



TRANSACTIONS

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ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

KOREA BRANCH

North Korea—Yesterday and Today

by Adrian Buzo

Strong Men and Virtuous Women: Changing
Male and Female Roles in Korea

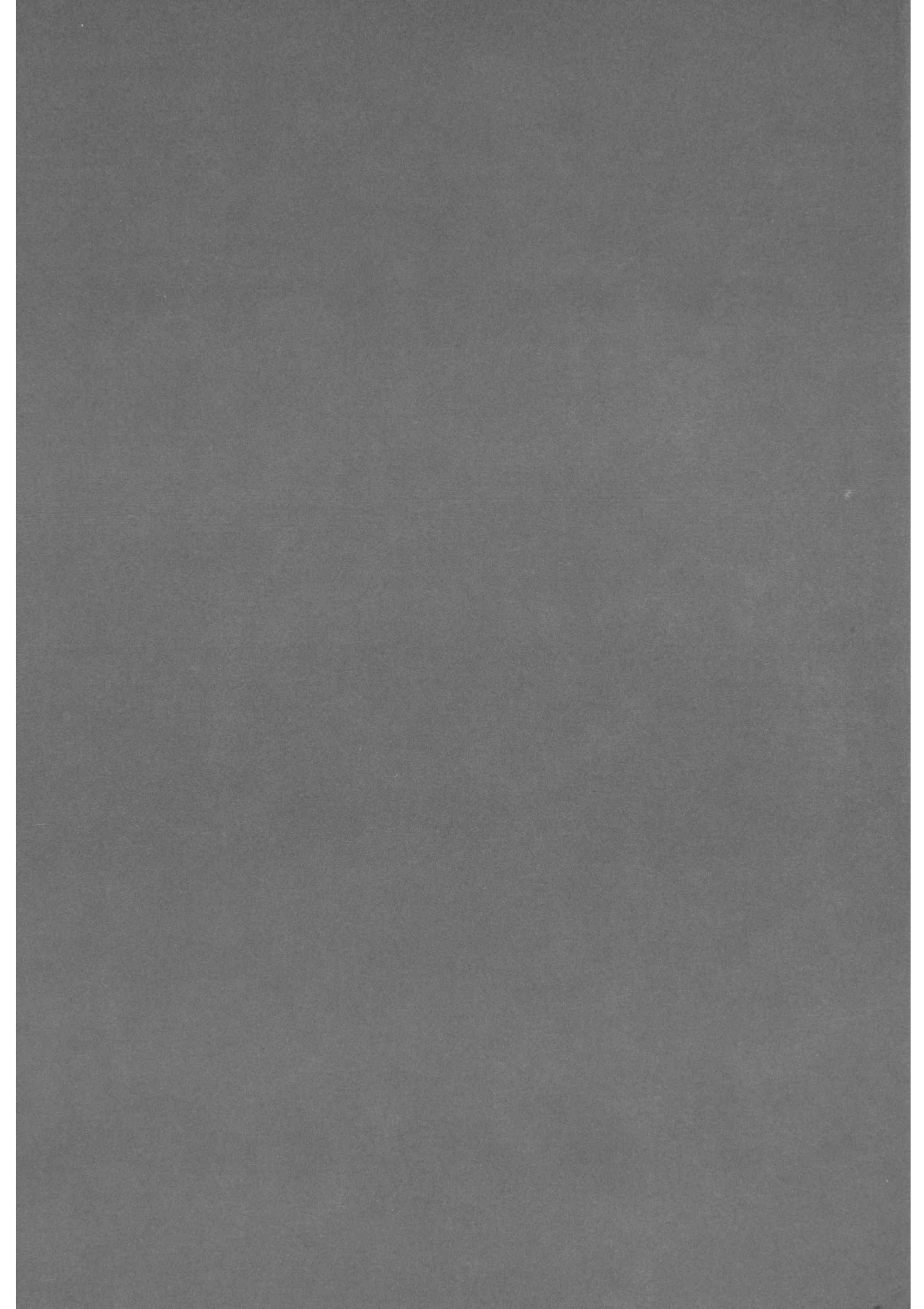
by Jack Balswick

Dr. Lee Tae-Young and
the Korean Family Law

by Sonia R. Strawn

Lao Tzu and Nietzsche: Wanderer
and Superman

by Park Yn-hui



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North Korea—Yesterday and Today

by Adrian Buzo

The immediate advantages of falsifying the past were obvious, but the ultimate motive was mysterious. He took up his pen again and wrote: I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY.

—George Orwell, 1984

From May to October 1975 I served at the Australian embassy at P'yongyang, north Korea. In fact, this period constituted the entire life-span of Australian diplomatic representation in north Korea because in October 1975 the north Korean embassy in Canberra withdrew without warning from Canberra and six days later our entire mission was expelled from P'yōngyang. This account is basically a first person description of what I saw and how I have since come to evaluate what I saw during those six months. It is based on a lecture I gave to an RAS meeting in Seoul, May 1981.¹

In December 1972 the Australian Labor Party gained office for the first time in 23 years and embarked on a mildly reformist foreign policy, especially with regard to the three socialist regimes in Asia—China, North Vietnam and north Korea. Diplomatic recognition was speedily negotiated with China and North Vietnam, and for the first time Australian diplomats were permitted to have ordinary social contact with their north Korean counterparts. A short period of sporadic contact was followed by a period of formal negotiations on diplomatic recognition, which was achieved in 1974. Soon afterwards both countries announced plans to establish resident embassies in each other's capital.

I had majored in Japanese Studies at Sydney University and upon graduating in 1972 joined our Foreign Service. At my own request I was posted to Seoul as a language student, and although I did not consciously see this step as leading towards a future posting in the north the possibility was always there. As things turned out, my timing was perfect and after two years of studying and working in Seoul I was appointed as Second Secretary to P'yōngyang. Thus it was that on the morning of 26 April 1975 I and a senior officer arrived by train in Peking on our way to open the Australian Embassy in P'yōngyang.

It was to be an interesting morning. On arrival we learned that Kim Il-sŏng was in Peking on a state visit and that he was to leave for P'yongyang by special train in two hours' time. We hurried to our hotel, showered, changed and returned to the station to watch the spectacle. By the time we got back to Peking Station the famous Chinese rent-a-crowd was assembling along with the entire diplomatic corps, Korean residents of Peking and cheer squads—the latter consisted of troupes of adolescent girls dressed in apricot or turquoise pyjamas running in place, waving pompoms and chanting slogans.

The din grew and grew until at last Kim made his entrance, followed by an entourage of senior Korean and Chinese ministers and officials. The Korean ministers seemed determined to appear as inconspicuous and obsequious as possible in Kim's presence, and I remember being rather surprised later to find that some of them, like Foreign Minister Hŏ Tam and Foreign Trade Minister (now Deputy Premier) Kye Ung-t'ae, could project a strong personality in our talks with them. Kim Il-sŏng himself appeared plump and sleek, a rather fixed toothy smile creasing his face, as he made his way up the platform in front of the cheer-squad and then down along the diplomatic line. He stepped firmly, his head lolling as if in modesty or shyness, the smile unchanging. As he shook hands with the assembled ambassadors, the famous little fluid-sac on the right side of his neck would bobble about and his interpreter would relay the stream of comments that passed from his lips.

When he reached our ambassador he was informed who the two extra bodies were, but no particular look of recognition crossed his face as he routinely shook our hands. A succession of damp, limp paws followed his as the rest of his entourage filed past silently.

Kim now reached the small group of Korean officials resident in Peking who were gathered around his special carriage, and scenes of earnest ecstasy ensued as he acknowledged their bawling cries of "Manse", accepted a bouquet from a small girl—at which the mother too went into what could only be described as a frenzy—and then entered the train. In due course it began to pull out, pursued down the platform at a headlong sprint by enthusiastic young Korean men waving more bouquets.

Two days later, having been joined by an administrative Second Secretary, we made our own exit from Peking and began the 22-hour train ride to P'yŏngyang. The images of the industrial northeast of China are still vivid to me with mile upon mile of drab industrial development stretching on either side of the major train stations. The small scale brick-walled factories and streets almost bereft of motor vehicles have a very

strong atmosphere for many travellers in China, possibly because they remind us of an almost Dickensian past.

As the train moved on into Manchuria we left this belt behind us and in the early light of the following day were greeted with rugged, beautiful scenery, before this too gave way to the flat coastal plains around the mouth of the Yalu River. A lengthy stop at Antung on the Chinese side was followed by a short haul across the Yalu to Shinuiju on the Korean side, and we were at last in north Korea. The contrast is palpable. Political slogans now vied for space on the station buildings, and the heavy presence of north Korean army men in their jodhpurs, jack-boots and belted tunics announced that we were in another country.

After another lengthy stop we set off for the final two-hour run to P'yōngyang along the western coastal plain. The scenery of Korea's west coast is generally uninspiring with low, non-descript hills ambling off in all directions. To this general lack of distinction the early spring vegetation, still brown and stunted, added little. Here and there villages were strung along the bases of the low hills, their structures set with almost barrack-like regularity. Above them the hillside was usually adorned with huge white Korean characters spelling out slogans of praise or exhortation —“Long live the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il-sōng,” “Let's win the speed battle,” “Forward at the speed of the 70-day battle,” “Thought, technology and culture all in accordance with the great Chuje idea,” and the like.

Finally we entered the suburbs of P'yongyang and pulled into P'yōngyang Station, to be greeted by officials from the Protocol Department of the north Korean Foreign Ministry who duly introduced us to our interpreter, saw us to our hotel and withdrew after issuing us an invitation to the coming May Day celebrations. The six-month period of official Australian residence in P'yōngyang had begun.

* * * * *

Physically, P'yōngyang has much to recommend it—most planned cities do. After almost total destruction in the Korean War a new city has been built with wide, grid-patterned streets, abundant greenery and a generally harmonious skyline. P'yōngyang originally grew up on a bend of the Taedong River and acquired a new town when the Japanese, as was their custom in Korea, sited the railway station well outside the old city walls. The city walls and most of the old city gates disappeared under the

Japanese and only the main east gate, the Taedong-mun, and the small west gate, the Podongmun, have survived.

The basic shape of pre-war P'yōngyang is still vaguely recognizable but the distinction between the Japanese quarter around the station and the old, somewhat higgledy-piggledy Korean town inside the old walls has been lost. The city is now a uniform entity. In the center of the city massive-looking public buildings confront wide, often tree-lined boulevards while four- and five-story residential buildings sometimes stretch for entire city blocks. Throughout the city there is a preponderance of medium-rise apartment buildings, and it is only on the outskirts as well as here and there in little clumps that one finds ordinary houses.

The city plan is essentially Soviet Provincial, but it avoids the monotony of its many models by virtue of its beautiful setting on the banks of the Taedong. The river winds down from the northwest, curves almost due south around the wooded hill to the north of the old town known as Moranbong (Peony Peak), and then girds the eastern and southern boundaries of the city proper before swinging westward to the sea. The rock cliffs of Moranbong, the mid-stream wooded islets, the broad tree-lined quays and the undulating countryside all add up to a pleasant vista. The first sight of P'yang made a strong impression on many of the early European visitors; and to the modern traveller, who has usually passed through a rash of drab, run-down Chinese cities, the location as well as the European cast to the city plan and architecture often make a favorable impression.

In time, however, it is the details that arrest one and they are less than impressive. The uneven roads, the cracks and leaks in almost every building, the wheezing, decrepit trolley buses and the recurring sight of broken-down vehicles on the streets are all signs of a fundamental solidarity with socialist planning and execution around the globe. One feels mildly puzzled at the absence of bicycles and other such humble vehicles, but the most disturbing aspect of P'yongyang is that there is almost no street life.

On a typical street in P'yōngyang one might find an occasional government shop, its wares stacked squarely on shelves as in a pantry—no street-stalls, hawkers or newspaper stands and very few pedestrians of any description. If there were groups of more than four or five they would usually be shuffling along in para-military formation on their way to or from some job of work. The children habitually marched to and from school in tiny bands, their arms swinging high as they rather breathlessly sang marching songs—all without an adult supervisor in sight. Very

rarely did one see two people stopped in conversation and never did one see any casual groupings. In the main department store the predominant sound is the shuffling of feet and the murmur of voices—normal or subdued, never exuberant or aggressive. I continually held out an ear for spontaneous laughter in public but was never rewarded.

Apart from public parks there seemed to be no focal points for social gatherings above the immediate neighborhood or work place level—no coffee houses, no small stores, no *tabangs*, no entry to hotels except on business, no ordinary restaurants, no market places, few cinemas and few large shops. As we were effectively screened off from the population I do not know in detail what the average Korean family does with whatever spare time it has, but as far as public expression of high spirits is concerned there is none.

The foreign community in P'yōngyang into which we melted consisted mainly of diplomats, with a few students and contract workers for foreign companies. There were about thirty resident missions in P'yōngyang in 1975, about half from the socialist bloc and the remainder mostly either Arab or Third World. Australia was the only "hard core" Western-allied country represented, with our nearest neighbors Sweden. Finland and Austria had small trade offices and France had an unofficial trade representative.

The diplomats lived mostly in a charmless little ghetto on the eastern outskirts of P'yōngyang where a large number of chanceries had been built. The Chinese, the Soviets and a few Eastern Europeans had downtown compounds which predated the establishment of the diplomatic compound proper. Relations between missions were usually pleasant, which was just as well because we had virtually only each other for company. The quality of the diplomats naturally varied and much of what they said reflected ignorance, bias, prejudice or just home government policy; but beneath it all the insights they could offer into north Korean realities in the course of long, frequently alcoholic exchanges were fascinating, and for this reason more than any other I was sorry to see our mission closed.

