. The previous situations would arise for the national minorities when "unavoidable limitations from co-existence becomes burdensome and is not justified by real advantages or spiritual approval."³

In speaking of the problems of national revival and national survival of Soviet Koreans, it must be noted that the diverse population of Koreans still have not identified their core national interests. In the national plan, there is no motivational structure. In this chaotic conglomeration of measures and actions to preserve and develop themselves as a distinct ethnic group, Koreans have not yet collectively distinguished between matters that are urgent in nature and those with secondary importance. This is also related to the fact that presently, the political consciousness of the Korean community is still dormant, as shown by analyzing the programs and activities of the various Korean organizations. These organizations are practically identical except for differences that are more personal in nature than in programmatic and strategic goals. The existing Korean organizations have yet to take upon themselves the task of defending the national interests of Koreans overall. A minor squabble between them illustrates the absence of the concept of preserving and developing the Korean community as an ethos. This is aggravated by the fact that Korean social organizations are continually pressured by government agencies that have their own perspectives of the problems facing the Koreans. In a situation when every ethnic group in the republic acquires a national consciousness and manifests itself into a national movement, new types of relationships arise between these communities. Here, it is important that these relationships be built with the consent of the nation and people. Unfortunately, there are still instances of administrative pressure from this or that bureaucrat or government agency upon social organizations. To this day, there are attempts to administer the lives of national social organizations by directives, which seriously hinder the activities of the people.

Notes:

¹Valeri Sergeievich Han is a candidate of Philosophical Sciences, docent in the Philosophy Department of Tashkent State Economic University. Translated by Steve Yang.

²The Russian word "ethnos" can be loosely translated as "a distinct ethnic group."

³B.N. Shaptalov. "Nationalist Problems of the USSR: correlation of contradictions." *Philosophical Sciences*, 1990. No. 8, p. 48.

⁴S.N. Artanovsky. "A Multinational Government from the Point of View from Culture Studies." *Philosophical Sciences*, 1990. No. 8, p. 39.

The Korean Diaspora in the Republic of Karakalpakstan *

After the forced deportation from the Far East to Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Koreans settled in various regions of Karakalpakstan, and began to labor in various areas of the economic and cultural establishment. The majority of them joined the ranks of the agricultural laborers, and in 1938, there appeared new collective farms, that is, those composed of, and organized by, Koreans.¹

In the Kungrad Raion, there were farms named "Avantegard" (directed by Mikhail Song from 1938 to 1947), "The New Life" (formerly "Blyukher Chernigovsky" from the Primorsky Krai), directed by Ivan Ch'oe, and "Pravda", directed by chairman Bum-T'ae Chang.² In the Khodzheiliisky Raion, there were the collective farms, "Voroshilov", headed by Ch'oe-Sung Kim) and "New World", headed by chairman Sung-Ch'ul Ch'oe). These two farms soon merged together and received the common name, "The New World," which was directed by Bong-Yul Kim, an active participant in the struggle to establish Soviet rule in the Primorsky region.³ The collective was subsequently headed by Young-Ho Cho, and continued on until 1948.

Of all the collectives, the largest was Avantegard. The backbone of the farm was composed of members of the former Far Eastern collectives, "Path to Socialism" (from the Chernigovsky Raion) and "Red Arrow" (a fishing collective from the Shkotovsky Raion). Many residents of Razdolnensky and other raions were drawn to Avantegard as well. At the time, its population numbered over one thousand residents. Avantegard was a distinct cultural center for the neighboring farms; its club was frequented by many farmers from The New Life and Pravda collectives. Here, there also performed a collective of artistic independence which included many talented youths. Among their performances, the fairy tales of the young girl, Sim Ch'ung, of Hyang Ch'un and others enjoyed great success. Members particularly loved the various arias from these classical works.

Advanced technology and an active cultural life set these farms apart from other collectives in Karakalpakstan. All farms had their own electric stations (the diesel engine was brought with great difficulty by the Red Arrow fishing collective). In addition, there were films shown in the club nearly every day, dances were organized, and "circles" for every conceivable interest were available as well. None of this was found in other collective farms in the republic.

During the years of the Great Fatherland War, the members of the collective Avantegard did what they could to help the front by supplying warm clothing and money to buy and produce weapons.⁴ Soon after the summer of 1943, the adult male population was mobilized for service on the home front. On the collective farms, the only ones left were the women,

children, juveniles, and the elderly. This situation led to the gradual breakdown of the economy, as there was no one to work the farms: after school, the young would head for the city, the factories, the construction sites, and their studies; the elderly were too feeble. The return of the men after demobilization could not provide a significant positive influence to strengthen the collectives, and they ceased to function. The farms organized in the Muinaksky Raion (composed of the original deportees from the Northern half of Sakhalin Island) soon collapsed.

The disbanding of the collectives caused the population to migrate. The remaining members of the collectives *Avantegard*, *New Life*, and *Pravda* reorganized in the Kungradsky Raion to form the collective, “*Bulganin*”, which then became the state farm, “*Raushan*”. It was directed by Alexander Stepanovich Um, followed by Vladimir Maksimovich Ch’oe, Gook-Bok Pak, and others, and specialized in rice production.⁵

Koreans played a large role in the development of rice production on the lower reaches of the Amu Darya.⁶ Along with their active participation, many specialized farms were organized for the cultivation of rice. For example, the state farm, “*Chapev*”, was founded in the Kungradsky Raion and directed by Nam-Guk Huh from 1961 to 1962. And in the Leninabadsky Raion, the following state farms were organized:

- “22nd Party Congress”, directed by Alexander Georgivich Pak (a hydroengineer who was one of the first Koreans to [complete] the Moscow Water Reclamation Institute in 1938);
- “*Altynkul*”, in the Chimbaisky Raion, directed by Ch’un-Baek Rhi (a former North Korean People’s Army general);
- “*Maiyab*”, directed by Bong-Su Kim from 1932 to 1965;
- “*October*”, directed by Moisei Kim from 1963 to 1967;
- “*Madeniyat*”, in the Karauzyaksky Raion, directed by Victor Unhakovich Kim;
- “50th VLKSM”, in the Nukusky Raion, directed by Konstantine Semyonovich Kim; and
- “*Soviet Karakalpakia*”, in 1972 directed by Sheggai Roman Alexandrovich (it soon failed).

Large harvests of rice were collected from all these farms, many of which specialized in rice production and had enthusiastic laborers. Among those noteworthy was the “Hero of Socialist Labor” Alexi Dyuevich Kang (Ch’ang-Hu Kang), from 50th VLKSM (previously from the *Rossia* state farm in the Nukusky Raion). The brigade under his direction produced 60-70 centers per hectare of the “pearly grain of the Aral” on 500-600 hectares of land. In addition, the foreman of 50th VLKSM, Yeong-Hwan Cheong, distinguished himself for producing 60-65 centers per hectare of rice from 200-250 hectares of land, and was thereby awarded the Order of Glory, 2nd

Degree, for “Service to Rice Production in the Karakalpakstan Republic.” Following the death of Alexi Dyuevich Kang, foreman Andrei Kharitonovich Khagai earned the confidence of his comrades and became the brigade’s director. He, too, produced harvests of 60-65 centers per hectare of rice from 300-350 hectares. There were many other foremen who distinguished themselves as well—a tradition that has been continued by the young machine operators and foremen from the ranks of Koreans, Karakalpaks and Kazakhs.

Many Koreans now work in industry, agriculture, and other areas of the People’s economy. Many of our fellow Koreans can be found in organs of the Republic’s administration—particularly the Supreme Soviet, the Council of Ministers of the Karakalpakstan Republic, and the Republic’s departments. For their active contribution to economic and cultural development, 72 Koreans were awarded various honorary titles of the Karakalpakstan Republic (e.g., rice producer, machine operator, livestock farmer, construction worker, etc.). The number of ethnic Korean scholars in Karakalpakstan is steadily increasing, and today, those teaching in the state university include Professor Lyudmilla Borisovna Hwang, Senior Lecturer Maksim Alexeievich Kang, and Yana Alexandrovna Kim. Scholars also work in scientific research institutions and pedagogical institutes.

The friendship between ethnic Koreans and the local population strengthens daily, mutually enriching both cultures and traditions. In the course of various events in Korean families, there can be found members of Karakalpak, Kazakh, Uzbek, and other nationalities. There is no doubt that this friendship will grow stronger in the future. It is especially important today when there are disturbances in various regions of the former Soviet Union. To conclude, the Korean community plays no small role in the preservation of peace and friendship between people here.

Notes:

¹D. Tyugai, Chairman of the Administration of the Association of Koreans in the Karakalpakstan Republic, December 22, 1992. Translated by Steve Yang.

²In the Soviet era, farms were organized into collective farms and state farms.

³A Raion is a political administrative region larger than a Krai. The Primorsky Krai is located in the Russian Far East.

⁴Today, according to unconfirmed reports, Bon-Yul Kim is a general in the People’s Army of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

⁵Otherwise known as World War II.

⁶Russified names contain a patronymic which comes from the father’s name.

⁷A major river system running through Uzbekistan near the Aral [Ural] Sea.