Contacts with Koreans were extremely limited. Approaches to people in the street to ask directions (as a gambit) were met with monosyllabic answers and a swift departure. Shops outside the diplomatic compound refused to serve us, and we could eat only by appointment in two or three prestige restaurants where no ordinary Korean could venture. We could wander around the city at will, but guards would materialize out of nowhere if we unwittingly ventured too close to what seem to have been a number of special compounds and apartment buildings for high officials.

Ordinary citizens felt free to wave us away, sometimes aggressively, if we dallied or seemed to be taking too close an interest in this object or that. Other foreigners reported their cameras being seized and film exposed for apparently innocuous photographs. I was once almost set upon for stopping to read a workers' notice board inside a building construction site. There is no question that north Koreans are instilled with suspicion and fear of outsiders, and their desire to avoid contact is both a desire to avoid retribution and a desire to meet the exacting demands of the Party for discipline and ideological purity.

This unfriendliness often verges on paranoia in official circles, and it made our dealings with the Government almost uniformly unpleasant. Our slender telephone book had only two numbers in it for contact with the Government (all the other numbers were for embassies and foreign—socialist bloc—news agencies, etc.). These were the Office of Diplomatic Services for administrative matters and the Protocol Bureau through which we had to pass in order to make an appointment with anyone at all in the Government. In practice, only appointments with our area section chief were regularly approved, and these meetings were usually brief, formal and with no personal content at all. They usually consisted of hard-line repetitions of north Korean policy delivered patiently and at length as though it were only a matter of time before we came round to seeing it their way. In our final days in P'yŏngyang they simply refused to see us at all.

There was no such thing as friendly chit-chat, let alone social invitations. At official receptions one grew used to the sad spectacle of *de facto* segregation between foreign diplomats and local officials. I used to make a rule of plunging into the midst of the local scrum, usually crowding around the buffet table, but could only elicit conversation from one or two who seemed to be cleared to talk with foreigners. On most occasions they would simply ignore greetings and turn away without any pretense at manners. Conversation at banquets was equally non-existent. My neighbors either did not respond at all or else balked at revealing even the most elementary information, such as the composition of their family or the countries to which they had been posted.

We were frequently reprimanded for this or that infraction of unstated rules of conduct for foreigners by the Ministry. An early famous incident occurred when a group of us took a ride on the P'yŏngyang Underground and a walk through a suburban housing area. Curious at a long queue of children outside an unmarked shop, I entered and observed a lady doling out milk ices behind a counter. We exchanged pleasantries

for a moment and she then came outside and very graciously gave us a tray full of them, whereupon we stood around eating them while one of our company snapped a couple of photos. The following day we were called into the Foreign Ministry and reprimanded for taking “unauthorized” photographs of “mud-stained” children that could be used as anti-north Korean propaganda abroad. I suppose, in retrospect, that we should have been happy to have elicited from them direct evidence of the careful doctoring north Korea’s image requires as a land of happy, healthy children; but at the time it was particularly annoying to have to endure this kind of lecturing.

As one goes up the bureaucratic ladder one finds sleeker, more relaxed officials in the chair opposite; the presentation is more relaxed and apparently more reasonable, but one searches in vain for any evidence to support this impression. As in Albania, the currents of international change eddy past the feet of the north Korean ruling class but it remains unmoved.

Apart from most ordinary areas of city, we could travel freely to and from the airport and also down the main road to Namp’o on the coast, 60 kilometers away. Three times a year diplomatic tours would be arranged—one each to Panmunjōm, Paektu-san and Kungang-san. If some special visitor came, then other tours to places such as Hamhūng could be arranged, but all other travel was effectively prohibited. We began our stay with a series of travel requests somewhat innocently, in response to the invitation of the Ministry to travel widely because “seeing is believing.” The reality quickly emerged that either roads were out, trains or hotels full in the case of major centers, or else that it was too dangerous or uncomfortable in other areas. These excuses reached the level of farce when we were refused permission to travel to a petrochemical works 50 kms from Seoul upon the invitation of a group of British technicians working there, on the grounds that the road was impassible—this when our Finnish colleagues traveled it almost every week.

For our Mission, then, life was a steady round of eating, drinking, sleeping and working with little relief. There was never any substance to our bilateral relations, and thus very little real work to be done once we had settled in and made all our courtesy calls. What little work there was took a great deal of time and effort to accomplish as we grappled with an unhelpful hotel staff and government bureaucracy. Requests for more working space—we had been working four to a room—in a near-empty hotel were countered with one of many bland untruths; usually that the hotel would soon be full and they would need every room. It took a letter

from our Foreign Minister to his north Korean counterpart to obtain it after all other means had failed. Probably the nearest thing to flexibility I experienced in my time there was hearing our interpreter, after listening to our seething driver report the theft of our Mercedes' windscreen wipers, suggest we pinch a pair from some other car.

Some of our best insights were gained on the trips we undertook to Panmunjŏm and Paektu-san. The Panmunjŏm trip was a three-day affair organized, as we later found out, so that it could be portrayed as a gesture of solidarity by diplomatic missions with the north Korean stand on reunification. The first day consisted of a slow drive in convoy to Kaesŏng, 200 kms away, plus a visit to a ginseng farm and a famous beauty spot, the Pakyŏn waterfall. From Kaesŏng one visits Panmunjŏm much as one would from Seoul, except that there is no general caution given on behavior in the Joint Security Area. Thus it was that on the morning of the second day of our trip the number plates were removed from our cars (presumably to frustrate possible US attempts to log the movements of visitors from the north side) and we drove across the flat plain that lies between Kaesŏng and Panmunjŏm. Our tour started with a stop at a rather strident photography exhibition mounted in the little schoolhouse where the armistice was actually signed. We then crossed the Bridge of No Return and entered the Panmun-gak, the north Korean reception building that straddles the hill overlooking the little conference huts in current use.

After a brief reception we all filed out onto the balcony to survey the scene to the south. Last out was the *PLO Representative*, who suddenly burst forth with a series of shouted slogans in Arabic which were translated into Korean in an equally raucous manner by his interpreter with the aid of prepared notes. As they had been the last to file out they now stood blocking the entrance and we all had no choice but to stand there for the duration. The reason for this was quite simple. Two days later we read in the *Pyŏngyang* newspapers that we foreign diplomats had visited Panmunjŏm and "unanimously" declared that the US should quit south Korea.

This sort of behavior came as no real surprise. The afternoon we then spent in Kaesŏng was rather more surprising, for our hosts managed to avoid showing us a single historical site in a city that was the capital during the Koryŏ Dynasty (918-1392) and which still has, I am told, a well-preserved traditional quarter. Our itinerary consisted of an hour standing under the huge statue of Kim Il-sŏng that dominates the hill on the city's northern fringe having explained to us the role "on the spot

guidance” from Kim played in post-war reconstruction. This was followed by a visit to the local Children’s Palace, one of a network of extra-curricular study and hobby centers across the country. Just as in Pyōngyang we were met at the door by young girls instructed to joyously grab our arms and tug us into the first room. One seems to hit a trip-wire upon entering the music room, for serried ranks of young accordionists burst into song, their heads bobbing in synchronized fashion as they sing through the almost clenched teeth their wide, stretched smiles dictate. (The trip-wire can be a hazardous mechanism. On one visit to the Pyōngyang Underground I came off the long escalator and onto the platform to be met by a storm of applause and the flash of cameras. It appeared that I had got onto the escalator about thirty seconds ahead of the leader of the Spanish Communist Party.) Just as in Pyōngyang too, we saw rooms full of children drawing, painting and even fiddling with tractors. In one room a mild-looking instructor explained that his sub-teen charges were practicing marksmanship. This consisted of using an air rifle on a penny arcade-style shooting gallery where the targets were labelled “Japanese militarist,” “US imperialist” and “Pak Chōng-hŭi.” He beamed as he explained and insisted we stay for a demonstration.

Finally, there was the usual concert, very professionally produced and starring a string of young prodigies, all honing their talents on songs of praise to Kim Il-sōng.

For us, this was the end of our tour. We had declined to visit the Museum of US War Atrocities which constituted the final day’s program, and after a protracted struggle were permitted to be driven the 200kms back to P’yōngyang out of convoy.

The trip to Paektu-san started with a chartered plane ride to Hyesan, a medium-sized town on the Manchurian border surrounded by the rolling, timbered hills of the far north. Paektu-san is about 60 kms north of Hyesan and is reached over an unpaved road. The road follows the course of the Yalu River at first, a course that is relatively narrow, swift and deep enough to accept river traffic at this stage. The banks are steep, forcing the road to climb steeply at points.

After passing a spectacular fork in the river, the road then follows the course of a small tributary of the Yalu to the little town of Poch’onbo where a huge museum has been built to commemorate a raid on the Japanese police station led by Kim and his guerillas in 1937. The road then leaves the river and passes through a succession of valleys before finally climbing up into the foothills of the Changbaek Range. This is vast, virgin country save for the occasional timber camp, and is quite

unlike the characteristic scenery of central and southern Korea. Whenever the road rose above the tall pine and birch trees we could see forested hills stretching away to the horizon, or to where the mountain ranges proper intervened.

Following an early morning departure from Hyesan we reached a small hotel built on a secluded, heavily forested lake shore within easy reach of Paektu-san. This was to be our headquarters for day-trips to Paektu-san itself and to various monuments to the activities of Kim and his band during the 1930s.

We were lucky with the weather the following day. Although it was mid-July it was mild and sunny, a perfect day for our visit. A short ride up through the timberline brought us to the base of Paektu-san, which from the outside is only one of a chain of ridges, somewhat mangy-looking, with their volcanic past very evident. Our dirt track now tackled the final slopes of the mountain and finally delivered us to the summit, the rim of the vast crater-lake known as Ch'ŏnji.

Nothing could have prepared us for the magnificent view from the rim. The sight is known to most people via ancient black and white photographs, but its colors are overwhelming. Grey and brown rocks stretch out along the rim in sharp, volcanic formations while on the southern side deeper greens marked the marshy fringes of the lake at the base of long gravel screes. The lake itself is of the deepest, pristine blue, extraordinarily deep in the center and utterly pure in its contents of melted snow and rain water. A disused wooden staircase and half-dismantled ladder led down from the southern side and it was clear that no one goes down to the lakeside any more. The matter of national boundaries has long been in dispute in this area, and as recently as 1970 armed clashes were reported between Korean and Chinese soldiers. To the east the boundary appears fixed at the gorge where the lake's overflow drops down to become the source of the Tumen River. I was curious about the western side boundary and set off along the rim to see how far one could go, but after negotiating a steep promontory I came to a sudden halt before a deep, eroded gully. There was no way around it without a long detour back down the outer slope, and so no prospect of proceeding to a point where some Chinese presence might be detected. As I stood surveying this, one of our solicitous hosts caught up with me; but my inquiries produced only a broad sweeping gesture and the predictable answer that it was "all our country's territory."

It was now time to leave, which we chose to do on foot, treading the thick springy carpet of lichen on the upper slopes past brilliant little

alpine plants and flowers and tiny pools of melted snow. In front of us a sweeping panorama of mountains and forests stretched away to the south from our 2,700-meter vantage point. Eventually we caught up with our caravan and returned to the hotel.

A trip to Paektu-san would naturally be incomplete without a tour of the several guerrilla camp sites once occupied by Kim Il-sŏng's band in the region. These tiny camps are now fitted out as holy shrines and receive streams of visitors. They consist of glass-encased camp-fire remains and re-erected tents; the one whose occupancy was ascribed to Kim was fitted out with a coffin-sized glass case around the spot where he slept. Each site has a monument stone, the first few lines devoted to Kim's full laudatory title—"ever-victorious, iron-willed commander, outstanding military strategist and Great Leader of the Korean people KIM IL-SŎNG..." with the last couple adding the time and place of some unverifiable achievement. Unlike the sombre halls of the extraordinary Museum of the Revolution in P'yŏngyang, however, these sites do have the advantage of affording a pleasant stroll through the thick birch woods of old Hamgyŏng Province. In this way, then, Kim identifies himself with the Paektu-san region, a region of almost mystical attachment for many Koreans.

This was the extent of our travels in north Korea. To my intense regret I was unable to visit the Kūmgang-san that autumn, and by November we were gone. To believe that under these circumstances I gained a picture of life in north Korea that could be said to be both detailed and true would be simple self-deception. I did not cross the threshold of a Korean house, eat in a genuinely public place, talk to a single person under 30 or engage in any purely social activity in Korean company. I had perhaps half a dozen personal conversations during the six months we were there.

But the essential outlines are all too clear. It is easy to point to isolated virtues in north Korean society, and journalistic accounts are often dotted with these, the result of the standard, utterly sanitized itinerary the reporters' visits follow. I differ sharply with the tenor of many of these reports because I stayed much longer and saw a good deal more. Still more important, I do not know of anyone who has had a reasonably broad experience of life in south Korea who can still find words of praise, however qualified, for north Korea without a heavy commitment to the north's basic political values.² This is an important consideration as we turn to the people and their culture.

As in all communist countries, the Party is more than just the gateway to a comfortable life, it is the arbiter of life and death itself. Amongst these remorseless systems, north Korea is perhaps the most remorseless of all. Its base inequalities are rigorously enforced by an extraordinary degree of penetration into the life of the individual and by a total monopolization of economic activity. Consumer goods are wretchedly few and luxuries unobtainable without Party sanction. I remember seeing groups of Koreans returning home buzzing excitedly around the tiny sales counter at Antung Station to buy little Chinese Knick-Knacks like fountain pens and pearl-handled nail clippers. A ground hostess at Khabarovsk airport in Siberia remarked to me in passing on the huge bundles of clothing Koreans would take with them on their way home. Locally-engaged staff at foreign embassies would ask diplomats to bring them a wide variety of things from abroad, from cigarette lighters to wrist-watches. Perhaps the most surprising request I had was from an interpreter who asked me to get him a couple of English-Korean dictionaries in Japan. I brought back half a dozen and was besieged by other interpreters wanting to buy them.

On the other side of the fence from the gaunt, ill-tailored people in the street were the sleek, dapper high cadres. For them, as the saying goes, communism has arrived. They could be seen disappearing into their well-guarded apartment blocks or casually buying electrical goods at the diplomatic store. An intriguing hint of the extent of this privilege once came my way when I saw a Jaguar sports car with no licence plates wrapped around a light pole on one of the Taedong River bridges. The elite have the privilege of travelling abroad, and they guard it jealously. I once suggested to an interpreter that as an English speaker he would be sent abroad on a mission one day, but he replied despondently that only sons and daughters of high cadres do that. The classic expression for this side of socialism then dropped from his lips as he snorted, "They used to be workers!"

It gives me no pleasure to dwell on images of a downtrodden, regimented populace and a bloated ruling class. Since leaving north Korea I have read similar accounts relating to other societies that share north Korea's political culture, and this situation is familiar to anyone who has lived in the North for even a short period. Despite this, many ordinary people preserve an air of earthy cheerfulness which I like to think is typically Korean. Our locally-engaged staff—interpreter, driver, cleaning lady—were thoroughly nice people and my office relations with them were much as they had been with their counterparts while I was in Seoul. Day-

to-day contact was obviously important because it enabled a degree of trust to be set up between us. I had other moments of pleasure—a spontaneous and effusive greeting (in Russian) from a picnicking family, a pleasant conversation with a middle-aged caretaker at a picnic resort area allotted us on the way to Namp'o. The latter had been an industrial worker now pensioned off to lighter duties because of a lung disease, and without knowing any of the background to his case the image of a benevolent government rewarding a loyal worker was pleasant to contemplate.

However moments of pleasure and relief such as these were few and far between and in my case, when I thought back on them, they all took place when the person concerned believed he was alone and unobserved. Not just for me but for the entire foreign community the cumulative effect of this social atmosphere was numbing to the extent that a weekend spent enjoying whatever pleasures Peking during the Mao era could provide was a positive relief.

Thus I cannot really address myself to the questions "How do they really live/ Are they happy?" Beneath this desert of a surface a good deal of variety and interest must obviously exist, because regimes of this ilk direct their attentions foremost to repressing public manifestations of social and cultural heterodoxy, and as long as the individual maintains a facade of orthodoxy he may preserve his private opinions. Thus, one or two north Koreans would ask by way of genuine inquiry, "Are there really a lot of beggars in Seoul?" instead of confidently asserting that this was the case.

Then again, it is important, lest we lapse into the realms of sheer propaganda, to bear in mind that the overwhelming majority of people in any given country see their lot as fairly normal. They are not seeking to oppose or even support their government, but would rather forget about it altogether and get on with day-to-day living. In understanding and giving due weight to this phenomenon I never fail to recall the following passage from Orwell's 1984. It deserves to be quoted at length.

"In the ramifications of Party doctrine (Julia) had not the faintest interest. Whenever he began to talk of the principles of Ingsoc, double-think, the mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality, and to use Newspeak words, she became bored and confused and said that she never paid any attention to that kind of thing. One knew that it was all rubbish, so why let oneself be worried by it? She knew when to cheer and when to boo, and that was all one needed. Talking to her, he realized how easy it was to present an appearance of orthodoxy while having no grasp

whatever of what orthodoxy meant. In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird."

Thus, although we met our fair share of politically-inspired nastiness, especially during the course of our expulsion, it should not for a moment be thought that the north Koreans are hate-filled paranoiacs or anything like it. They could be normal and courteous in ordinary situations, even when saying or doing the most unusual things. Our cleaning lady in the chancery was both polite and natural in manner one morning as she observed copies of local newspapers spread on the floor of my office, some with Kim Il-sōng's face staring upwards. She then gently told me that perhaps I didn't know this amounted to disrespect and that I should always keep them off the floor.

Judged by any rational standards, north Korea is still a poor country and probably always will be while such a huge slice of its resources is devoted to the military. The people probably have a sufficient supply of shoddily produced staples, but any real change to their lot is dependent upon a moderation of Kim's basic militarism, a prospect hard to foresee at present.

Not only must people contend with material poverty but they are also subjected to strong and sustained psychological pressure. There is unrelenting propaganda through hectoring radio speeches and ubiquitous public loudspeakers, endless "lecture meetings," "study sessions" and rallies. The intensity of it all simply defies the imagination.

The assault on childhood is particularly severe, with children inculcated with basic military values at as early an age as possible. At the showpiece pre-school we visited in P'yōngyang the children were coloring in scenes from the legendary life of Kim Il-sōng, watching a little miniature recreation of the raid on Poch'onbo (complete with colored lights to mark Kim's lines of approach and withdrawal and flint-sparks for gunfire), while in the playground there were fighter aircraft for swings, artillery positions for merry-go-rounds and pedal tanks for pedal cars.

When we visited a primary school on opening day the children were having their first lesson—memorizing the names, birthdates and birth-

places of all of Kim's relatives back to his grandfather. Already at this stage there was direct instruction on the thought of Kim, held in a special study room where a white bust of him stood at the center-front of the classroom with a lectern off to one side for the teacher. School activities all center around the theme of loyalty to the Great Leader, whether in song, dance or extra-curricular activity at the Children's Palace Weekends are taken up in "voluntary" work and elsewhere I have related how on the road to Namp'o on weekends little parties of teenage children could be seen whitewashing trees and rearranging pebble verges. One weekend I observed them with rags and plastic bowls scrubbing the actual surface of the road.

If they have the antithesis of a natural childhood then there is not much improvement as they get older. No foreign news of any significance reaches the ordinary people, and their intellectual fare consists almost entirely of the "thought" of Kim Il-sŏng which is unique in that it brooks no debate but relies on "unconditional loyalty" for validity. It is the natural counterpart of Kim's military posturing that he should wish also to be seen as a great thinker when even the kindest Marxist critics pronounce its contents indigestible.

The public is dangerously unhinged from reality when it comes to south Korea. It is more than simply portraying the south today as it was in the 1950s. Throughout the summer of 1975 the media were full of lurid reports of the progress of a huge bacteriological warfare experiment being conducted on the civilian population of the south, with deaths recorded in the thousands. It took me a long while before I understood the genesis of this particular propaganda line—the several deaths recorded in the south from haemorrhagic fever every summer.

As modern totalitarian propagandists have long understood, it is necessary in telling a lie to tell one so whopping that your audience either accepts it or has nowhere else to go. Thus it is that the north Korean government not only engages in propaganda of the above type, but has coupled it with a most amazing feat—the almost complete destruction of traditional Korean culture. Documenting this subject is an exceedingly difficult task, mainly because of the ineffability of the term "culture" itself. During my time in P'yŏngyang I made only scattered observations and can do little more than suggest the possible dimensions of this phenomenon.

At the social level, there appear to be no traditional festival days—*Tano* and *Ch'usŏk* passed unobserved while we were there. All holidays are post-1945 creations. No Confucian rites of passage appear to have

survived, and I saw evidence in the form of overgrown grave sites that ancestral rituals are no longer carried out.

Traditional songs, even basic ones such as “Arirang” and “Toraji” are no longer heard, and judging from the TV and concerts that I saw, Korean traditional music is now excluded from the sphere of officially-approved culture. I heard no *kayagums*, no *ch’anggos*, heard no tunes based on Korean melodic scales or rhythms. “Music programs” are made up entirely of either martial music or syrupy paens of praise to Kim, the Revolution or (occasionally) the seasons, all done in the form of the modern Korean art song (*kagok*) which is almost entirely European in its inspiration.

Also consigned to the underground is almost the whole world of the humanities—literature, history, anthropology, etc. As far as I am aware north Korean scholarship has hardly contributed at all to the field of Korean Studies since the 1960s with its scholars, if they are still able to work on issues in Korean history, unable to present them to international forums. The entire body of traditional literature is now denied a public voice and pre-1945 literary forms such as the *sijo* are no longer in evidence.

As far as public manifestations of pre-1945 culture are concerned there are almost none. P’yŏngyang lies in a plain surrounded by rich, ancient tomb sites, but they are never mentioned publically, and access to them by foreigners is unheard of. The gigantic Museum of the Revolution spreads through thirty-plus halls mainly of Kim Il-song memorabilia, whereas the whole of the pre-1945 period is covered in a small building with three exhibition halls full of representative pieces—very similar to minor university museums in Seoul. There are no antique stores, no evidence of modern craftsmanship in traditional areas such as pottery—the examples of the latter I saw were of low quality—and no books of reproductions of traditional art works on sale anywhere.

Traditional belief systems have also been suppressed—perhaps the most eloquent spokesman on this score is Kim himself. The following extract is from a record of his conversation with the then Governor of Tokyo, Minobe Ryukichi, in October 1971.

Kim: We did not destroy the prayer¹ houses of religious persons.

They were all destroyed by American bombing.

Religious persons at first prayed for America. However, when their churches were bombed they came to be against America.

For this reason they gave up praying to their “God” or for

America. For whom did they pray then? They prayed for the development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea . . . In this way there are no longer any religious persons in our country. There are some believers still left among the old people. Democratic people who visit our country from Italy and France say they wish to see churches, but there are no churches in our country.

Minobe: Are there no Confucian or Buddhist temples?

Kim: There are temples.

Minobe: However, one does not see many of them.

Kim: There are no Confucian temples in the city of Pyongyang. However there are some if you go to remote farm villages. In farm villages there are some old houses which are the same as in the past. Today, however, the people do not believe in Confucianism. People who believed in Confucianism in the past are now all old people. The younger people have all received modern education. Therefore, they are not interested in Confucianism.

* * * * *

How does one account for this type of regime and how did it come about? No clear answers are possible to such questions, but through an understanding of certain qualities of Korean society, communist political culture and Kim's own background and character, north Korea may become a less incomprehensible country.

The history of Korean communism dates back essentially to the Russian Revolution of 1917. As the ensuing civil war spread eastward to Siberia it engulfed the tens of thousands of Koreans who had been entering and settling in Siberia since the 1880s. The earliest Korean communists were those among this community who rallied to the Red cause both for its own sake and because the Reds offered material support to them for their prime objective, the liberation of Korea from the Japanese.

Attempts to found a Communist Party on Korean soil were slow to materialize and even slower to be put into effect, given the enormous geographical distances involved in organization work and the deep factionalism that had already overtaken the young movement. Finally in 1925 a tiny Party was officially inaugurated in Seoul, where a toehold had been found among urban intellectuals in an otherwise profoundly rural

and conservative country. Success was shortlived, however, as a combination of internal disunity and Japanese police diligence saw most of its leaders quickly rounded up. Three further attempts between 1925 and 1928 failed for similar reasons, leading to the abandonment of attempts to establish a Party on Korean soil. Between 1928 and 1945 there was no Communist Party in Korea and communist activities were pursued by a handful of the faithful, drawn from the same urban intellectual class as had attempted to found the first Party in 1925. They resumed organized activities in the south after the war but soon fled north and were extinguished as an identifiable group in one of Kim's many purges during the mid-1950s.

In tracing the antecedents of present-day north Korean communists, then, we have to look abroad once more, and especially to Manchuria. Southern Manchuria had long been a focus for armed Korean resistance to the Japanese, and the Korean population of about 600,000 provided a solid base of support. The rugged terrain, the weather, and the lack of any major centers of population all made Japanese military penetration difficult; and throughout the 1920s and for much of the 1930s small-scale guerrilla bands were active—some as nationalists, some as communists. Their rate of attrition was high, and as Japanese military operations in the area became more concerted as the 1930s wore on they ceased operations almost completely.

The leader of one of these bands in the late 1930s was Kim Il-sōng. It is frequently said that there were several people by that name and that the current leader of north Korea is an "impostor." However, no evidence has ever been found to support this theory, which may have its origin in the idea that the name "Il-sōng"—"Single Victory"—was a common *nom-de-guerre*. Kim was born Kim Song-ju near P'yongyang in 1912. His father was a schoolteacher by profession, with strong nationalist convictions which appear to have contributed to the early death of both himself and his wife. Kim first became active in Manchurian communist guerrilla circles around 1930-31 and managed to remain active right through the 1930s. The brief hit-and-run attack on the Japanese police post at Poch'onbo remains his most notable operation. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, Kim survived. He was never caught by the Japanese, nor did he become a victim of the fierce intra-Party battles of the period. In 1941 sustained Japanese military pressure and Soviet counsel that Japan would shortly be involved in an unwinnable war with the US, during which it was better to sit out and prepare oneself for the post-war future, caused Kim to cross over into Siberia. He spent the

period 1941-45 in a military camp near Khabarovsk.