STUDENTS OF KOREAN HERITAGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES*

Kevin W. Madden, Jae Hwan Kim, and Jesse S. Curtis

Abstract

This paper is a preliminary report of a survey conducted among Korean heritage students at the University of Washington in the spring of 1995. A comparison group of students not of Korean heritage was also surveyed. Student demographics, attitudes regarding language use, gender roles, traditional Korean values, and opinions about their educational experience and U.S.-Korea relations were examined. Where appropriate, responses of Korean heritage (KH) students were compared with those of students not of Korean heritage (NKH). Responses revealed that Korean-American students appear to be highly acculturated in terms of language, gender issues, and perceptions about the purpose and environment of their college experience. However, traditional values about the centrality of the family and the importance of the Korean language were not very different. Differences between the two groups exist, but some of their core values appear to be very much the same.

Introduction

This paper summarizes findings of a survey research project conducted among the students of Korean heritage (KH) at the University of Washington (UW) in the Spring of 1995. We tried to determine if and how student attitudes and demographics have changed as the numbers of Korean heritage citizens immigrating to the United States has increased by collecting

This paper was produced for a course on Korean expatriate communities, taught by Professor Kwang Kyu Lee of Seoul National University. KEVIN W. MADDEN is an officer in the US Army; JAE HWAN KIM and JESSE S. CURTIS are recent graduates of the University of Washington's Korea Studies Department at the Jackson School of International Studies. The authors also wish to acknowledge Sandra Kang, Carla Kim, and Chung Ku Kim for their assistance with this project.

information on five different aspects of the Korean-heritage student community. They are: 1) demographic composition; 2) social attitudes, specifically with respect to characterizations of “typical traditional Korean values” about marriage, gender, ethnicity, and family; 3) self-identification of Korean and English language ability and usage preference; 4) general attitudes about the UW environment and their educational goals; and 5) general attitudes about the U.S.–Republic of Korea (ROK) relationship.

We expected that students of Korean heritage born in the United States would have values and attitudes less likely to be categorized as “traditional Korean values” about the three attitude areas. We also expected Korean-heritage students, in general, to conform to the Asian student stereotype—majoring in hard science, medicine, and business. Because the centrality of the family is such an important value in Korean society, we examined the composition and attitudes of their families as well.

Background

Historically, the Korean people have valued education and respected the scholar. As early as 372 A.D., a National Confucian Academy (T’aehak) was founded and since then, state institutions of higher learning have been maintained almost continuously, even during periods of foreign occupation and national crisis.¹

In 1891, reformist Pyon Su earned a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural science from the University of Maryland, thereby becoming the first Korean to earn an academic degree from an American university.² Pyon Su’s success was duplicated by a small but increasingly important group of Koreans, including famed independence leaders such as Chae-p’il So (Philip Jaisohn) and Syngman Rhee, who became the Republic of Korea’s first president in 1948.³ Throughout Korea’s colonial period (1910–1945), attendance at American universities was limited to a small number of expatriates, however. This changed with Korea’s liberation in 1945 by U.S. troops and American occupation of the southern portion of the peninsula, which made America the logical destination for South Korean scholars and immigrants. In fact, until 1964, students as a group represented the largest number of Korean immigrants to America excluding adopted children.⁴

In 1965, the Hart-Celler Act opened up Korean immigration and thousands took advantage, often settling near their “war-bride” relatives or in other major urban centers throughout America. From 1976 through 1990, more than 30,000 Koreans immigrated to the United States annually, increasing the population of Korean Americans to almost one million.⁵

The large “war-bride” population attached to surrounding military bases, combined with its proximity to the Pacific Rim and increasing economic

opportunities throughout the 1970s and 1980s made the Greater Puget Sound region a natural and popular place for Korean immigrants to settle. By 1993, with more than 100,000 residents of Korean heritage, only the Korean populations of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco outnumbered those of the Seattle-Tacoma area.⁶

With such a large, well-established regional Korean population and given the traditional Korean emphasis on education, it should be no surprise that students of Korean heritage (KH) comprise a large portion of the student body of the University of Washington (UW). In fact, such a disproportionately high number of KH students are admitted to the university each year that the Office of Minority Affairs has designated KH students as an “over-represented minority.”⁷ Yet despite this growing presence in the region and specifically at the UW, there have been few efforts to study the characteristics and attitudes of these first- and second- generation immigrants and foreign students. Moreover, stereotypes about KH students (seemingly fueled by national exposure of recent social unrest in New York and Los Angeles involving Korean immigrants) continue to exist within the local community. “All Koreans are rich”; “Korean students all study medicine or computers”; “Korean students only hang around with each other”; “Korean students’ families all own a groceries, a dry cleaning stores, or a restaurants” are some examples.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to put a “face” on this student group. Some questions we tried to answer included “Are KH students in fact ‘different’ from non-Korean heritage (NKH) students in their views about family or gender?” “Is there a difference between KH students who were born or raised in America (one-and-a-half and second generation students) and those who have only recently immigrated and not secured American citizenship (first generation students)?” “Are the views of graduate students different from those of undergraduates?” “Are there any difficulties faced by KH students that are perhaps different from those encountered by NKH students?” In essence, it was our goal to gain a sense of how KH students at the University of Washington perceived their environment. To address these questions, we conducted a field study using surveys and interviews to sample more than 200 undergraduate and graduate KH students, and more than 100 NKH students.

Students of Korean Heritage at the University of Washington

Students of Korean heritage studying at the UW can be categorized into four groups. Approximately 17 percent of the 25,000 undergraduates at the UW are of Asian ethnicity;⁸ approximately 700-900 (2-4 percent) of these are KH students.⁹ This group includes first, second, and third genera-

tion Korean Americans, permanent United States residents of Korean nationality, and foreign students of Korean nationality. According to the Korean Graduate Student Association (KGSA), there are approximately 150-200 graduate KH students, the majority of whom are foreign students of Korean nationality (although there are substantial numbers of Korean Americans as well).¹⁰ A third group consists of approximately 100-150 KH students enrolled in the university's English as a Second Language (ESL) Center on campus. The length of participation in this program ranges from one summer quarter to two full years or more, and most of these are foreign students of Korean nationality. KH students have established a reputation of success in the program and it is not unusual for some of these students to continue baccalaureate or graduate studies at the UW following the conclusion of their ESL studies. A fourth group consists of Korean businessmen and other professionals who attend accelerated English language programs coordinated by the School of Business in conjunction with the ESL center throughout the year. Many of these programs last less than a month and are designed to teach conversational English while exposing students to American society. Along with numerous visiting scholars, faculty and staff, this group adds yet another dimension to the diversity of thought and attitudes among KH students on the UW campus. Together, there are approximately 1,300 KH students at the University of Washington.

While the Greater Puget Sound area embodies a large and distinct Korean community, the UW itself offers several benefits available at only a few campuses in the United States. In addition to the undergraduate and graduate Korean Studies programs offered by the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies (JSIS), the Department of Asian Languages and Literature offers four years of Korean Language courses. Furthermore, the UW boasts one of the finest Korean collections in the world at its East Asian Library, offering students a choice of thousands of books, hundreds of periodicals, and numerous newspapers concerning Korea and Korean Affairs in both Korean and English. It is, therefore, an excellent institution for KH students to explore and strengthen their heritage if they desire.

The existence of such divergent groups of KH students with wide-ranging interests bespeaks of their important role in the UW's student community. An understanding of their characteristics and attitudes is important in developing an accurate understanding of the social fabric of the UW student community at large.

Method

To ascertain the characteristics and attitudes of KH students, we developed a questionnaire that covered five main topics:

Students of Korean Heritage at the UW

1. Basic demographics (age, age immigrated, gender, citizenship, household income, major);
2. Social attitudes (towards family, gender, ethnicity and marriage);
3. Perceptions of language ability and its use;
4. Attitudes toward the school environment; and
5. Attitudes regarding U.S.-Korea relations.

A draft survey of over 100 questions was then designed, and each question was examined for bias. All questions were carefully scrutinized to ensure they would measure variables as intended. We eventually produced a 71-question, four page survey that employed standard testing and measurement methods.

To establish a comparison group of NKH students for certain variables, we constructed a second survey by extracting 26 questions from the main survey, and then administered it to 102 randomly selected NKH undergraduates. Since the UW student body is predominantly undergraduate (about 70 percent) and Caucasian (about 70 percent), we chose to sample this group as representative of majority student opinion. To acquire a meaningful sample, we targeted male and female undergraduates ages 17-28, and excluded those students of Asian heritage.

We used a variety of methods to administer the main survey and to ensure as comprehensive a sampling as possible. Because obtaining lists of KH students for the main survey proved problematic (neither the UW nor any other campus organization maintained such a list), the UW student directory was first examined for all students sharing common Korean surnames. These students were then contacted by email, telephone, and postal mail. In addition, information bulletins and clearly-marked survey distribution points were established at numerous common meeting areas on campus. Other surveys were handed out during Korean language and Korean studies courses, through church and social groups, as well as student-based social organizations. In addition to the above methods, graduate students were contacted through campus mail based on a listing provided by KGSA. Of the approximate 550 surveys distributed to KH graduate and undergraduate students, 217 were returned over the five-week survey period (a 39 percent response rate).

Results

Survey responses were classified into three groups according to student status and heritage (two study groups [Table 1] and one comparison group

[Table 2]), and where possible, into subgroups according to gender, birth-place, and citizenship as follows.