Kim's pre-1945 activities were a tiny part of one theatre of military struggle which was itself a tiny part of the overall political struggle against the Japanese colonial government. It would not be fair to belittle his credentials as a nationalist and as fighter, both of which were as firm as any during the 1930s. Nevertheless, in view of the inflated claims now made about his pre-1945 activities, it is important to recall that he was simply the youthful leader of a band of perhaps several dozen equally youthful men.

The wider background to Kim's activities is the Japanese colonial period in Korea (1910-1945). It was a period of immense social and cultural trauma for Korea as it became subject to its age-old enemy and an unwilling economic appendage to the Japanese empire. Although one may point to certain benefits of modernization, especially in economic infrastructure, that Korea gained during this period, it is important to view such benefits in the ultimate context of Japanese colonial rule—economic expropriation and exploitation, exclusion from higher education and all but the lowest levels of administration, pervasive internal security, strict censorship, and massive interference in almost every area of traditional Korean life. It was not simply that Japan was culturally insensitive and unwilling to accept significant diversity within her domains. It was also that during the 1930s its policies in Korea were determined by military extremist forces in Japan proper, forces which saw Korea as a vital staging area for expansion into northern China.

Against this overwhelming military superiority the Koreans could do little. Not only had they come into contact with Western technology later than Japan, but like China they had been unable to harness the political energy to deal with the new realities this technology brought. At least part of the reason for this lies in the intensely rural characteristics of Korea as a nation and as a people, for lacking regional urban centers of any size, and never having had a truly feudal system of government the people did not readily accustom themselves to units of organization beyond the personal and family circle. Throughout the modern era the Koreans have shown themselves peculiarly susceptible to political control by an economy of means, and at least part of the explanation seems to lie in the particularist, small-group pattern of their human and social relationships. In the event, Japan ruled Korea with only a modicum of force available for display against a bitterly resentful but quiescent population.

The defeat of the Japanese and the liberation of Korea in 1945, albeit a liberation into the hands of the US and Soviet military authorities,

unleashed a generation of pent-up political frustrations. In a period of extraordinary turbulence in the south, the body-politic became bitterly fragmented as a multitude of parties struggled against each other and among themselves. It was a striking demonstration of inter-personal relationships contending on a broad political stage, with only an unprepared, somewhat confused US military authority available to referee.

It is with the north during this period that we are properly concerned, and although the Soviet authorities must have had to contend with a succession of unforeseen, rapidly developing situations they displayed little confusion. It was clear from the outset that Kim was their chosen instrument of rule in what was to be a classic Soviet satellite.

As the Soviets moved to establish their administration, they had to contend with two major problems. The first was that when the remnants of the old guard Korean communists emerged they adopted Seoul as the logical base of operations, for this was the only place in the country where some sort of urban proletariat could be said to exist. Few came north, thus depriving the Soviets of important local allies. A more important obstacle lay in the fact that P'yongyang had been a particularly strong bastion of indigenous Christianity and, given the leading role played by Christians in the anti-Japanese struggle, moral as well as actual political leadership lay strongly in their hands.

Such obstacles did not long delay the Soviets, however, and with a mixture of coercion and assassination both unreliable communists and non-communists were speedily neutralized. Kim Il-sōng was rapidly built up as the natural heir to the political leadership of Korea and two months after the Japanese surrender Kim, by now 33, appeared for the first time in P'yongyang, at a public rally in October 1945. Accounts of Kim's appearance and activities during this period give little evidence of a strong or attractive personality, and his effusive praise of the Soviet system and the Soviet Army—the latter a deeply unpopular army of occupation—can have done little to bolster his nationalist credentials. In the end all this mattered little, however, and within six months he stood out as the leading Korean exercising political authority in Soviet-occupied Korea.

Why did the Soviets pick Kim as their chosen instrument in north Korea? Among the factors that must have recommended him were the fact that he had no connection with the older domestic Korean communist movement which had so exasperated the Soviets by its ineffectiveness in the 1920s. Also, as we have previously noted, there was a rather high rate of attrition amongst possible candidates from the Manchurian guerrilla campaigns—the chief alternate source of possible Korean communist

leadership. Then the Soviets had had Kim with them for four years and had obviously come to regard him as a known quantity. These most searching judges of political reliability give no sign of ever having found significant fault with a man who was totally reliant on their favor from 1941 until the mid-50s. We may say with hindsight that they underestimated his ruthlessness and single-mindedness, but they were not deceived in their abiding expectation that he would run things in a thoroughgoing Stalinist manner. Almost thirty years after his chief model's death he is still doing just that.

Along with the Soviet Army came hundreds of trained Soviet-Korean cadres. These men of dual citizenship held high, often sensitive portfolios in the north Korean Government until the late 1950s, and as in other Soviet-occupied countries at this time, were a classic feature of what we call Soviet satellite states. With close guidance from the Soviet Union north Korea began to develop both a socialist economy and a large army. By 1950 Kim believed he could win a stand-up fight with the disorganized south and, according to Khrushchev's memoir—Stalin, calculating that the US would not intervene effectively to prevent a short, victorious war, approved Kim's plans.

As it turned out, the US did intervene determinedly and the war became a horrible disaster for all concerned. For Kim, whose whole adult life had been spent close to the military, it must have been particularly galling to have suffered such a defeat. He personally survived as leader, because Soviet backing remained firm, because of the non-*pareil* advantages of incumbency in a Stalinist system, and probably because he kept a tight rein on the north Korean military. The period 1951 to 1957, was however, was a period of great challenge to him mounted by different interests within the Party.

We know little about the nature of these challenges apart from the ritual denunciations of major Party figures that began appearing in the darkest days of the war and which did not stop until the end of the decade. What is very striking, however, is that during this period every current of thought or interpretation of Marxist-Leninism that ran counter to the will of Kim was expunged from the Party. One by one the many and varied streams of Korean communism that had rallied to the north after 1945 now fell by the wayside—veterans of the 1945-50 period from Seoul and other southern communists who had come north in 1950; ex-comrades in arms of the Chinese Communists, many of whom had also fought in Manchuria but had essentially fought for the Chinese Revolution both there and in Yenan; and Soviet-Koreans and others whose past

links had been predominantly with the Soviet Union. Finally, just as loyal Stalinists were often victimized by Stalin, so too did Kim's old guerrilla comrades and those with strong post-1945 connections suffer attrition as the Party attained an ideological purity and rigidity unmatched elsewhere, save perhaps in Albania. Kim's was a triumph of willpower and of manipulative skills, but the tragedy of it is that he has never found anything to place in the many seats he has emptied except self-glorification and a determination to reduce the whole country to the level of his own intellect.

Since the last of the great purges of the 1950s political leadership in north Korea has been exercised totally by Kim, his family, members of his old Manchurian guerrilla circle with records of attachment going back to pre-1945 days, and by products of the exacting system he has created. Nothing has been allowed even to pose a potential threat to the hold Kim and his group have on power. Politics and policies are seen entirely within their narrow range of experience as guerrilla fighters and Party functionaries. Despite attempts to apply the model of "Red vs. Expert" to north Korea, no one has yet succeeded in identifying "expert" elements in the inner circle. People cited by foreign observers as Foreign Affairs and Industrial "specialists" are usually those who have spent long periods of time in high office exerting monolithic Party control over their portfolios. Similarly, attempts to define an armed forces faction with the Party find great difficulty in identifying distinct armed forces concerns in a highly militarized society. The present image remains one of hard-line monolithism with dissenters, however marginal, keeping their thoughts to themselves.

There are as yet no economic demands for change, because the economic system remains subordinate to political directives. In the 1960s the north Korean economy achieved a solid, if uneven, record of growth based on almost non-existent consumerism, coerced voluntarism and the considerable natural wealth of the country. Parallel to policies of economic reconstruction, a strong rearmament program was undertaken when in 1962 a basic policy to place equal emphasis on economic reconstruction and military preparation was adopted.

The narrow scope for economic initiative provided by the Party did not appear as a major drawback while a very basic level of reconstruction was the economic goal. As north Korea began to outrun the parameters of Party policies, however, strains appeared, and in the 1970s north Korea incurred sizeable foreign debts when it embarked on an extensive program of capital equipment purchases abroad without any correspond-

ing liberalization of the internal economic structure. The economic result was much as it has been in Poland, though on a smaller scale, but north Korea has been able to weather this period. Once the consequences became clear its purchases very quickly fell off and its internal economic structure, functioning largely independent of external influences, survived without discernible change. North Korea still retains a sizeable foreign debt, and the option of an economic leap forward without political compromises has been dropped.

In the foreign sphere, north Korea gradually ceased to be a Soviet satellite in the late 1950s and the Soviet-Koreans chose either to retain north Korean or Soviet citizenship. Many returned to the Soviet Union and almost all who remained departed from office. Since this time Kim appears to have maintained a high degree of independence for such a small state surrounded by two such huge and powerful countries.

Kim's foreign policy is often represented as playing China and the Soviet Union off against each other, but the intimations of pragmatism and maneuverability contained in this model tend to distract attention from his basic domestic imperatives. As an unreconstructed Stalinist Kim was severely put out by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and the steady waning of Soviet influence really dates from that point. Kim found he had a lot more in common with the hard-line policies of Mao Tse-tung, and despite occasional ruffles he has remained far closer to basic Chinese positions—both domestic and foreign—ever since.

To an extent, the competing influences of the Soviet Union and China cancel each other out. Neither can hope for decisive influence, and as long as north Korea does not needlessly antagonize one or the other it can expect to exercise a good deal of autonomy in its foreign dealings. Although it has used this autonomy to gain acceptance into the non-aligned movement, a move in which enthusiastic backing from Yugoslavia played an important role, it would be unwise to assume that this broadening of contact has had any effect on basic state policy. North Korea's foreign policy still issues from Kim's domestic imperatives, which are to encourage socialist orthodoxy, exert whatever pressure it can on the US and to seek out diplomatic support for its stance on reunification. In the 1970s this led it to especially strong expressions of support for Pol Pot's regime in Kampuchea, as well as for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In January 1982 it was expressing support for the military rulers of Poland and condemning "the reactionaries who tried to topple the Polish people's regime."

The demoralizing effects of Japanese colonial rule, the polarizing effects of the Soviet and US occupation period and of the Korean War where millions of people departed who might otherwise have stayed and been a force to be reckoned with, the essential character of Korean society where few institutions not based on the personal or the family tie have found fertile soil, the machinations of the Soviet Union and the sheer determination and ruthlessness of Kim have all contributed to the extremes we see in north Korea today. In the wake of the Korean War, Kim succeeded in purging the Party of all currents of thought counter to the exercise of his own will, and since the late 1950s has possessed the degree of control to implement and sustain what has amounted to a movement as virulent as the Chinese Cultural Revolution, until it now stands unchallenged from within as the accepted reality of north Korean life.

The future holds too many unknowns to be discussed with any great confidence. Clearly, the next significant internal event will be the passing of Kim, for despite his apparently successful attempt to have his son accepted as his successor, and despite the fact that his clique may be expected to struggle hard to ensure their own self-perpetuation as the ruling class of north Korea, Kim's personal authority has been a key element in sustaining the north Korean system and this is ground for belief that a measure of liberalization must come.

However, one should not automatically assume that qualitative change will take place. Again, we need to refer to the destruction of traditional patterns of life and the purging from the Party of all identifiable traces of liberalism and revisionism over thirty years ago. Where will they go? How will they resolve problems of legitimacy? The experience of the Soviet Union suggests that the legacy of a long dictatorship is extraordinarily difficult to escape, and in north Korea we have seen a more extreme form of Stalinism than Stalin himself ever presided over, enforced over a much smaller, monocultural population.

Nor can we be certain that pressure for change from outside the Party will be significant. Factors such as consumer demand and regional diversity are all but unknown, and decisive foreign influence is unlikely. We are left with many built-in retardants to change in the current anachronistic reality of a fantastic will to conquer and a strong resolve to defend, set in a country where outsiders have repeatedly involved themselves, all the while knowing little of the country and people whose interests they profess to uphold.

NOTES

1. At that time I prefaced my talk with a couple of points of explanation that are still relevant here. The first was that although I am closely involved with the academic field of Korean studies my field of expertise is far removed from modern Korean politics. I am not proposing to write in an academic vein on north Korea but rather am passing on an account of my practical experience in the north, along with the results of my attempts to put those experiences into some sort of perspective.

The second point is that I am writing entirely as a private individual. Since leaving the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in 1976 I have had no official contacts with any government. As a matter of record, I have never been approached by the Republic of Korea authorities on the matter of my opinions or experiences in the north.

2. It almost, but not quite, goes without saying that when I talk of life in south Korea I am referring not to a political regime but to a social culture which has remained substantially intact from pre-1945 times.

Strong Men and Virtuous Women:
Changing Male and Female
Roles in Korea

by Jack Balswick

Social scientists will tell you that there are always two views to understanding human behavior—the insiders and the outsiders. Each view contains insights *and* blinders which are not contained in the other. My outsider's view of Korean sex roles is hopefully informed by conversations I have had with insiders—my students and colleagues at Yonsei and Ewha Universities.