Table 1a. KH Undergraduate Study Groups

Undergraduates of Korean Heritage (KH)	Number	Percent
Females	103	59%
<i>Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen</i>	22	21%
<i>Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen</i>	49	48%
<i>Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen</i>	32	31%
Total	103	100%
Males	73	41%
<i>Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen</i>	25	34%
<i>Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen</i>	27	37%
<i>Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen</i>	21	29%
Total	73	100%
Total KH Undergraduates	176	100%

Table 1b. KH Graduate Study Groups

Graduates of Korean Heritage (KH)	Number	Percent
Females	6	15%
Males	35	85%
Total KH graduates	41	100%

Table 2. NKH Comparison Group

Undergraduates Not of Korean Heritage (NKH)	Number	Percent
Females	57	56%
Males	45	44%
Total NKH Undergraduates	102	100%

A fourth group consisting of ESL students was sampled using a Korean translation of the main survey, but responses were not received in time for inclusion. Except for the subgroup, “Female Graduates of Korean Heritage”, all subgroups provided enough responses to assume their data as representative (even if in some cases only nominally so). We additionally conducted dozens of formal and informal interviews with KH students to gain insight into the possible genesis of many of the opinions expressed by the survey results. These interviews not only provided the rationale of many of the responses but also confirmed the divergence of thought among and within the subgroups of KH students.

Respondent Profile

Student Demographics

The overwhelming majority of KH undergraduates (90 percent) and graduates (98 percent) indicated that they derived their Korean heritage

from both parents.

Ages of undergraduate KH students ranged from 18 to 28 years old, although the overwhelming majority (80 percent) of undergraduates were between 19 and 22 years old. Ages of undergraduate NKH students were between 17 and 28 years, with the bulk of ages ranging from 19 to 24 years (59 percent; n=60). As expected, graduate KH students were older and their ages covered a wider range.

Undergraduate KH students with U.S. citizenship tended to have arrived in the United States during peak migration periods in the early 1980s while still very young; those without U.S. citizenship came at a later age. An overwhelming proportion of graduate students (66 percent; n=27) did not come to the United States until after they had completed high school and indeed are more “foreign” than the majority of KH undergraduates.

When describing their hometowns, undergraduate KH students almost invariably described them as “predominantly white” (66 percent) or “racially integrated” (22 percent); only 9 percent came from “predominantly Korean” communities. One third of graduate KH students described the ethnic composition of their hometown as “predominantly Korean” (29 percent); this is likely influenced by the fact that 31 percent of graduates surveyed indicated that their hometown was in Korea.

Practically all undergraduate KH students were single (97 percent); NKH undergraduates were also mostly single (95 percent). Of the graduate KH students, 54 percent were single, 44 percent were married, and 2 percent were divorced.

Responses to Current or Prospective Field of Study (Table 3) suggest that undergraduate and graduate KH students are studying virtually every discipline offered by the UW. Interestingly, a substantial proportion (16 percent) of KH students are pursuing degrees in the Social Sciences (fields of psychology, sociology, and social work). One student interviewed said that this was because of “the UW’s national reputation and high employment prospects in those fields,” and another felt that “the increased urban

Table 3. Current or Prospective Field of Study

Category	Natural Sci.	Medicine	Social Sci.*	Comms./ English	Oth. Liberal Arts**	Bus.	Educ.	UK***	Total
KH Undergraduates (n=176)	22%	7%	16%	10%	22%	14%	2%	7%	100%
NKH Undergraduates (n=102)	19%	4%	11%	13%	31%	11%	3%	8%	100%
KH Graduates (n=41)	30%	2%	—	2%	42%	10%	7%	7%	100%

*Psychology, Sociology, Social Work

**History, Political Science, Fine Arts

***Undecided

difficulties and increasing non-White population is creating a demand in those fields”—these are perhaps complimentary. English and Communications were popular choices among the Liberal Arts fields (32 percent), while the Natural Sciences and Medical fields interested 29 percent, and Business fields attracted 14 percent of KH undergraduates sampled. For graduate KH students, Liberal Arts (Communications/English and Other Liberal Arts) was the college of choice (44 percent), while Natural Sciences (primarily engineering and computer-related fields) drew almost one third of responses (30 percent).

Regarding grade level classification, KH undergraduates were roughly equally distributed across all four classes, while NKH undergraduates showed a heavy concentration of seniors (44 percent). Graduate KH student responses were distributed fairly evenly between masters and doctoral programs, and 10 percent indicated that they were pursuing postgraduate or professional studies.

Finally, both KH and NKH undergraduates have high expectations of academic achievement. About 80 percent of both groups intend to attain at least a master's degree or higher. Compared to NKH undergraduates, KH undergraduates show a greater interest in pursuing a medical or dental degree and a slightly greater desire to study law—perhaps indicating vestiges of the popular idea in Korean society that true success is defined by successfully becoming one of the four “sas”.¹¹ At least one male KH undergraduate supported this, stating, “Let's face facts; all Korean parents want their kids to be doctors and lawyers, and only after [KH students] fail at that do they pursue other majors.”¹² Graduate KH students also have high expectations of educational achievement, with 72 percent of master's students intending to seek a doctorate as a terminal degree.

Family Composition

The average family size of KH students surveyed is comparable to that of a typical American family, hovering at around 2.5 children per family.¹³ Of note is the fact that families of KH undergraduates who were born in Korea and still maintain Korean citizenship average only about 1.5 children per family—a large difference from those KH undergraduates who are U.S. citizens. Interestingly, 29 percent of male KH graduate students indicated that they came from families of five or more children. Furthermore, unlike the typical KH student of Johng Doo Song's study of 20 years ago (who more often than not attended school in the United States while the parents remained in Korea), about 90 percent of all UW KH undergraduates' families reside in the United States, including those with Korean citizenship.¹⁴ However, 20 percent of all KH undergraduates still holding Korean citizenship had one or more siblings living outside the United States.

Compared to U.S. Census statistics, the divorce rate for parents of KH undergraduates is also on par with the national average while that for parents of KH graduates is much lower.¹⁵ Unmarried single parents, however, are nonexistent.¹⁶

Education is one area where parents of KH students distinguish themselves, as shown in Table 4. Overall, a great proportion of parents of KH students at the UW are highly educated. Fully 47 percent of the parents of KH undergraduates and 48 percent of the parents of KH graduates hold college degrees. At the lower levels, only 13 percent of parents of KH undergraduates did not graduate from high school.

Table 4. Educational Level of Parents of KH Students

<u>Category</u>	<u>Did not complete HS</u>	<u>HS Diploma</u>	<u>Attended College</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Post-graduate</u>	<u>No Reply</u>	<u>Total</u>
KH Undergraduates (n=351)	12%	23%	15%	34%	13%	3%	100%
KH Graduates (n=82)	27%	18%	7%	31%	17%	0%	100%

When we analyzed parent subgroups, we found that fathers of KH undergraduates who were born in Korea and retained Korean citizenship had the highest overall level of education, with 64 percent having graduated from college. This corresponds accurately to descriptions of immigrants over the last ten years, who are increasingly professional and engage in a variety of occupations. The next highly-educated subgroup are the fathers of KH undergraduates born in the United States. This is followed by fathers of KH undergraduates born in Korea with U.S. citizenship. Perhaps these findings can be explained by their immigration to the United States during a period of high employment and discrimination within the United States, which forced a large number of Koreans to take menial jobs (they later became proprietors of small groceries, dry cleaning shops, or restaurants). Nevertheless, 41 percent of fathers still graduated from college, thus surpassing the national percentage.

The educational experience of mothers of KH undergraduates is a more interesting and illustrative case. Of KH undergraduates born in the United States, 66 percent reported that their mothers were college graduates.¹⁷ Most surprising is the contrasting and extremely low level of education for mothers of KH graduates born in Korea, but now U.S. citizens. This group's level of educational achievement was much lower than the national level, with a full quarter failing to complete high school and only 22 percent completing college. Interestingly, over 60 percent of these "uneducated" mothers are reported as being business persons with annual incomes exceeding \$15,000.

KH graduate students' parents perhaps represent the "typical" Korean

model of the 1960s and 1970s—highly educated fathers (59 percent college graduates) and lowly educated mothers (29 percent without a high school diploma and 58 percent of high school or lower education). These figures likely reflect the historical disadvantage women have faced regarding education in Korea. Because of the male bias within the traditional neo-Confucian view of education, few women were able to enroll in Korean institutions of higher learning until the late 20th century.

Table 5. Estimated Annual Income of Parents of KH Students

Category	\$14,999 and Under	\$15,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000 and Over	No Reply	Total
KH Undergraduates (n=176)	4%	24%	20%	31%	16%	5%	100%
KH Graduates (n=41)	22%	15%	17%	12%	20%	15%	100%

Regarding annual family income and socioeconomic status, the family incomes reported by respondents were comparable to the 1990 national average reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁸ Families of KH undergraduates showed a lower degree of poverty, and a higher degree of affluence than nationwide (a lower percentage of Koreans reported incomes below \$15,000, and a greater percentage of Koreans reported incomes of \$50,000 or more annually). Respondents largely associated their perceived economic class with their families' actual reported income. Those reporting an annual family income under \$14,999 usually described their socioeconomic status as *low*, while those students from families of annual incomes over \$75,000 invariably chose *high*. The remainder of students chose *upper-middle class* at a rate of three to one over *lower-middle class*.¹⁹

Further examination revealed that fathers usually out-earned mothers who worked; 71 percent of mothers of KH undergraduates earned \$15,000 or more, and 11 percent earned \$50,000 or more. This is in high contrast to the mothers of KH graduate students, who predominately live in Korea and 66 percent of which earn less than \$15,000 annually—namely because they do not work at all! Among families who immigrated, less than one in four mothers worked while in Korea, while nearly three-quarters became employed or operated their own business after immigration to the United States.