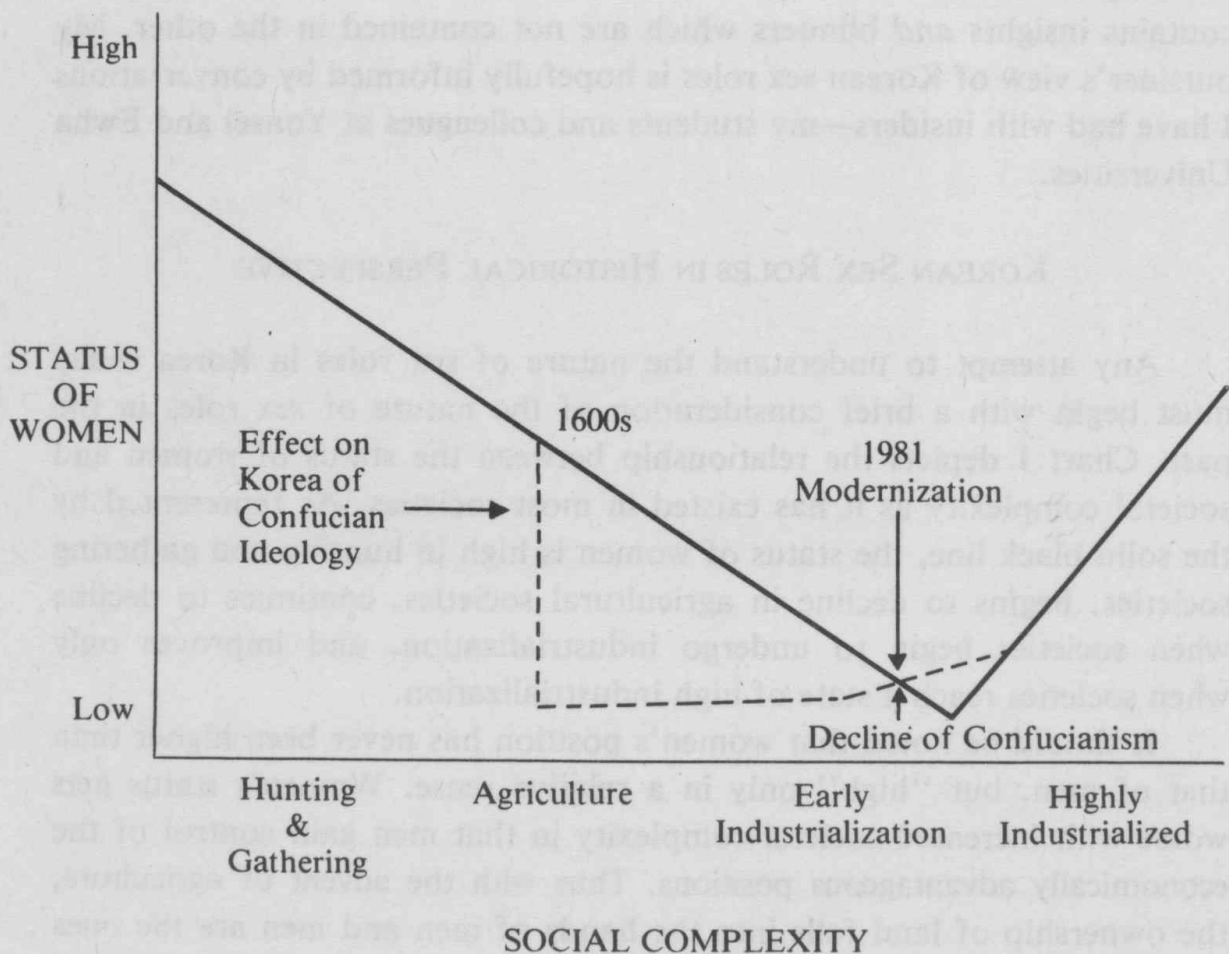
KOREAN SEX ROLES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Any attempt to understand the nature of sex roles in Korea today must begin with a brief consideration of the nature of sex roles in the past. Chart 1 depicts the relationship between the status of women and societal complexity as it has existed in most societies. As represented by the solid black line, the status of women is high in hunting and gathering societies, begins to decline in agricultural societies, continues to decline when societies begin to undergo industrialization, and improves only when societies reach a state of high industrialization.

It should be noted that women's position has never been higher than that of men, but "high" only in a relative sense. Women's status gets worse with increased societal complexity in that men gain control of the economically advantageous positions. Thus with the advent of agriculture, the ownership of land falls into the hands of men and men are the ones who assume the role of tiller of the soil, planter of the crop, or herder of the cattle. With the advent of industrialization, it is again the men who assume the key economic roles. Thus in most industrialized societies in the early 1900s telephone operators and typists were all men; these positions were relinquished to women only after such work became routinized and low paying. High technology societies cannot afford to distribute economic roles on the basis of sex. Where electronic and computer skills are needed, the best qualified persons regardless of sex are needed for immediate positions.

The status of women in Korea, however, differs significantly from that described above. The dotted line in Chart 1 represents the status of women which has resulted from the acceptance of Confucian ideology in Korea. Prior to the 1600s Korean women had the right to inherit property on a near-equal basis with men (Peterson, 1981). With the acceptance of Confucian ideology in the 1600s women were effectively disfranchised by being forbidden to inherit property. They were systematically reduced to a position which was subordinate to men in most aspects of life.

CHART 1.
SOCIETAL COMPLEXITY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN KOREA



As Korea is presently in a stage of rapid industrialization there are opposing forces which are affecting the status of women. The development of industrialization and western ideology is bringing about a decline of Confucianism, which is a force contributing to the rise in the status of women. At the same time however, modernization, contrary to much public opinion, is having a suppressive impact upon the status of women.

The vast majority of the well-paying positions which have resulted from modernization have been given to men. Modernization in Korea is benefitting men more directly than women. Evidence of this can be seen from the fact that the gap between what women were paid compared to what men were paid has widened between 1970 and 1980 in Korea. Further, Korean women (considered by some to be the weaker sex) work on an average of six hours *more* than men per month for this lower pay. I expect that this inequality in Korean women's earnings will widen rather than narrow in the next 10 years. It will only be at the advanced stages of industrialization that the earnings of Korean women will become closer to those of Korean men.

THE CREATION OF KOREAN MALES AND FEMALES

An understanding of Korean sex roles must include a consideration of how Korean boys and girls are reared and socialized. As in most patriarchal societies, the nurturant caring for children in Korea is done by women rather than men. This has a significant impact on both males and females, who emerge into adulthood with distinctly different personalities and needs. Korean males tend to define their masculinity in negative terms, as that which is *not* feminine. In the process, males downplay the importance of women and feminine activity and attempt to portray themselves as self-confident and superior. Females learn to establish empathic relationships due to their identification with the mothering process and become adept as interpersonal relaters. They take on different roles, which often results in females being put into a suppressed position in society.

In the Korean family the care and nurturing of children is done primarily by the mother. The father typically has a more distanced relationship with his children. Honor rather than intimacy is the valued characteristic of the father-child relationship. While the status of father is more ascribed, the status of mother is more achieved. Fathers are given honor because they are male, and mothers must earn their position by virtue of hard work.

Infants begin life totally dependent upon their parents. However, since the mother does the caring, this dependent relationship is developed only with her. This strong dependence upon the mother profoundly affects the development of the infant's self-concept. The developing self of the Korean child, then, is defined in relationship with the mother and not with the father. Once this strong dependence and attachment to the

mother is developed, children cling to their mother's love. This close attachment to the mother affects sons differently than daughters.

For daughters, being cared for by a member of their own sex means that they can learn how to be a female in a personal relationship. A Korean girl learns her role in the context of personal identification with her mother and as a result emerges with a basis for "empathy" built into her self structure in a way that boys do not. Girls develop nurturant capabilities and a strong basis for being sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

A boy must attempt to develop a masculine gender identification and learn the masculine role in the absence of a close relationship with his father. Rather than learning the male role in a personal way, Korean boys must identify with cultural stereotypes of the masculine role. Affectionate relating between father and son is usually non-existent. While the girl comes to find her femininity in her affectionate relationship with her mother, boys find their masculinity more in terms of denial of their relationship with their mother. They reject for themselves any behavior which might be considered feminine. The male personality is defined negatively, in terms of what a male should *not* be or do. In the process, it should not be surprising to find that the manner in which males develop their masculine self concepts also involves their devaluation of female activity and females themselves.

A boy's dependence on, attachment to, and identification with his mother represents that which is not masculine. To affirm his masculinity, the motherly characteristics of nurturance, tenderness and expressiveness must be rejected. A boy represses those qualities he understands to be feminine within himself, and tends to reject and devalue women and whatever he considers to be feminine in the social world. It becomes important to achieve masculine identity by confirming certain social activities as masculine and therefore superior. Women are prevented from participating in these socially important activities because they are thought to be inferior and not able to perform them adequately. It becomes important for men to think that women's economic and social contributions cannot equal men's. Adult Korean males will often guard these particular activities and insist that these "realms" are superior to the activities performed by women.

The end result of the exclusive mothering of children is that males are prepared to assume a distinctly male dominated role in the family and in society. Females, on the other hand, are prepared emotionally for participation in family life and taught to uphold this traditional patriarchal system.

MALES AND FEMALES IN MARRIAGE

The lack of fathering in Korean society doesn't do much to bring about intimacy in marriage relationships. A woman, because she was mothered by a woman, needs something more than a relationship with a male. She seeks to fill the emotional aspects of her relational needs either by establishing intimacy with other women or with her own children. As for the male, his marriage relationship with his wife completes his needs. However, his past struggle to obtain a masculine self identity by negating anything appearing to be feminine prevents him from establishing much intimacy with his wife. The wife, in failing to find intimacy with her husband, is further driven to meet her emotional needs through her children. Due to their early dependence upon their mothers, males reared in a Korean society may merely substitute one mother for another when they marry. The husband becomes his wife's eldest son. As their mother waited on them and met their needs, so males may expect that their wife will do the same. Psychologically, many Korean men are still boys, perhaps incapable of entering into an intimate communicative relationship with their wives.

In spite of this immaturity, males possess a sense of self-confidence that is often unsupported by their own abilities. Close observation reveals that this "self-confidence" is an attempt to avoid losing face by pretending to be able to perform a task even when it is beyond their ability.

Ironically, in Korean society the male, instead of being the stronger sex, is in some ways the weaker. In reality, the male is frail. He has been coddled and pampered and given privileges when he was growing up. He was taught to think of himself as superior to his sisters, that they had a right to an education only *after* him, and that it was his parents' lucky day when he was born. This pampered boy grew up dependent upon females yielding to his wishes and serving him. A girl, on the other hand, was not given a status of honor at birth, but had to achieve her status.

COWBOYS, PLAYBOYS, GOOD OL' BOYS, AND LOCKER ROOM BOYS:
KOREAN STYLE

Much of my recent research on sex roles in the United States has centered on identifying types of inexpressive male roles. Given the fact that part of the Confucian ideal is to not show one's feelings, it might prove interesting to compare inexpressiveness as it is found among American males and among Korean males.

In relating to females, many American males assume what I have called the *cowboy* role. The cowboy is a "John Wayne" type who believes that the mark of a real man is not to show any tenderness or affection toward women, because his culturally acquired male image dictates that such a show of emotions would be distinctly unmanly. The cowboy is the strong, silent type who wouldn't dream of saying, "I love you" to the women he loves. I believe that most Korean men, in their relationship to the women whom they love and care for, are very similar to this cowboy type. It is a rare Korean wife who has ever heard her husband say, "I love you," or who has even seen him cry. In his relationship with his wife Korean males are even less expressive of their tender feelings than are American males.

Whereas the cowboy has feelings towards the women he cares for, but cannot express those feelings, another type, the *playboy*, has no feelings towards the women, but pretends that he does for the purposes of sexual exploration. The playboy can say, "I love you" to a woman while remaining emotionally detached in the relationship. Playboys encounter women as if they were playing a game in which scoring (achieving a sexual conquest) is a means of ego enhancement. To the playboy, the woman becomes a playmate or plaything, dehumanized in the process. A successful "love affair" is one in which the bed was shared, but the playboy emerges having avoided any personal involvement or shared relationship with the women.

Among Korean males there are very few playboys of the sort described above. This is not to say that Korean males do not engage in impersonal sexual encounters; they do, but only in highly structured social situations. Korean males limit such impersonal sexual encounters to the *kisaeng* and the *kisaeng* parties or beer halls in which it is clearly understood by both the men and the women involved what the nature of the exchange will be. This is quite different from the western playboy who may be "on the make" in any hotel lobby, street corner, or bar. To pursue a woman other than a *kisaeng* is looked at by Korean men as stupid and foolish at the least, and possibly even insane or criminal.

The *Good Ol' Boy* and the *Locker Room Boy* are two types of males which I have identified in American society in reference to ways in which males relate to other males. The good ol' boy is the type of man who has warm and often deep feelings for other men, but who is unable to communicate these feelings verbally or physically. The locker room boy is similar to the good ol' boy in that he has warm feelings for other men, but he is different because, in addition, he *can* verbally communicate

these feelings—but only in the masculine security of the locker room. He is dependent upon such masculine subcultures as men's athletic clubs, sport teams, bars, and gaming rooms. In such environments, where masculine identity is secure, the locker room boy is better able to express his gentle feeling and even demonstrate his affection physically.

Although this is a much too brief introduction to these two types of American male roles, it at least provides us with a comparative basis to understand the importance of male friendships to Korean men. In relationships with each other, Korean males are a combination of both the above types. Like the good ol' boy, Korean men establish strong, deep friendships with certain other men to the exclusion of others. But unlike the good ol' boy they are able to freely express their feelings and affection to these men. By contrast American men have a homophobia or fear of closeness with a member of the same sex. Part of the "culture shock" most western males experience in observing Korean males is the ease with which they hold hands, put their arms around each other and in general physically express their affection for each other. It is as if the locker room boy subculture exists on a permanent basis for Korean men—their masculinity is not threatened by either showing or receiving affection from another man. Korean men achieve a degree of closeness and trust with certain other males that is generally absent among western males.