While this section has given some insight into what defines the average undergraduate and graduate student of Korean heritage, it has only scratched the surface of these student's beliefs, thoughts, and ideas. The following sections will examine in greater detail student responses regarding their language ability, and their attitudes regarding social issues, school environment, and U.S.-Korea relations.

Perceived Language Ability and Use

The retention and expansion of a culture's language has long been an indicator of a respective culture's economic strength and political power. Witness the requisite ability for French in 18th century international politics, the introduction and domination of Spanish over indigenous languages in Central and South America, and the recent popularity and growth of English—particularly American English—over the past half century. It is certainly not because of its ease of understanding or universality that foreign businessmen, for example, learn English, but rather because of America's past and present economic and political strength. This is also the reason why, historically, Americans as a people have been so poor at learning other languages, as typified by the attitude that everyone else should learn to speak English.²⁰

Koreans have been very protective and proud of their language. Most certainly the Korean language has undergone, and withstood—albeit with drastic changes—significant outside influence. Centuries of Sinification greatly transformed the Korean language, and hardly a paragraph can be spoken without resorting to loan-words of Chinese origin. At one stage in Korean history, the Japanese endeavored to supplant Korean with Japanese throughout the Korean peninsula. Without its liberation in 1945, the Japanese may very well have succeeded just as the British did in Ireland.

To examine the strength of KH students' cultural identification, we investigated how proficient students perceived themselves to be at Korean and English, where Korean was spoken most often, and whether or not students intended to pass it onto successive generations. Because Korean language retention is such a key element of the Korean ethnic and cultural identity, we wanted to know whether Koreans who immigrated to the United States showed a unique degree of native language retention than that demonstrated by other ethnic groups.

Survey responses suggest that Korean language ability may be lost as rapidly as English is gained (Tables 6 and 7). In addition, further analysis shows that perceived language ability in English and Korean likely depends upon the age of arrival in the United States. For instance, respondents born in the United States or who arrived before age 10 indicated that they possessed *native ability* (that is, they felt more confident) while those who arrived later did not. Of KH undergraduates retaining Korean citizenship, 40 percent identified their language ability as *native* (a figure that corresponds directly with the number of Korean students arriving in the United States after age 12 [n=19]). Only about 11 percent of KH undergraduates born in Korea and now holding US citizenship considered their language ability as *native*. This is exactly the same percentage of KH students who indicated

that they came to the US after age 11. Interestingly, many respondents who arrived between the ages of 5 and 15 (29 percent of Korean-born American citizens [n=22], and 68 percent of Korean-born Korean citizens [n=32]) often indicated that they considered *neither* language as *native* (52 percent; n=54), thereby showing that they did not feel confident using either language. Among the 52 KH students holding American citizenship, only 6 percent indicated *native* Korean ability, while 38 percent indicated *minimal* or *none*. These results support the assertion that age of immigration is a major factor in native language ability retention. This only underscores the cultural challenges and identity problems faced by immigrants who confront a pervasive American society.

Table 6. Perceived English Language Ability of KH Students

Category	Native	Good	Fair	Minimal	None	Total
Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen (n=47)	36%	47%	11%	6%	—	100%
Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=76)	75%	20%	5%	—	—	100%
Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=52)	94%	2%	2%	—	—	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=175)	70%	22%	6%	2%	—	100%
All KH Graduates (n=41)	27%	44%	27%	2%	—	100%

This process of acculturation is most visible in the language used among friends and family as reported by our sample. When communicating with parents, 68 percent of those KH undergraduates born in the United States indicated that they used English either *frequently* or *exclusively*. For those born in Korea with U.S. citizenship, half used English while the other half used Korean. We found that among friends and regardless of citizenship, however, English was the overwhelming language of choice—even for those KH undergraduates retaining Korean citizenship (of whom 75 percent identified their closest friends as Korean). Only among the KH graduate students did a high percentage (44 percent; n=18) prefer speaking Korean.

Table 7. Perceived Korean Language Ability of KH Students

Category	Native	Good	Fair	Minimal	None	Total
Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen (n=47)	40%	34%	21%	4%	—	100%
Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=76)	11%	21%	42%	21%	5%	100%
Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=52)	6%	28%	26%	30%	8%	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=175)	17%	27%	32%	19%	5%	100%
All KH Graduates (n=41)	76%	7%	10%	5%	2%	100%

Interestingly, fully 91 percent of all KH undergraduates felt that their children should learn Korean, perhaps a reflection of their growing ethnic

awareness in a nation that is becoming more conscious of different ethnic groups. Despite this desire, however, the pattern set in failing to maintain or acquire Korean language ability are not likely to be changed during their children's lifetime, and for the vast majority of respondents, we can arguably presume that their children will not learn Korean either.

One of the first things a visitor to Korea learns is of Koreans' pride in their language and *hangul* alphabet. Without leaving the airport, one can be informed that the Korean alphabet is among the world's most scientific, given to the people by the sage ruler King Sejong. While this pride has enabled Koreans to retain their language (with strong Chinese elements) through invasion and occupation, it does not appear as though it will survive the experience of immigration to America. Like virtually all other nationalities, there appears to be only a limited interest among KH students in maintaining their Korean language skills. While many students maintain conversation skills out of necessity or convenience in dealing with their families, interviews confirmed that few developed any capability to write or read at an advanced level. In conclusion, the results of the survey suggest that Korean language ability is not being preserved among the KH students at the UW, despite the availability of an extensive Korean language program. It remains to be seen if Korean immigrants are in any way unique compared to any other ethnic group in the retention of language.

Attitudes Toward Marriage, Gender and Family

Marriage and Gender Roles

As in most cultures, marriage is intertwined with gender and family, and plays an important role for Koreans. Until very recently in Korea, the institutionalized legal and social systems were heavily prejudiced against female equality and minimized the rights of women. An even greater barrier was a set of societal norms that required a woman to define herself based on her husband, her relationship with her mother-in-law, and her ability to produce a healthy child—preferably a male.

As a product of the Confucian Choson Dynasty, modern Korean society evolved to one where a man's key responsibilities were to maintain order in and to support his family.²¹ The head of the house had the final say in all important family decisions and he was not to be disputed. Women were expected to perform their appropriate duties as the "inside master", namely, cooking, cleaning, and care of the children, and it was a rare husband indeed that was aware of the toil involved, much less that assisted with it. To this day, most women who work outside the home are relegated to such positions as secretaries, bus assistants, tour guides, and school teachers, and their

resignation from such occupations is expected—if not upon marriage, then upon pregnancy. While in a modern American context, these may seem as almost “Neanderthalic” concepts, these attitudes still prevail in Korean society despite rapid changes in social and economic life.

Given present Korean culture, we were interested in determining whether such strong and persistent ideas have held their ground among KH students in the face of pervasive American culture. The answer is an emphatic “no.” According to the survey, KH undergraduates (women *and* men alike) have wholly rejected these ideas, and while the family remains of the utmost importance to them, gender inequality is no longer acceptable. The only “holdouts” in this revolution of social thought are among the KH male graduate students (the majority of whom arrived in the United States after their high school years after having already formed their internal cultural values and mores), who often demonstrate a more conservative attitude.

As shown by Tables 8 and 9, the traditional value that the woman should devote her life solely to domestic activities is all but ended. Even the male KH graduate students overwhelmingly view housework as a joint effort; only 18 percent believe that it is *always* or *usually* the responsibility of the wife. Additionally, 82 percent of all KH undergraduates and 80 percent of KH graduates (regardless of gender) *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that women should not have a career after marriage. These attitudes are likely affected by economic realities within the United States, and increasingly within Korea where two-income households are on the rise.

Table 8. “Household chores are the responsibility of:”

Category	Always/Usually the Wife	Jointly	Always/Usually the Husband	Total
Female KH Undergraduates (n=102)	7%	93%	—	100%
Male KH Undergraduates (n=73)	18%	82%	—	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=175)	11%	89%	—	100%
Female NKH Undergraduates (n=57)	2%	98%	—	100%
Male NKH Undergraduates (n=45)	—	98%	2%	100%
All NKH Undergraduates (n=102)	1%	98%	1%	100%
Female KH Graduates (n=6)	—	100%	—	100%
Male KH Graduates (n=34)	18%	76%	6%	100%
All KH Graduates (n=40)	15%	80%	5%	100%

Regarding major family decisions, all respondents tended to indicate that the best course of action is chosen through a joint decision. Some KH undergraduates of both gender (20 percent of men and 13 percent of women)

viewed the husband as taking the dominant role in making family decisions, while only one female student indicated that usually the wife takes the dominant role. Although it is not pervasive by any means, it does demonstrate a male bias not seen among NKH counterparts.

Table 9. "A woman should not have a career after marriage."

Category	Agree/	Neutral	Disagree/	Total
	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	
Female KH Undergraduates (n=103)	7%	10%	83%	100%
Male KH Undergraduates (n=73)	7%	12%	81%	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=176)	7%	11%	82%	100%
Female NKH Undergraduates (n=57)	7%	4%	89%	100%
Male NKH Undergraduates (n=45)	4%	4%	91%	100%
All NKH Undergraduates (n=102)	6%	4%	90%	100%
Female KH Graduates (n=6)	—	—	100%	100%
Male KH Graduates (n=35)	2%	20%	78%	100%
All KH Graduates (n=40)	3%	17%	80%	100%

Unlike the drastically changing role of women, attitudes toward male roles seem to be changing more slowly. Moreover, the traditional perception of the man as the breadwinner appears to be more consistently accepted by males of all categories. This is an area where KH students differed significantly from NKH students in their responses. Over half (53 percent) of female KH undergraduates and 80 percent of male KH undergraduates *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that a man's primary responsibility was to provide financial support for his family, while only about one third of NKH undergraduates *agreed* or *strongly agreed*. Male KH graduate students showed the strongest support for this statement with a full 85 percent of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing*.

As evidenced by the above results, it appears that a high proportion of KH students at the UW have not adopted traditional Korean views with respect to gender; particularly the role of women. We expect that this trend will continue and increase as succeeding generations of KH students pursue opportunities previously not available to, and experience social norms not encountered by, their parents.

Family Values

Throughout Korea's history, the family has played a central role, not only in Korean society, but in every aspect of human endeavor from politics,

to farming, land ownership, and industry.²² The lasting cohesion of the Korean family has been uniform in terms of solidarity, with a minuscule divorce rate, arrangements for the care of elders, and a strict adherence to hierarchical relationships. Four questions pertaining to attitudes about the family were posed:

1. "Should children marry without parental approval?";
2. "Should an eldest son live with his parents after marriage if at all possible?";
3. "Should parents expect their children to support them in their later years?"; and
4. "Are obedience and respect the most important virtues children should learn?"

These questions all embraced traditional neo-Confucian Korean cultural values. Unlike the previous responses regarding gender roles discussed above, responses to these questions seemed to suggest that KH students still largely ascribe to Korean family values. Of real surprise was the similarity of responses given by NKH students, indicating that many of these values and beliefs once thought of as unique to Korean society are perhaps universal to other societies where the nuclear family predominates. Only when asked about parental permission for marriage, did the NKH undergraduates register a high level of disagreement, with 54 percent strongly disagreeing with the statement. This was in sharp contrast to both KH undergraduates and graduates, more than half of which agreed with the statement to one extent or another.

Attitudes Toward the UW School Environment

Perceptions of Education and Community

Respondents were asked why they were at the University of Washington and asked to select one of five responses (Table 10). Without exception, all students chose answers that appear to verify their internalization of the belief in the importance of higher education. Female KH undergraduates usually identified *intellectual development* as the primary reason, whereas male KH undergraduates emphasized the need to succeed in their field. To become employable was also a frequently chosen response. Overall, KH graduate and undergraduate students chose *intellectual development* (38 percent) as their primary reason for attending, followed by *succeed in field* (35 percent).

Upon being asked to rank the importance of a college education, all respondents, regardless of heritage, recognized its value as either *useful* or *very useful*. Female KH undergraduates assigned the greatest value (78 per-

cent thought it very useful), while only 58 percent of their male counterparts felt the same. These results are in sharp contrast with those of Song's 1978-79 study where only 32 percent of KH respondents thought a college education was very useful (although 83 percent ranked it as useful).²³ Moreover, there appears to be a high degree of optimism towards post-graduate study; respondents in all groups see the relation between their education and employment opportunities. This could be affected by a more competitive job market necessitating more specific and advanced skills.

Table 10. "I am at the University of Washington to:"

Category	For Intellectual Development	Succeed in Field	Become Employable	Be with Friends	Placate Parents	Total
<i>Female KH Undergraduates (n=102)</i>	43%	32%	19%	—	6%	100%
<i>Male KH Undergraduates (n=73)</i>	25%	41%	29%	—	5%	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=175)	35%	36%	23%	—	6%	100%
<i>Female NKH Undergraduates (n=57)</i>	37%	35%	12%	9%	5%	100%
<i>Male NKH Undergraduates (n=45)</i>	44%	29%	27%	—	—	100%
All NKH Undergraduates (n=102)	41%	32%	19%	5%	3%	100%
<i>Female KH Graduates (n=6)</i>	100%	—	—	—	—	100%
<i>Male KH Graduates (n=34)</i>	41%	38%	12%	—	9%	100%
All KH Graduates (n=40)	49%	32%	10%	—	7%	100%

Participation in campus extracurricular activities by KH students is limited, however. Responses indicate that fewer KH women participate in these events than KH men, regardless of classification. This differs from the NKH undergraduates, where slightly more women participate in extracurricular activities than men. The low percentages of participation may be influenced by the very low level of visibility and activity by Korean-oriented organizations on campus, particularly the Korean Students Association (KSA) and the Korean Graduate Students Association (KGSA). Of all the questions in the survey, this one (regarding the performance of Korean-oriented organizations in promoting Korean culture on campus) evoked the most hand-written comments, with more than 12 responses criticizing KSA specifically.²⁴ Typical comments criticized the organization's level of commitment to Korean culture and students. Results further show that while a higher percentage of KH students participate in the surrounding Korean community than they do in on-campus activities, 57 percent of all KH undergradu-

ates indicated that this participation was at best *infrequent*. The most active participants of any group were the women graduates, of whom half indicated that they participated *moderately* often. What these responses imply is unclear and deserves further study. It would be interesting to see whether the perceived lack of community leadership (outside of the church), loss of language ability, and infrequency of community participation are related. We suggest that these are interrelated and hasten the loss of traditional Korean values in America.

To summarize, KH students at the UW value education and see positive benefits from it. It also appears that the KH undergraduates at the UW today are much more optimistic about the value of college education than their LA peers of 16 years ago.²⁵ This change may reveal a larger number of students who have family and other support networks than did their predecessors. Korean heritage undergraduates see college as a route to better marketability and success as well as an opportunity to develop themselves personally. Unfortunately, they also perceive the Korean organizations on campus as doing and offering little to promote their heritage, and so few participate—particularly women. Moreover, the local Korean community is not deeply involved with the KH student bodies on campus, and vice versa. These are areas that must be examined to understand the Korean cultural experiences in America and if Korean heritage is to be sustained among post second generation Korean Americans.

Difficulties Faced by Students

For this section, respondents were asked to rate the following issues as to whether they posed a *major difficulty*, *minor difficulty*, or *no difficulty* on the UW campus:

1. A language barrier;
2. Acceptance by students of other races; and
3. Costs associated with college;
4. Excessive graduation requirements;
5. High academic standards;
6. Making friends;
7. Racism;
8. Relations with the opposite sex.

Remarkably, students for the most part voiced few concerns, and, although a number of issues did pose *minor difficulties*, very few were perceived as posing *major difficulties*.

Only 25 percent of male KH graduate students (the highest percentage of any subgroup) perceived that language barrier was a *major difficulty*. As noted by Song, this is directly related to the length of stay in the United

States, and is demonstrated by the fact that in this survey, 43 percent of KH undergraduates born in Korea and still holding Korean citizenship reported a language barrier to be a *minor difficulty*, while 23 percent of Koreans holding U.S. citizenship reported the same.²⁶

About 33 to 55 percent of all subgroups thought that the UW's high academic standards and excessive graduation requirements posed a *minor difficulty*; less than 16 percent viewed them as posing a *major difficulty*. No correlation between language ability and perceiving academic standards or graduation requirements as difficulties was seen.

Regarding the issue of making friends, 30 percent of KH undergraduates still holding Korean citizenship saw no difficulty, as did a similar percentage of KH graduates and NKH undergraduates. About 60 percent of KH undergraduates holding US citizenship saw no difficulty (perhaps a function of the language skills of those KH students who had been in the United States longer).

Similarly, a larger percentage of male KH undergraduates with Korean citizenship viewed relations with the opposite sex to be a *major difficulty* (but only slightly so). In most cases respondents indicated *no difficulty* in relations with the opposite sex.

Surprisingly, the issues of racism and acceptance by students of other races were not greatly perceived to be difficulties, and perhaps were reinforced by the results to the questions of ethnicity. Only 3 percent of KH undergraduates and 2 percent of KH graduates, and 2 percent of NKH undergraduates, viewed racism as a major problem, and about the same saw acceptance by students of other races as a *major difficulty*—a very laudable result concerning the social environment of the UW.

All groups saw the expense of a college education as posing either a *major* or *minor difficulty* (25 to 50 percent). There was no correlation between responses to this question and annual family income, either—students from “rich” families viewed college education costs to be as much a difficulty as those from “poor” families. Nearly 75 percent of every group saw cost as a *minor* or *major difficulty*; only 10 percent of NKH undergraduates viewed it as posing *no difficulty*.

In sum, both KH and NKH, graduate and undergraduate, students view the UW as a campus free of major difficulties in the surveyed topics, except for the cost of education. This environment may very well be a contributing factor to the rapid acculturation that is demonstrated by survey results.