Intimate friendships between Korean males seem to be based upon friendships originating in the schools they have attended. Friendships established through membership in a common graduating class can last a lifetime. One thing which a Korean wife learns that she must not challenge or question is the time her husband spends with his "good ol' school boy" network. Whereas the western male will communicate most intimately with his wife, the Korean male will communicate most intimately with his "buddies." I might add that the same is also true in the case of women, except for the fact that western females, like their Korean counterparts, are usually able to communicate intimately with other females.

THE PROSPECT FOR CHANGES IN SEX ROLES

Although there is strong resistance to sex role change in Korea, the current stirring for change is but part of a world-wide movement involving the redefinition of sex roles. In considering the possibilities for change in Korean sex roles, westerners should avoid two mistakes: (1) to hold to a romanticized view of the virtues of the traditional sex role division in

Korea; and (2) to interpret Korean values, desires, and discontents from their own western value system. It is true that Korean society has been and continues to be oppressive to women; Korean women are increasingly becoming cognizant of that oppression. It is also true, however, that not all Korean women experience the traditional sex role division in terms of oppression. A recent study conducted by the Korean Gallup Research Institute found that 53% of the people questioned think that there is *no* discrimination between men and women. Further, it was found that while 63% of the men questioned regarded men as superior to women, 67% of the women do so. Further, education does *not* decrease the percentage of those who believe in male superiority.

Chart 2. Feminist Ideologies and Strategies for Change

Ideology	Explanation of sex role differences	Proposed solution
Sociobiology	Biology Genetic	Eliminate culturally produced differences
Liberal Feminist	Inequal opportunity	Work towards legal and social equality
Marxist	Private property	Communism
Radical feminist	Men have historically oppressed women (size, childbirth, child rearing)	Change means of production, reproduction, rearing children, and sexual regulations
Socialist feminist	Combine Marxist and radical position to see economic and sexual oppression as <i>both</i> primary	
Dependency theory	Peripheral (3rd world) countries dependence on core capitalist countries most adversely affects women	Establish economic independence (interdependence) for Korea and women's interdependence with men
Psychoanalytic feminist	Mothering, but little fathering	Joint parenting and marital intimacy
Religious feminist	Sexism within religious ideologies (Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.)	Eliminate or redefine religious ideology and behavior

There are a number of alternative strategies which could potentially be utilized in Korea to bring about change in sex roles; these are summarized in Chart 2. As far as I have been able to detect there is a small but vital "underground" women's liberation movement in Korea which is composed mostly of highly educated women. The most common attempted strategy change has been liberal feminism (see Chart 1), in which social and legal equality is sought. Liberal feminists have found change to be slow, as male-dominated educational, religious, political, and economic institutions have resisted granting qualified women equal opportunities. Due to the seeming unresponsiveness of male-dominated institutions, some Korean feminists have become very pessimistic about the prospects for meaningful change. Although some are advocates of more radical change strategies, we will have to wait and see if these attitudes culminate in action.

As long as only a few of the more educated Korean women and hardly any men are desirous of change, little will be forthcoming. The average Korean wife wants little more than a greater respect from her husband and for him to spend more of his time with her and the children. The hope that her husband will begin to communicate his feelings of love and affection to her exists only in the realm of an ideal. Change in sex roles in Korea will be a slow process. As change does take place, the Korean people will hopefully be able to retain the many positive traditional aspects of Korean manhood and womanhood, while at the same time incorporating needed new dimensions into each gender role.

NOTES

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Dr. Lee Tae-Young and the Korean Family Law

by Sonia R. Strawn

This paper is an attempt to tackle the nearly impossible task of presenting a discussion on three subjects in one: the Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations, Dr. Tae-Young Lee (Yi T'ae-Yōng), and the Korean Family Law. It is improper to speak of one without the other two, but in the brief space allotted one cannot do justice to any of the three. It is indisputable that for any discussion of legal aid in Korea or of questions about Korean Family Law Dr. Lee, whose name is synonymous with both, should be present. Nevertheless, I am honored that the Royal Asiatic Society should have asked me to take her place, and I have been asked to convey her greetings as well as her gratitude for the Society's interest and concern in her work.

It is at best a difficult undertaking to encapsulize the amazing career of a person like Dr. Lee in a few words. If she goes to buy fruit at the East Gate Market, an old grandmother who has never seen her knows Dr. Lee by her voice, which has gone throughout Korea on the radio as she has broadcast for many years on the need to revise the Family Laws and to improve the status of women.

Dr. Lee, born and reared in a gold mining area of North Korea where she early lost her father—and so was brought up by her Christian mother and grandmother—never saw a train or any other accoutrements of the West until she went to P'yongyang to high school. After graduating in Home Economics from Ewha Womans University in 1936, she married Dr. Yil-Hyung Chyung (Chōng Il-Hyōng), recently returned from the United States where he had received a Ph.D. in sociology from Drew University.

During the early years of their marriage Dr. Chyung spent five years in prison for his activities in protest against the Japanese oppression, and Dr. Lee taught, made and sold quilts from door to door, and did other jobs to support her children and care for her mother-in-law, as well as provide for the basic needs of her husband. So it was with Liberation in 1945 that Dr. Chyung urged her, upon his release from prison and entry into political life, to embark on the path of fulfilling her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer. She matriculated at Seoul National University as the first coed student, the first married woman student, and the first mother in the

College of Law. Four years later she became the first woman graduate of that prestigious law school and then passed the extremely difficult national judicial examination in 1952. Thus she became the first woman lawyer in Korea's 5,000-year history.

At first she wanted to become a judge, but this request was turned down by the current president, Syngman Rhee, because she was the wife of an opposition party politician. (Dr. Chyung went on to hold the longest tenure, eight terms, in Korea's National Assembly, being elected continually from the central district of Seoul.) Dr. Lee remained undaunted and so turned her sights towards helping poor, uneducated, needy women who appeared to her as if they had been standing in line for 5,000 years, waiting for someone to whom they could talk about their troubles and who could give them family counseling and legal advice.

That was the beginning of her work in legal aid in which she is today well known as pioneer. In 1956 she opened the doors of what has grown to be the Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations, which in October 1981 celebrated its 25th anniversary. As she saw the need for her services grow, and responded by expanding the center and its personnel, she helped to organize the Family Court of Korea as well as serving for eight years as Dean of the Law College at Ewha University, her *alma mater*.

Dr. Lee's master's and doctoral theses studied the system of, and changes in, divorce in Korea, and have provided a basis for later studies. Gradually, awards both from within and without Korea have come to recognize her stature in the fields of law and of legal aid work. In 1971 she received the World Peace through Law Prize in Yugoslavia, in 1975 she was presented with the Magsaysay Prize for her work on behalf of equal juridical rights for women, and as recently as 1981 she became a member of the International Commission of Jurists, one of four women among a worldwide membership of 40.

Her credentials for giving other people advice on what constitutes a 'happy family life' certainly include not only her professional training and long experience in counseling, but also her own personal background. She has been happily married for 46 years (to the same man), has three daughters and a son, and 12 grandchildren.

When on August 25, 1956, Dr. Lee opened the doors of a small rented office at the Women's Issues Research Institute, she founded the first legal aid center in Korea. Some critics said that as the first woman lawyer she probably could not get clients otherwise, and so had no choice but to dispense legal advice free of charge. History has proved that this was not the case. However, it is true that women who were poor and ignorant of the law

became her first clients. She recalls that in those early days her biggest expense was for tissue to wipe away the tears of many who came to tell her their sad stories of troubled situations at home.

Now, 25 years later, still as the center's director, Dr. Lee notes in retrospect that she has devoted half of her lifetime to this work, never having received any salary or other remuneration from the first day to the present. The first ten years she worked by herself, but then the demands became so great that she had to turn to someone for help. She was totally worn out when some of her friends who were ordinary housewives offered to make monthly contributions and form a support group. This made possible the gradual expansion of facilities and staff until today the large center is recognized both regionally in Asia and throughout the world. In 1978 in Sydney, Australia, Dr. Lee was honored with the second International Legal Aid Association Award.

In 1976, after 20 years of moving from one rented office to another, with all the consequent inconvenience to potential clients, the women members of the center succeeded in accomplishing the amazing feat of making possible their own building to house the center. The One Hundred Women's Building is a six-story red brick building on Yo-i Island in Seoul, a small building actually in comparison with its larger neighbors, but in the minds of the 1,700 women who made contributions so that it would become a reality, it is seen as the most significant of all. It not only houses the center's offices, large auditorium, library and research center, but stands as a symbol to the surrounding society of what women can do with their own strength when they join together to erect a building 'by the women, of the women, and for the women'.

In 25 years over 150,000 people have been given counseling and legal aid. Approximately 30 per cent of these have been men, and all counseling is free of charge, related either to civil or criminal matters. In fact, most questions revolve around family relations, hence the center's name. Divorce accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the total number of cases. The counseling, which is seen as a 'curative' kind of program for a wound already inflicted, is done by the all-woman staff.

To continue the medical metaphor, however, it would be appropriate to emphasize the current two-pronged approach of the program. The curative counseling continues with 80 or more cases daily. At the same time, in order to work towards preventing a disease or injury from arising in the first place, a number of preventive programs have been set up, especially since the opening of the center's new, permanent offices. These include law lectures, a Mothers' School, free wedding ceremonies for the poor, the

publication of a newsletter, and finally, perhaps most significant of all, the ongoing movement to revise the Korean Family Law.

What is the goal of the work of the Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations? To sum it up in one phrase, Dr. Lee affirms that it is to establish and maintain peace and harmony in the family, then in the nation, and of course ultimately in the world. This can be done, she feels, through ensuring the basic human rights of all people: a man cannot live in a free and just situation when such rights are not equally accorded to a woman. The center's motto—'together with my suffering neighbors'—urges putting into practice the conviction that none should be denied justice because of either ignorance or poverty.

Recently the center has published an English translation of its handbook *What Can I Do?* which cites actual cases of the legal counselling work done there. The following two cases are illustrative of the tremendous variety of the problems which comprise its everyday work, and particularly of the difficulties which many married women still face in Korea today.

1) Q: My fiance died in the war in Vietnam. He was the only child of his parents and they are in a hurry for me to get married to him in order for me to console his soul. Is this kind of marriage recognized legally?

A: It is admirable of his parents to want to console their dead son who was killed in Vietnam, as is your intention to marry his soul. But that is only a spiritual union and marriage with a deceased person is not legally recognized. In our Civil Law because marriage comes into effect after it is registered, marriage with a disembodied deceased person cannot be registered. Therefore such marriage cannot take place.

2) Q: From the beginning of our marriage, my mother-in-law has come into our bedroom late at night every day. Even when she does not, she has called my husband to her bedroom and without fail makes him sleep beside her and sends him directly to work in the morning. My husband and I cannot continue our married life together by any means. Is divorce possible?

A: In your case divorce is possible. If a mother-in-law interferes with her son's married life, 'extreme maltreatment by a spouse's lineal ascendant' is an applicable ground and you can file for mediation of divorce.

What is the relationship, then, between the Legal Aid Center and the Family Law of Korea, which is the third subject for discussion here? There is a very intimate connection indeed, since the Legal Aid Center has both urged and provided evidence for the work of family law revision for nearly 30 years.

Members of the staff at the center have learned through their counseling experience that regardless of how able the counselor might be, how skilled the attorney or how wise the judge, the limitations of the law itself pose insurmountable problems in attempting to provide any individual with a just solution to a particular situation. From this growing awareness came Dr. Lee's conviction that raising the legal status of women in Korea and eliminating discrimination against women under the law had to be an integral and long-term part of the work of the Center. So as one looks at the history of the Family Law, one learns at once that Dr. Lee and the Center formed the driving force behind the two recent major reforms of that law. In addition, at present they are hard at work for grassroots education and mobilization of ordinary Koreans to work toward the revision of the one-third of that law which is still untouched. Dr. Lee is unwilling to be satisfied with partial success in this important area.

It is important at this point to include a disclaimer about what is said next. In discussing the Korean Family Law it is not the intention to be critical of the laws of a certain country from a foreign perspective. Rather, the purpose here is to relate and affirm what it is that Korean women themselves are advocating in regard to their own law. Upon careful scrutiny it will become clear that the demands are far from radical by comparison with many other countries.

It goes without saying that most people are ignorant of the family laws of their country, nor do they care about them, except and until they have trouble. It is also true that most of us who are interested residents of Korea know even less about the Family Law of Korea, especially as almost nothing has been published in English about it, perhaps a notable exception being *What Can I Do?* quoted above. We do, however, give momentary attention to certain isolated laws when something is mentioned in the newspapers, such as the recent controversy at Songgyungwam (the Confucian University) over the law prohibiting marriage between persons of the same family name and place of family origin.

In every country, the reality of the family system is reflected in that country's laws. Korea is no exception. It is not necessary to remind members of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society about the strength of Confucian tradition in regard to human relationships in the

family with its patriarchal, patrilinear, and patrilocal character. The patriarchal system in particular has been handed down through many centuries, as embodied in the concept of the three obediences expected of a virtuous woman: obedience to her father in her youth, to her husband in her maturity, and to her son in her old age.