Attitudes Toward the U.S.–Korea Relationship

We asked students whether they thought current and future U.S.-Korea relations would *improve*, *remain the same*, or *deteriorate*; responses are pre-

sented in Tables 11 and 12. The most popular choice for all subgroups in characterizing present U.S.-Korea economic and diplomatic relations was *friendly competition*. This suggests that the current KH student body sees few major obstacles between Korea and the United States right now; however, students' assessment of future relations is somewhat different.

Table 11. Respondents' Assessment of Future U.S.-Korean Economic Relations

Category	Improve	Remain the Same	Deteriorate	Uncertain	No Reply	Total
Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen (n=47)	51%	23%	26%	—	—	100%
Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=76)	50%	37%	8%	1%	4%	100%
Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=53)	47%	37%	8%	—	8%	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=176)	49%	34%	13%	—	4%	100%
KH Graduates (n=41)	24%	44%	32%	—	—	100%

Table 12. Respondents' Assessment of Future U.S.-Korean Diplomatic Relations

Category	Improve	Remain the Same	Deteriorate	Uncertain	No Reply	Total
Born in Korea; Currently Korean Citizen (n=47)	49%	36%	15%	—	—	100%
Born in Korea; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=76)	49%	38%	8%	1%	4%	100%
Born in the U.S.; Currently U.S. Citizen (n=53)	40%	45%	6%	—	9%	100%
All KH Undergraduates (n=176)	46%	40%	9%	—	5%	100%
KH Graduates (n=41)	22%	54%	24%	—	—	100%

As shown in Tables 11 and 12, most students believe that present U.S.-Korea economic relations will improve or stay the same, but a significant portion of undergraduates (25 percent) and graduates (32 percent) with Korean citizenship believe that relations will deteriorate. Similar, although slightly more moderate, views are held by the same groups regarding the status of future relations. Whether this is because of these groups' greater exposure to the South Korean press and the country's growing nationalism remains to be seen. Nevertheless, it is somewhat disheartening to see such dire predictions for the relations of two countries who form one of the most unique alliances in all of world history.

Conclusions

Students of Korean heritage at the University of Washington are a group with more diverse origins than previously shown. Unlike the students of Song's 1978 study, today's KH students are not simply foreign students with

limited American roots. The students of our survey reflect the general trends of Korean immigration to the United States over the last 15-20 years. Most students derive their heritage from both parents. Those students holding U.S. citizenship arrived as young children with their families. Students holding Korean citizenship normally came to the United States during or after their teens. These students choose a variety of majors at the UW. About 50 percent pursue social science or traditional liberal arts degrees, while under one-third (28 percent) are majoring in medicine or business. In addition, the educational goals of these students are very high, with 80 percent indicating that they intend to study beyond a bachelor's degree.

Students of Korean heritage at the UW also consider their college experience an opportunity to improve themselves intellectually as well as better prepare themselves for employment. However, many feel that the opportunity to explore and nurture their Korean heritage through extracurricular groups is sorely lacking. Few of the respondents indicated that they found Korean-related organizations on campus useful, although this does not seem to negatively affect student attitudes regarding their overall educational experience.

While many KH students have some ability to speak Korean, almost all use English as their primary language when communicating with parents and friends. Despite the availability of extensive Korean language programs at the UW, KH students do not appear to be trying to develop, or preserve, their Korean language ability. This is not to say that these students do not value their culture and language, however, although the values and attitudes that are characterized as "traditional Korean values" have seen some transformation among these students as well.

Although KH students still largely subscribe to traditional Korean family values, attitudes regarding marriage and gender roles in particular have changed among KH students to reflect the more egalitarian Western views. For example, survey responses show that students no longer believe that the wife's sole domain should be the home, and that family decisions and responsibilities should be shared by both the husband and the wife. Although attitudes about gender relationships have moved away from strict, traditional roles, traditional attitudes that include respect for parents' wishes and authority do not appear to have changed drastically. Interestingly, analysis of NKH responses revealed that other UW students were inclined to accept values that could be characterized as "traditionally Korean" as well.

Regarding the future of U.S.-Korea relations, responses seemed to be divided according to country of citizenship. KH students holding U.S. citizenship believed that relations between the two nations are currently good and would continue so, or were likely to improve. Students of Korean citizenship, however, were less optimistic about the future of economic and

diplomatic relations between the United States and Korea.

To summarize, the University of Washington's students of Korean heritage are surrounded by American culture and values. Korean-American students appear to have experienced a high degree of acculturation in terms of language, gender issues, and perceptions about the purpose and environment of the college experience. At the same time, more traditional Korean values such as the centrality of the family and the importance of the Korean language remain. These more conservative attitudes perhaps reflect the strong influence of Confucianism over Korean society, which defined age and gender roles for more than 500 years. Will these values be passed onto subsequent generations? If our survey's respondents are any indication of a trend, we expect that succeeding generations will continue to show greater degrees of acculturation. This does not mean, however, that Koreans in America will lose their identity. The fact that many of our respondents intend to have their children learn Korean is evidence of this.

When taken together with student demographics, the above results provide evidence against validating the typical Korean-American stereotypes by revealing a variety backgrounds, characteristics, attitudes, and experiences among the KH student subgroups at the UW. Furthermore, it is important to point out that attitudes expressed by KH students are within the norms of American society. Although the demographic and attitudinal composition of the KH student population shows it to be a microcosm of the larger Korean community in the United States, these attitudes and views are shared by other Americans as well, particularly by their non-Korean heritage peers. To be sure, differences do exist, but some core values of these communities appear to be very much the same.

Notes:

*Seattle: Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, June 1995. Printed by permission.

¹Ki-Baik Lee. *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J Schultz. Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1984.

²Andrew C. Nahm, *Introduction to Korean History and Culture*. Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym International Corp., 1993.

³Ibid. Chae-p'il So (1866–1951) became the first Korean to earn an American medical degree (at the Medical College of George Washington University in 1893) (Richard Saccone, *Koreans to Remember: 50 famous people who helped shape Korea*. Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym International Corp., 1993). Syngman Rhee received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University in 1907, a master's degree from Harvard in 1908, and a doctorate from Princeton in 1910—the first Korean to earn a Ph.D. from an American university.

⁴Kwang-Kyu Lee, personal communication, University of Washington, May 1995.

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- ⁵U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994*. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1995.
- ⁶Kwang-Kyu Lee, student handout, University of Washington, May 1995.
- ⁷Representative for the Office of Minority Affairs, telephone communication, University of Washington, April 27, 1995.
- ⁸College Services, Inc. *Barron's Universities and Colleges 1994*. Princeton: College Services, Inc. 1993.
- ⁹This estimate is based on previous estimates performed by the campus organization, the Korean Student Association (KSA), other researchers, and regional journalists.
- ¹⁰The KGSA is a campus student organization that actively seeks and recruits Korean graduate students.
- ¹¹The four "sas" are *uisa* (medical doctor), *paksa* (doctor of philosophy), *pyeonbosa* (lawyer), or *taesa* (ambassador).
- ¹²While this statement may not apply in most cases, it is illustrative of the emphasis Koreans place on high education. For example, a number of KH liberal arts majors, when asked how they chose their major, jokingly replied, "because I got a 'C' in biochemistry" or, "I changed from pre-med after I blew chemistry."
- ¹³U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1995.
- ¹⁴Johng Doo Song, "Korean College Students in Los Angeles: basic characteristics." In *Koreans in Los Angeles: prospects and promises*, ed. Eui-Young Yu, Earl H. Phillips, and Eun Sik Yang. Los Angeles: Koryo Research Institute, The Center for Korean-American and Ethnic Studies, California State University, 1982.
- ¹⁵U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1995.
- ¹⁶Since this is an emerging phenomenon, it may be that families of KH students in America may very well closely resemble those of NKH students of similar age; further research needs to be performed in this area.
- ¹⁷We cannot infer that this represents the U.S. or earlier immigrants as having any educational advantage in the U.S., as only 28 percent of these mothers attended and graduated from college in the U.S.. Perhaps it is simply representative of a high number of college female college graduates. Further research needs to be done.
- ¹⁸U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1995.
- ¹⁹This result could be affected by the negative connotation associated with the category, *lower-middle class*.
- ²⁰As of 1990, only 13 percent of persons five years old or older spoke some language other than English in the home. Of these, 57 percent spoke at or above the level of "very well". U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1995.
- ²¹Virtually all of the works that discuss Korean neo-Confucianism in detail stress the male household head's critical role in maintaining order within the family.
- ²²Sorensen, Clark. *Over the Mountains are Mountains*. Seattle: U. of Washington Press, 1988.
- ²³Song, "Korean College Students," 1982.
- ²⁴The question asked whether existing Korean-oriented organizations' performance in promoting Korean culture on campus is *excellent, good, mediocre, poor, or I am not aware of 'Korean-oriented organizations'*.
- ²⁵Yim, Sun Bum. "Non-kinship networks and immigrant families in the US: the case of Koreans." In *Koreans in America: dreams and realities*, ed. Hyung-chan Kim and Eun Ho Lee. Seoul: The Institute of Korean Studies, 1990.
- ²⁶Song, "Korean College Students," 1982.

BOOK REVIEWS

“A painfully touching account” of the Korean immigrant experience*

Quiet Odyssey: a Pioneer Woman in America, by Mary Paik Lee.
Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990.

Martha Choe

As a young child, my idea of pioneer women was of women riding atop Conistoga wagons, searching for a better life in the Wild West. *Quiet Odyssey* captures the harsh experiences of a different kind of pioneer woman—one from Korea, “eastward” bound. Mary Paik Lee was born in Korea in 1905. Five years later, Japan completed its annexation of Korea and began its 36-year rule over the country, during which time native Koreans would experience tremendous physical and mental suffering. The annexation meant a virtual void of any work except in the most menial of jobs for most Koreans and finally convinced Mary’s father to seek a better life for his family in America. Borrowing barely enough for his and his family’s boat passage, Mr. Lee moved his young family to Hawaii along with many other Korean and Japanese laborers to fill the call for cheap plantation labor. Mary was five at the time. After a year-and-a-half of living in Hawaii and discovering the harsh reality of plantation labor, the family would move to California where they would try to make a living wage in the farming industry.

Quiet Odyssey is a painfully touching account of one of the first women to emigrate from Korea to the US. Lee’s account is important (and welcome) because so little has been written about the Korean immigrant experience. It is virtually impossible to find an autobiographical narrative of the life of these early pioneers. The earliest memories of Lee date back to her early childhood in Korea where both her grandparents served as strong community leaders in the small village where she was born. As she recounts her experiences in this country, we see through a child’s eyes the pain and humiliation of encountering racism for the first time. Upon her family’s arrival in San Francisco, Lee recalls being tormented and spit upon by strangers who called them names in a language she had yet to comprehend. She later writes of her experiences as the only Korean child in a small one-class school in California.

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Chapter after chapter recalls the incredible hardships suffered by the Lees and by what must have been hundreds of other early Asian immigrants. The family approached the point of literally starving to death several times, but managed each time to scrape enough food to make it through, or made the decision to move on in hopes of finding better jobs. As a result of the physical demands of 15-20 hour days, seven days a week, Mary's father constantly fought against total exhaustion and skin conditions from chemicals used in the fields. Mary herself began as a domestic laborer while just a young girl and attending school full time. Her adult employers, particularly the women in the households, often would expect her to perform heavy labor even though she was not yet a teenager. Amidst these hardships, the Lees managed to find a friendly neighbor or employer once in a while. One of Mrs. Lee's fondest memories is of Mrs. Nixon (former President Nixon's mother), who was one of the only ones who continued to frequent her family's produce market during World War II. All the rest of the neighbors associated the Lees with the "dirty Japs", enemies of the US.

A brief historical summary is provided as a prologue to assist the reader in understanding events in Korea and throughout the world. The strong, quiet spirit of Lee is felt throughout the book. Her writing is simple and unsophisticated, but subtly powerful as it unravels year after year and experience after experience in her personal history. This book is a welcome addition to the growing collection of first-hand accounts of our Asian men and women pioneers.

Some additional thoughts since this review was written

Since having written this book review several years ago, a significant number of events that have been pivotal to the contemporary experience of Koreans in America have come and gone. First and foremost were the riots in Los Angeles following the Rodney King verdict in 1992. The events in South Central LA served as a catalyst for greater Korean American community interest and involvement in politics, the media, and law. New organizations such as the National Association of Korean Americans, the Korean American Alliance, the Korean American Professionals Association, the Korean American Bar Association and the Korea-America Society have sprouted to organize around issues of mutual interest to Korean Americans across the country.

We have seen a slow increase in nationally prominent Korean Americans in the literary and entertainment arenas, and in the press. In 1995, the first novel to hit the "mainstream" press by a Korean American, Chan-Ree Lee, entitled, *Native Son* received positive reviews. And then there is Margaret Cho (nor to be confused with the author of this article!) who starred on

the prime-time TV show, *All American Girl*. Her experiences as a second generation Korean American caught between two cultures were the basis for this sit-com, with rumors that it is now being reworked to return to prime time shortly. We have also seen new periodicals such as the *KoreAm Journal*, which is published in Los Angeles as a way to target 1.5 and second generation Korean Americans, and focuses on issues important to the Korean American community as a whole, and *Occasional Papers* in Seattle, which provides a record of the community's oral history.

Recently, there has also been much focus on historic events such as the 50th year of Korean Liberation, and the 100th year anniversary of the first Korean to immigrate to this country in Hawaii. I recently attended the Third National Conference of Korean American Leaders in Hawaii, and found that unique to the islands, there were a number of local community members who represented the fourth and fifth generation of Koreans in this country. Many shared their heritage with other Asian ethnicities including Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos, as well as those of non-Asian backgrounds including Puerto Ricans and Caucasians. The issues today are different and yet the same as those for earlier generations, who are still concerned with preserving their traditional values and language through their children. Locally, in 1997, the Burke Museum at the University of Washington will open a ten-year-long exhibit, *Pacific Voices*, which will include displays of Korean cultural traditions. Additionally, the Wing Luke Asian Museum is planning an exhibit of Korean American oral history for 1998.

As the Korean American community grows and matures, we can expect to see more literary and cultural works, more representation in the media, politics and in every aspect of contemporary American life. The early days of Korean American pioneers have now given way to some 1 million plus Korean Americans in the United States. These second, third, fourth, and even fifth generations are breaking glass ceilings in all fields. With the current attack on immigration and affirmative action, we will need to make sure that we can bridge generations, geography and ideologies as one community—the Korean *American* community.

Notes:

*This article first appeared in volume 17, no. 22 of the *International Examiner* (Seattle: November 21, 1990). Reprinted by permission.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

The Third Annual Korean American Leadership Conference

Samuel S. Chung

The Third Annual Korean American Leadership Conference was held January 3-5, 1996 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Hosted by the Korean American Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, this historic event brought together many leaders of the Korean American community from across the United States. Throughout the three days of panel discussions, banquets and meetings, participants exchanged ideas and learned about each other. Set in the beautiful surroundings of Waikiki Beach and under the theme of "Unity, Leadership and Empowerment", the Hawaii conference set out to build a national organization truly representative of the growing Korean American communities in the United States. I attended the conference as one of the panel members; the following is a narrative of the events at the conference followed by my observations of the activities.

The Programs and Participants

The Hawaii conference was the third consecutive year that Korean American political leaders had gathered (first in Los Angeles in 1994 and second in Seattle in 1995), although this conference was the first to be known as the "Korean American Leadership Conference" instead of the "Korean-American Political Conference" of the past. The name of the conference had been changed at an organizing meeting in Los Angeles earlier in 1995 to better reflect the community and grass-roots base of the annual conference. Reflective of the change, many community leaders from a variety of occupations attended in addition to the complement of politicians. According to organizers, over five hundred people attended the three day event, and while it was difficult to determine just how many were from outside Hawaii, there appeared to be more than from the earlier conferences. For many visitors from the mainland, the site provided a welcome escape from the snow and the below-freezing temperatures. As had been advertised (and

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as indicative of the general mood of the event), the weather throughout the conference was simply spectacular.

Friday, January 3

The conference began this afternoon at the Sheraton Hotel and was organized into two discussion sessions. "A Century of Korean American Assimilation & Acculturation", which reflected on the immigration experience, was followed by panels on "What Kind of Empowerment", a discussion regarding the political advances that need to be made in the Korean American community.

The first session focused on the meaning of the term, "Korean American" and addressed issues relating to identity and assimilation. Speakers included Dr. Bong Hak Hyun, professor at the Thomas Jefferson Medical School; Hyepin Im, executive director of the Korean American Coalition in Los Angeles; and Howard Halm, a third generation attorney from Los Angeles. Also speaking on the same topic in a separate room were Philip Ahn Cuddy, independent filmmaker and grandson of the late Doh San Chang Ho; Won Ko, professor of literature at the University of LaVerne in Northridge, California; Barbara Kim Stanton, CEO of High Technology development corporation in Honolulu, and Jan Voelker, an active community leader (who, along with her brother, had been adopted by an American family as a child). Panelists shared their experiences about what it is like growing up in the US as a Korean American, and what obstacles they had to overcome. Some, particularly Philip Ahn Cuddy, spoke movingly about the need to embrace non-first generation Korean Americans despite their lack of language ability (for some) or their interracial heritage (for others). Philip recalled instances of being rejected and even scorned by other Korean Americans because of his western appearance and poor language ability.

The second set of discussions on "What Kind of Empowerment?" featured George J.S. Choe, a 1.5 generation engineer and active community leader from Maryland; Ilpyong Kim, professor of political science at the University of Connecticut; John Kim, a New York attorney active with the National Association of Korean Americans (NAKA); and Cheryl Lee, councilmember for the City of Shoreline (Washington state). An adjoining room featured Dr. Bong Hak Hyun; Robert Kwon, a CPA from New York; former Hawaii state representative Jackie Young; one of the co-chairs of the conference; and myself. These discussions centered around what Korean Americans must accomplish in order to become more politically active and why we have not achieved political status. Some of the panelists commented that our community leaders must prioritize issues according to our unique status as Korean Americans. Too frequently, one panelist commented, our leaders are limited by the perspective that we are Koreans *only*, and our

efforts to reach out to the mainstream community fall short of making real changes.