In 1948, the constitution of the new Republic of Korea provided in Article 9 for the equality of the sexes. However, in terms of the implementation of the Civil Code, the Family Law does not obey the Constitution. It is at this point that many women, and fortunately some men as well, have urged that certain basic changes be made in the law. Here it may be helpful to clarify briefly what is meant by 'family law.' Family Law refers to the rules and regulations concerned with the areas of marriage, children, family, and relatives. Within the Korean Civil Code the laws grouped together as Article 4—Relatives, and Article 5—Inheritance, are referred to collectively as the Family Law.

With liberation from Japan, several significant changes had occurred which affected all laws. The family structure began to change from a large, extended one to the smaller, nuclear family as the Korean economy underwent transformation from a rural, agrarian system to an urban, technological one. But it was only from the time of the promulgation of the new Civil Code in 1960, which includes several important new provisions relating to family concerns, that the Family Law as defined in the preceding paragraph came into being. It should also be mentioned that until 1954, under the Korean criminal code, there was inequality between the sexes with regard to adultery, which was a crime for women but not for men.

To summarize many years of extensive educational and legislative efforts, we may say that with the first revision of the law (which was approved in late 1957 and came into effect in 1960) a number of articles went some way towards ending discrimination against women. The salient points of this revision were:

- 1) The legal incapacity of married women was abolished.
- 2) The system of joint management of a married couple's property was changed to a system in which each spouse may separately manage his or her property.
- 3) Freedom and equality were granted in matters of marriage and divorce by agreement.
- 4) Marriage was permitted without parental consent for women 23 years of age and men of 27 years age.
- 5) Husband and wife were to be treated equally in regarded to grounds for divorce.

- 6) The Law of Adoption was reformed so that anyone, without regard to sex, may become an adopting parent or an adopted child.
- 7) Freedom to establish a branch family was granted to all who have attained the age of majority, that is 20 years.
- 8) Succession through the maternal line was recognized. That is to say, when there is no son, a daughter may continue the family line and, in such a case, if she marries, her husband is registered in her family register and their children take the mother's family name and clan origin.
- 9) The right to inherit the family headship and property was granted to women as well as men.

These advances seemed tremendous in comparison with the former situation of women legally, but they were not enough. In June 1973 the Pan Women's Committee for Promoting Revision of the Family Law was constituted by 61 women's organizations to begin what developed into a four-and-a-half year struggle to effect another revision in the country's laws. As one stage in that movement, a resolution of ten basic demands was submitted to the Korean National Assembly by the women legislators, with the result that in December 1977 some of the original requests for revision were approved. The revisions came into effect on January 1, 1979, with the exception of one, which provided only for the suspension of a law for the calendar year 1978.

In order to provide an overall view of the situation of the Family Law at present, so that readers may make their own assessment of the current legal status of women, a list of the newly-revised provisions will be given here, followed by mention of those areas in which the Family Law remains discriminatory against women.

REVISIONS APPROVED DECEMBER 1977

- 1) Registration of the marriage of couples who have the same surname and the same place of family origin will be permitted for a one-year period. This will legitimize children born to such couples and will permit such legal marriages from January 1 — December 31, 1978.
- 2) Anyone twenty years old or over may get married without parental permission.
- 3) Anyone who is married, even though he/she be a minor in

- age (under 20), will be considered an adult.
- 4) Any property of a married couple that does not clearly belong to one partner or the other will be considered the common property of that couple.
 - 5) Divorce by agreement will take effect upon confirmation by the Family Court.
 - 6) Both parents are entitled to exercise authority over their children.
 - 7) Inheritance will be given equally to the first son and the mother, with the other sons and daughters dividing the remainder equally. A married daughter continues to receive one-half of an unmarried child's portion.
 - 8) If the head of the family dies leaving property to persons other than his family and nothing to them, they will nevertheless become entitled to a portion.

REJECTED REQUESTS FOR REVISION

- 1) The boundary of relatives should be the same for both husband's and wife's family, namely that all with four degrees of blood ties should be considered relatives. (At present it is eight degrees for the husband and one for the wife. Therefore, all blood relatives of the husband are considered blood relatives of the wife, but the husband assumes only his parents-in-law as blood relatives).
- 2) The system of prohibition of marriage between persons of the same name and same place of family origin should be abolished.
- 3) In cases of divorce, either partner should have the right to petition for division of their common property. In addition, recognition should be given to the value of the wife's work in the household as contributing to common investments.
- 4) Rectification should be made of the present system whereby a legal wife must accept an illegitimate child officially as her own, and a stepmother must accept a child of her husband's former wife as her own. (This is carried out at present without regard to the desires of the mother, but should be changed to provide for the wishes of the mother/child in each situation.)

- 5) Rectification should be made of the present practice of having an adopted child keep his original name. The adopted child should be given the adopted father's or mother's name; for adoption of a minor, approval must be received from the Family Court.
- 6) Abolition of the system of the head of the family. (At present, males have priority in succession of family headship, decide the place of residence, and are in charge of supporting family members.)

By way of conclusion to this necessarily sketchy overview of three inter-related and important areas impacting on the situation of women in Korea today, it is important to underline the fact that the work is not all done. Women must join together to bring about changes in the laws that affect their lives, and they must further the consciousness-raising movement in order to educate all citizens, both women and men, about justice before the law. As part of such a campaign, the Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations publishes a newsletter and books, holds lectures, and uses every opportunity through the mass media to contact as many as possible of Korea's nearly 10 million households.

It is likewise incumbent upon those of us who are non-Koreans to know about the situation of families in Korea. A growing number of international cases are coming to the attention of the counselors at the center. Likewise, since women's issues have worldwide dimensions of commonality, none of us can afford to be ignorant of them.

In response to my question about what should be the most important closing thought for this paper, Dr. Lee said, "Watch us, and keep an eye on the women of Korea! We're way ahead of the men."

Lao Tzu and Nietzsche: Wanderer and Superman*

by Park Yn-hui

I have been asked to talk on Taoism. But, as the title of my paper indicates, I shall be dealing with both Lao Tzu and Nietzsche. My intention, however, is not to do a comparative study, but to put Taoism in a better perspective through a comparison between two thinkers. Given tonight's audience, most of whom have a cultural background quite foreign to the background from which Taoism sprang and has been developed, this comparative approach to Taoism seems appropriate.

To relate Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, to Nietzsche would appear at first glance as surrealistic as to connect, in the fashion of Salvador Dali, a sand beach to a melted watch. They are as far apart in space and time, and, as it will be seen, in their ideological stands as two thinkers can conceivably be. At a closer look, however, several similarities strike us: the fragmentary and unsystematic character of their writings and presentations of their thought in the form of aphorism or literary expressions; the essentially ideological orientation they took; the heretical and radically revolutionary aspect of their thought, and more. What is the most fascinating and astonishing, however, is their common and almost identical interest in and views on language, which are strikingly similar, if not identical, in their general outline, with those of the most influential and prevailing philosophers of today such as Quine, Goodman, Kuhn, Foucault and Derrida, for instance. For these reasons alone, Lao Tzu and Nietzsche seem to deserve a fresh look and evaluation. They are very close to us, and their thought is profound and seems to be genuinely relevant to us.

Both Taoism and Nietzsche's thought are too complex to be classified in a single category. It is no accident, on the one hand, that Taoism is often considered at once as philosophy, as religion and as ideology, and, on the other hand, that for a long time Nietzsche has not been considered a philosopher in the strict sense of the term, but rather as a man of

* This paper was presented to the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, April 8, 1981, Seoul.

letters or as an ideologue. In fact, both Taoism and Nietzsche's thought have two distinctive dimensions or aspects. They are both philosophical and ideological. As philosophies, they shed light on language; to be more precise, on the relationship between reality and language. It is in the light of the concept of Tao in Taoism and that of the Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche that their philosophy of language leads them to redefine the relationship between Nature and man, or between the universe and ourselves. In other words, they are led to take a certain religious or ethical position. The concept of In-Action in Taoism and the concept of Will-to-Power in Nietzsche have to do with this practical question. Finally, as ideologues, they propose two different values of life, or goals of life, which are embodied in the concept of Wanderer and of Superman. The burden of the present paper is to show the similarities and differences between Taoism and Nietzschean thought, and further, to make a quick evaluation of each of them.

1. TAO AND THE ETERNAL RECURRENCE

The beginning verse of *Lao Tzu*, or *Tao Teh Ching*, the Taoist equivalent to the Old Testament, is about Tao; and the end of *The Will-to-Power*, Nietzsche's posthumous book, considered as the expression of his crystallized ideas, is about the Eternal Recurrence. That the most important concept in Taoism is the concept of Tao has never been questioned by any scholar of Taoism. But the concept of Eternal Recurrence has no such weight in the writings of Nietzsche. It is, however, generally agreed that this concept is essential to the grasp of the overall structure of Nietzschean thought. It is against this background, and in the light of this concept, that the complexity and the meaning of his thought can be better understood.

Both concepts are ontological. They denote or name the one and ultimate reality taken as a whole. The most famous statement of Taoism is the very beginning verse of *Tao Teh Ching*, which says: "The Tao that can be told of is not eternal Tao."¹ It is taken for granted among scholars of Taoism that this Tao, the ultimate reality, cannot be described in language, because Tao is an indivisible whole and because any linguistic representation is necessarily conceptual, divisive, and thus distorting. As Chuang Tzu, the most famous disciple of Lao Tzu, says, "The universe is but one mark."² For Nietzsche the Eternal Recurrence, on the other hand, is described as "a sea of forces of flowing and crushing together, eternally

changing, eternally flooding back, with years of recurrence, with an ebb and flood of its forms."³ The Eternal Recurrence is, then, the unbroken, continuous and thus non-substantial nature of ultimate reality taken as a whole.

If the idea that reality is one and an indivisible whole is all that the ontology of Lao Tzu and Nietzsche is intended to mean, there is nothing profound and new in it. If they mean more than this idea, and intend to say that reality as it is can never be completely conceptualized and thus put into words, this idea is not new either. For we find more or less the same idea in Plotinus, Bergson and Heidegger, let alone in most educated people and artists. And yet the profound meaning and originality of these two concepts can be discovered only when we realize that these concepts have to do less with the description of reality than with the description of the relationship between reality and its linguistic representation. What is new and great in these ontological concepts is an enlightening and astonishingly profound up-to-date philosophy of language, more precisely a theory of the relationship between reality and its linguistic representation.

What Lao Tzu and Nietzsche are primarily concerned with is to help us see the gap between reality and its linguistic representation, even though we are doomed to represent reality in language. If this is all that there is in the ontology and philosophy of language in Lao Tzu and Nietzsche, this idea still lacks profound meaning or insight and appears rather trivial, for, upon a little reflection, we discover that by definition things can never be identical with a language representing them. However shocking it was, Kant was right when he argued that we are destined to see things only through the windows of transcendental categories. Goodman follows Kant when he writes in very recent years that "We can have words without worlds, but not worlds without words or symbols."⁴ One may even say with Derrida that "things escape us always."⁵ The thought of Lao Tzu and Nietzsche on language is exactly in line with the above recent day philosophers of language.

But looked at differently, the trivial truth of the relationship between reality and its linguistic representation is awakening and, indeed, revolutionary. With such a trivial truth, Kant, Goodman and Derrida have shocked us. What does this mean? Why is this view revolutionary? We are often, as Nietzsche pointed out somewhere, lured and thus deceived by language. As a result, we tend to take what represents as though it were what is represented. As Nietzsche writes. "The concept of 'pencil' is confused with the thing 'pencil'."⁶; yet, there is no such entity or idea or *eidos* or substance or essence as "pencil" separable and distinctive from

other things continuous with it. What we take to be a real "pencil" is nothing other than a conceptualized thing. "There is," Nietzsche goes on to say, "neither 'spirit' nor 'reason' nor 'thinking' nor 'consciousness' nor 'soul' nor 'will', nor 'truth': all are fictions that are of no use." As Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu argued, there are no such Confucian moral entities as 'righteousness' and 'benevolence'. And yet, from Plato up to Husserl, throughout the Western philosophical tradition, the existence of fixed and eternal realities has never been seriously questioned and doubted, and the ultimate philosophical goal has been finding out such realities called 'substance', 'essence', 'truth', 'eidos' or 'meaning', or 'ideas'. From the point of view of Lao and Nietzsche, as well as the recent philosophers just mentioned above, these realities or entities are in reality philosophical spooks. Lured by the neatness of language, as Nietzsche denounces, "even philosophers are caught in the linguistic net."⁸

To say that our conception of reality is necessarily dependent upon our language is to say that our conception of reality, and, by extension, our knowledge and our truth are relative. Since our language is not natural, but conventional, made by us according to our need, and since our need depends on our natural and cultural condition, our 'world' or our views on reality or realities are relative through and through. It is relative to our human perspective, relative to a culture, relative to a person, relative to a condition of that person in a given time. What is called 'perspectivism' in Nietzsche is intended to show this relativity of all our knowledge, our conception of reality. It is this relativity that Chuang Tzu attempts to illustrate in his many amusing and often funny parables. We, human beings, believe in the objective beauty of, say, Cleopatra, and run after her, but dogs, birds and skunks and even cockroaches are quick to run away. Blind to this relativity, we are as narrow-minded as Chuang Tzu's frog in his small and dirty well, who believes that he is in an ocean and that he is the greatest. Conflating reality and our conception of it, we become stupid, just like Chuang Tzu's monkey, who is confused in counting the number of meals he gets.⁹

At this point, Taoism and the thought of Nietzsche cease to be philosophies, and appear as critiques of ideology. The function of philosophy in a narrow and strict sense, to which I ascribe myself, is to elucidate confusing concepts and to disentangle them. It consists basically in what is called 'conceptual analysis.' On the other hand, by ideology I understand our overall beliefs about the world and our overall system of values. The philosophy, more specifically the philosophy of language of

Lao Tzu and Nietzsche, unveils the ideological character of our beliefs and values as they are found in the prevailing thought in the West, exemplified in the Western philosophical tradition as well as in Christianity, and in the dominating thought in the East, which is best illustrated in Confucianism. For both Lao Tzu and Nietzsche, the theoretical and moral picture that Christianity and Confucianism present as objective truth is not objective, but subjective in some sense, and thus ideological. It is their task to unmask it, to criticize it; that is, to use recent philosophical jargon, to deconstruct it. Philosophy takes on a therapeutic, debunking and liberating function.