Dr. Hyun gave a historical overview of how far Korean Americans have come from the days of working as sugar plantation laborers and that we must give credit to those who have paved the way for the younger generations. The discussion also illuminated the need to maintain accurate records of Korean American history. During a disagreement between a member of the audience and a panelist over the number of Korean laborers and picture brides who came to Hawaii, it appeared that such records are not always available or accurate.

These discussions were followed that evening by a banquet dinner and a Q&A session at the historic Royal Hawaiian Hotel adjacent to the Sheraton. Approximately 3000 people attended the dinner, including the mayor of Honolulu and many distinguished guests. Participating in the discussion were State Senator Donna Ikeda of Hawaii, (who wore a lovely *hanbok*); Howard Kwon, board member of the Cerritos, California School Board; Oregon State Senator John Lim; US Representative Alexander Santiago of Hawaii; Dr. Paull Shin, former house representative of Washington state; and Donna Mercado Kim of the Honolulu City Council (a third-generation Korean American, whose heritage also included Portuguese and native Hawaiian). Many of the speakers gave touching, personal stories about being Korean American. Many—particularly those who grew up in Hawaii—stated that their heritage was not clearly identified until they were in their teens. It became apparent from their stories that the identity issues faced by the mainly first generation members were clearly different from those of the many third and fourth generation Hawaiian-born Korean Americans. First generation panelists normally spoke in terms of being Koreans struggling to survive in the US. Latter generation speakers, on the other hand, spoke from the perspective (many of which had learned later in their lives) that they were not entirely “American” and had another, different, heritage which they were now trying to incorporate into their lives.

Wrap-up—Saturday, January 4

Following the previous night's dinner and discussions, everyone rose early to attend a breakfast session with keynote speaker Benjamin Cayatano, governor of Hawaii. This was followed by panel discussions on “Unity within the Korean American community” and a wrap-up session entitled, “Where do we go from here?”.

During the "Unity" panel, a member of the audience asked about supporting Korean American candidates, and whether it was in the best interest of the Korean community to support a candidate regardless of his or her views. Angela Oh and other panelists replied that Korean Americans must

support political candidates based on their views and not on their ethnic background. In her point of view, issues were far more important than candidates' ethnic origins, even if they were fellow Korean Americans. She urged others to carefully screen and support candidates based on whether they truly promote the interests of the Korean American community. In the second room's panel on "Unity", Los Angeles journalist Brenda Paik Sunoo pointed out that during the LA riots, in order to get the news on the Korean community, the American media closely followed the English edition of the *Korea Times* because it was the only English language source available. She indicated that despite all other efforts at that time, information within LA's Korean community was not being passed on to the American community. She emphasized the importance of speaking with a united voice and praised the work of people like K.W. Lee, former editor of the *Korea Times*' English edition.

The conference officially closed that evening with a Hawaiian luau dinner at the home of Seung-Ji Lee, a local businessman and one of the speakers.

Follow-up—Sunday, January 5

Following the conference, many of the speakers and honorary committee members met Sunday morning at the Sheraton to discuss the future of the conference. The Hawaii Host Committee reported that they had incorporated the conference under the name, "National Conference of Korean American Leaders" (NCKAL), a Hawaii non-profit corporation. This incorporation is intended to ensure continuity for future conferences and also to facilitate fundraising efforts by allowing contributions to be tax-deductible. After discussion, everyone present agreed to the Hawaii Host Committee's structure with the understanding that it may be changed later, based on further examination. Many in attendance stated that in order to become more seriously involved in the national political dialogue (that is, in endorsing candidates and influencing legislation), having tax-exempt status may actually *hinder* the organization's efforts. Many agreed that there are already too many so-called "national organizations", none of which actively promote the Korean community's political agenda. Participants then agreed to form sub-committees to work on organization and mission statements of NCKAL. The Hawaii host Committee agreed to act to coordinate efforts and encouraged others to work on the issues assigned.

Observations

The Third Annual Korean American Leadership Conference was the largest and most comprehensive conference of its kind held to date. The

The Third Annual Korean American Leadership Conference

large number of participants and extensive involvement of corporate sponsors shows that in terms of size and operations, the conference was very successful. Many people, particularly Martha Kim, Kyongsu Im and Jackie Young of the host committee, worked countless hours and their work clearly showed. All of the events ran smoothly, and the receptions and dinners that followed left lasting impressions—especially on those of us from the mainland.

Hawaii's rich history of Korean Americans provided the perfect backdrop for the Conference's theme of unity, leadership and empowerment. The sheer presence of so many second, third and fourth generation Korean Americans changed the character of the discussion regarding what it means to be a Korean living in the United States. With so many serving in government and holding leadership positions in private industry, Hawaii's Korean Americans appear to have adjusted and become part of the mainstream community.¹ As the home of the oldest Korean American community in the United States, Hawaii's diversity is unparalleled. Furthermore, the Korean American community's political strength—as evidenced by the large turn-out of local political officials and their familiarity with the Korean community—illustrates that they may have achieved greater empowerment than other Korean American communities elsewhere. The most noticeable aspects of the Korean American community in Hawaii are its multi-racial heritage and high degree of intermarriage. Many of the speakers from Hawaii traced their heritage not only to Koreans, but also to Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Portuguese—other substantial ethnic groups in Hawaii. The conference's focus on identity was particularly fitting in light of this rich history, and all of us left the conference with an understanding that the word, "Korean American" embodies much more, and depends on aspects such as one's generation, age, and where one grew up, to name a few.

The conference's objective of unity within the Korean American community, however, requires much more effort. Largely absent from the conference were many of the first generation community leaders, and except for the elected officials, the current heads of the Federation of Korean Associations did not attend. During the Sunday round table discussion, Dr. Paull Shin stated that he will be attending a meeting of the federation's leaders in San Francisco and suggested that the conference participants and organizers invite and work with the federation and other primarily first generation organizations. Many people agreed and felt that NCKAL could not accomplish the task of reaching out to many of these first generation communities on its own.

To encourage voter registration and educate Korean Americans about issues and candidates, NCKAL needs the support of first generation community leaders. Since a number of "national" organizations already exist,

many participants expressed reservations about becoming a national organization without first having a clear agenda and specific tasks. As some suggested, NCKAL may be well suited to organize itself as a political arm of Korean organizations nationwide in order to lobby for Korean Americans. Some participants thought that the conference should focus more on grass-roots issues such as political organizing and empowerment; leadership workshops and other task-oriented programs should be offered in order for the conference to truly succeed. A few pointed out that while giving personal anecdotes offers interesting insights, we should move beyond such discussions and begin the more serious work on development issues such as voter registration and campaigning and fundraising education.

One participant privately told me that in some areas, Korean Americans were fast becoming known as “the ATMs [automatic teller machines] of political fundraising”, observing that Korean American communities have raised a great deal of money for candidates but have received little in return. NCKAL must work to educate its constituents that issues must come before ethnicity and that those who do not best serve the interests of the Korean American community should not expect financial support regardless of his or her ethnic background.

The Future of NCKAL

Unlike previous years, the Hawaii conference ended without a decision for the next conference. Representatives from the Korean American Coalition offered to organize the conference in Los Angeles, but no action was taken. Some expressed the view that since 1996 was an election year, we should situate the next site in the most politically appropriate location, perhaps in Washington, DC. At its conclusion, participants at the Sunday meeting agreed to further develop the structure of NCKAL first.

Wherever the next conference may be, participants agreed that future conferences should offer more programs to assist Korean communities in political organizing, fundraising and leadership training. Many believed that while the Hawaii conference offered many ideas, it lacked in offering the kind of assistance people needed for grass-roots organizing—the “ABC’s of political empowerment”. In order to be a truly national conference, we should all work to involve more community leaders, inviting participation from such groups as the Federation of Korean American Associations and NAKA; thereby obtaining a *true* cross-section of our national community.

Notes:

¹The general rule of thumb in many Korean American communities with a large percentage of first generation families is that someone in his or her middle ages speaks Korean. In Hawaii, this simply was not true.

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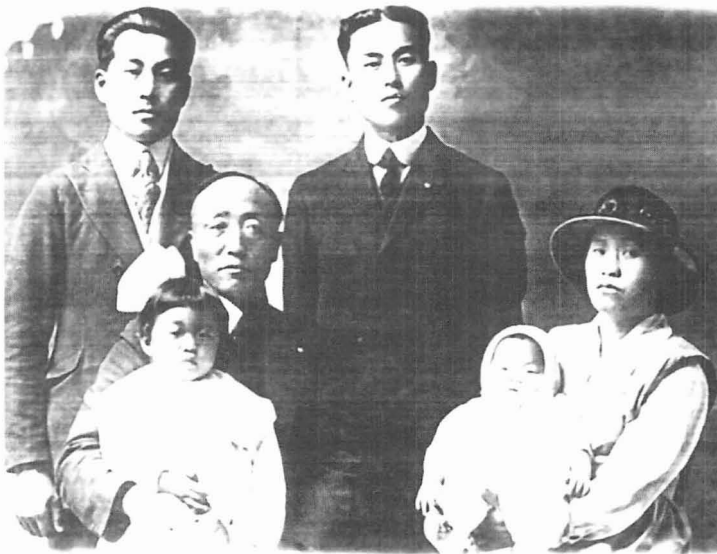
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