2. IN-ACTION AND THE WILL-TO-POWER

According to Nietzsche, "We are still being constantly led astray by words and concepts into thinking that things are simpler than they are, as separate from one another, indivisible and existing each on its own. A philosophical mythology lies hidden in *language*, and it breaks out again at every moment, however careful one may be."¹⁰ Where are we astray? We are astray in our beliefs, in our values and in our goals. Thus Chuang Tzu, too, writes in referring to Confucianism, a rival philosophy of Taoism: "As I look at the master, the first principle of benevolence and the parts of approval and disapproval are intrinsically mixed and confused together. . . . How is it possible that I shall know how to distinguish among them?"¹¹ The benevolence and the righteousness which Confucius presents as if they were real entities somewhere in the moral realm are in fact merely linguistic fictions which have no counterpart in the actual and real world. For Nietzsche the Christian God, who justifies the traditional metaphysical and moral order, is also a linguistic fiction. It is for this reason that Nietzsche says: "I am afraid we shall not get rid of God until we get rid of Grammar."¹² It is in this manner that the philosophy of language of Lao Tzu and Nietzsche transforms itself into, and develops as, radical critiques of the existing philosophical, religious and moral beliefs and thus unveils the true nature and meaning of these beliefs, not their objective but their ideological character.

But, according to the philosophy of language of Lao Tzu and Nietzsche, whatever beliefs and values we may hold are logically doomed to be ideological in the sense that they are never able to be true and objective pictures of reality. If so, on what ground could they criticize? According to Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, there are right ideologies,

healthy ideologies, which have to replace the wrong and sick ideologies. It is here that Lao Tzu and Nietzsche become more than analysts and critics of ideology, and thus present themselves as new ideologues.

From the Taoist perspective Confucianism is wrong, firstly because it confuses ideology with objective reality, forgetting that it is one of many possible ways of looking at reality and man, and more importantly, because it is fundamentally erroneous. From the Nietzschean perspective Christianity is bad, firstly because it also mixes up reality with ideology, not realizing that it is one of many alternative pictures of the world and life, and more importantly, because it is fundamentally sick in character.

In essence both Confucianism and Christianity are philosophies of life concerned with teaching us the best way to live. But both teachings are unacceptable. On the one hand, if the goal of Confucianism is to provide us with the way in which men could realize their fullest happiness in peace and freedom in a society, in the universe, the Confucian doctrine is self-defeating. Confucianism teaches us how to regulate our every action, indeed our life, according to and in compliance with infinitely complex and various rules. But to conform oneself to a certain rule or regulation is to force oneself, and thus not to act and to live freely and spontaneously. And to have rules and orders is to divide things and differentiate them. Thus, to live according to Confucianism is to live artificially, not freely, and to conduct ourselves according to the Confucian teachings is to become divisive and thus to break harmony and peace rather than to find them. Confucianism is essentially disruptive. Confucian rules and regulations are against, as it were, the lawless law of Tao.

On the other hand, although Christianity is believed to be the way toward salvation, it is in fact, according to Nietzschean analysis, a sick ideology invented by the impotent, sick with rancor and resentment. Christianity is at once a disguised means of self-consolation devised by unhappy and frustrated slaves and a sneaky instrument invented by them in order to satisfy their need of revenge against their strong, healthy masters. The moral values derived from and justified by Christian doctrine are traps cast to catch the masters and to poison them. In accepting Christian values, we have accepted the values of a sick herd. With it life is seen as suffering rather than joyful. Christianity is an ideology of anti-life.

Taoism and Nietzsche's thought appear as two doctrines of at once liberation and therapy. Lao Tzu and Nietzsche intend to free us from our ideological prison, and to help recover our health and happiness.

Critics of the existing ideologies, they become advocates of new and better ideologies. It is at this juncture of their direction of thought that the concept of In-Action in Taoism and the concept of Will-to-Power in the thinking of Nietzsche take on their true meaning and significance. And it is also at this point that the difference between Lao Tzu and Nietzsche becomes greater. What then could an alternative ideology be? Is there any alternative ideology in place of the ideologies which are denied? In-Action in Taoism and Will-to-Power are two different answers. They are two proposals of how to live, how to relate ourselves to Nature, to the universe at large, to ourselves, to our desires and to our neighbors. Therefore, they are theories of action, thus practical in nature. Lao Tzu and Nietzsche are ideological therapists.

In-Action is still a principle of action, a principle of how to live, how to determine our conduct. Thus, it appears as an ethical or moral principle, for moral or ethical principles are principles of how to decide right and good action. But moral principles are principles dealing with our conduct in relation to others within a given society. From this point of view Confucianism is essentially ethical in character, and its rules are moral. In contrast to Confucian moral rules, In-Action is the principle of action *in general*, or of the ultimate action. It is the most viable principle of action not in relation to other persons within a society, but in relation to everything, to persons, to a society, to things, to Nature and to the universe at large. It shows not how to achieve moral good, but how to achieve the Good in general, the ultimate Good. It is in this sense that Taoism, insofar as it is a philosophy of In-Action, is a religion in the broadest sense of the term, and the concept of In-Action is a sort of religious concept rather than an ethical concept, even if Taoism does not accept any transcendental world, any other world than this world. As a principle of action, the principle of In-Action does not say that we should restrain ourselves from doing anything, which is absurd. It only says how we should do things. It consists in acting, doing according to Tao, according to the way things are, and according to the way we are. It teaches us how to live and to act in harmony with the nature of reality. To follow Tao is then to adjust ourselves to the natural and cultural orders and to our condition in a given time, instead of forcing them into our desires and goals. In plain words, it means to do things and to live *naturally*, not artificially; spontaneously, not formally. It is for this reason that Taoism is anti-intellectual and anti-cultural.

The concept of Will-to-Power in Nietzsche is the concept which corresponds to the concept of In-Action in Taoism. This interpretation of

the concept of Will-to-Power might be objectionable, for in the philosophical scheme of Nietzsche the Will-to-Power refers to the ultimate nature of reality. It is described as denoting the essential character of the ultimate reality, whose structure is described as the Eternal Recurrence. Ultimately we are said to be Will-to-Power, and everything is said to be Will-to-Power. The concept of Will-to-Power must then be understood as ontological rather than ethical or practical. However, to the extent that Nietzsche demands us to act always in order to fulfill our Will-to-Power, which is our very nature, the concept of Will-to-Power can better be interpreted as practical, if not ethical in the narrow sense of the term, even if this concept has an ontological meaning. There seems to be no contradiction in keeping two senses of the term at once. What is the Will-to-Power as the ultimate principle of action? Just as in the concept of In-Action, the principle of action of the Will-to-Power is less moral than religious, even though Nietzsche denies the existence of God, for it is a principle of action depicting how to realize the ultimate Good, how to take up our life in the scheme of the universe. Like Lao Tzu, Nietzsche is concerned with trans-ethical good, not good in life, but the Good of life. The Will-to-Power stresses individuality, self-affirmation, and active control of the external and internal force. From this perspective Lao Tzu and Nietzsche oppose each other.

3. WANDERER AND SUPERMAN

Wanderer and Superman symbolize two different ideal types of man in Lao Tzu and Nietzsche respectively. With the difference between these two types, the difference between the Taoist ideology and the Nietzschean ideology reaches the irreconcilable conflicting point. It is in these two types of man that the principle of In-Action in Lao Tzu and that of Will-to-Power in Nietzsche are projected.

Although the importance of the concept of Superman in Nietzsche's thought is well recognized and widely known, the concept of Wanderer or *So-Yo-In* in Taoism has not been fully recognized as one of the central Taoist concepts. In the writings of Taoist literature, the concept does not appear as frequently as the concept of Tao and that of In-Action. Only once does this concept appear in the title of the first chapter of *Chuang Tzu*, the second best known book in Taoist literature. Even here it is neither discussed nor explained. However, the idea of wandering and by extension, the idea of wanderer, seems to be fundamental. It is in this

concept that the entire thinking of Taoism seems to be crystallized. It appears that the whole point of Taoism is to offer us the wanderer, the idea of wandering as model of man, to teach us to become Wanderers, which is the exact counterpart of Superman in Nietzsche. Who are they? How to characterize them?

Wanderer is the one who spends his whole life wandering, and wanders through his life. To be sure, here, to wander does not mean to get lost, but to walk around the fields and woods of life, without forcing his external conditions and himself. For him, to live is just like taking a walk without any fixed goal or set of goals, which can be enjoyed in and for itself at every moment. Life has no other purposes or goals than itself, just as a man who takes a walk on a week-end has no particular and well defined aims, no obstacles to overcome and to endure in order to achieve something other than his walk. Just like the man who enjoys his week-end walk in the fields and woods, for the Wanderer his wandering in itself is a value, every moment he spends and every place and thing he visits and sees are to be enjoyed and admired in and for themselves. They are by themselves an end-in-itself. Each moment is an eternity and each experience is felicity. For the Wanderer, life is a feast, a poem, a song. He is like a poet admiring the high mountains and clean running brooks. He is just like a man who enjoys every quiet moment at the bank of a pond in which his fishing line is cast. The Wanderer is the one who follows Tao and he is a perfectly happy man.

But then, who is Superman? He is not like a happy Wanderer, for he despises this kind of life. For Nietzsche "Happiness is invented by the herd-man of contemporary life."¹³ He holds such a herd man in contempt. Often Superman seems to denote in Nietzsche's writings the famous "blonde beast" roaming through the wilderness, terrifying foxes, cats, rabbits and rats, or a medieval conquerer who dances like Dionysus, drinks and intoxicates himself after the conquest of his enemy's territory, for Nietzsche exalts such persons as Napoleon, Cesare Borgia, the Roman conquerers, and other people who are physically powerful. But in many other places, Superman also refers to such persons as great artists and great thinkers. Who then is Superman exactly? What is the common feature between militaristic men and creative men? Nietzsche writes:

It is particularly illuminating to substitute for 'happiness' (toward which everything that lives is supposed to strive) the term 'power'. Thus they strive for power, more power. Pleasure is only a symptom of the feeling of power achieved, a consciousness of difference. They do not strive for plea-

sure, pleasure comes in when they achieve what they strive for.

Pleasure is an accompaniment, not a motive.¹⁴

He goes on to say:

What is pleasure but an excitation of power feeling, through an obstacle which is all the stronger if there is a rhythmic obstruction and resistance which increases the excitation.

Thus pain is inherent in all pleasure.¹⁵

Superman is, then, the man of power, the man who finds his pleasure in overcoming every obstacle, internal or external, and thus experiences pleasure in the constant and perpetual expansion of his power. Since the Will-to-Power is the very essence of man and, for that matter, of everything, to be Superman is to live up to one's own nature, to live *in authenticity*, if one may borrow an existentialist term. Since, ultimately, there is no meaning, but Eternal Recurrence, meaningless change, Superman affirms himself and challenges this meaninglessness. It is in such challenge that he finds his own greatness. "My formula for greatness in men," Nietzsche writes, "is *amor fati*."¹⁶ And "Superman," Nietzsche goes on, "is the meaning of the earth."¹⁷ Just like Wanderer, Superman does not admit other worlds than this world; and just like Wanderer, Superman does not think that the absence of the other world entails the meaninglessness or value of life. Both Wanderer and Superman affirm life and find its meaning. However, the way in which the meaning is found differs. Wanderer finds this meaning in maintaining, or better, in recovering harmony with Nature and with himself, whereas Superman does so in achieving, or better, in experiencing power in perpetual transcendence. Wanderer is a man of peace and reconciliation, whereas Superman is a man of conquest and tension, and finds satisfaction in such a tense state. Wanderer is passive, self-effacing and relaxed, while Superman is aggressive, self-affirming and nervous. Wanderer and Superman are not always good company.

How can this difference between two types of man, embodying two values, be explained? This difference reflects two different conceptions of man in his different relation to Nature. The Taoist ideal of man, Wanderer, reflects the conception of man as an integral part of nature, not entirely different from other creatures. Man is not a special creature, which has a divine or metaphysically special status within the chain of Being or within Tao. In fact man is only part of Nature. The Nietzschean ideal type of man reveals the conception of man according to which man has a legitimate right to exercise his power over Nature and over anything insofar as

he is capable of doing so.

The difference in the conception of man between Lao Tzu and Nietzsche can be characterized in terms of the difference between the humility of the Taoist Wanderer and the arrogance of the Nietzschean Superman. Thus construed, Wanderer is typically oriental in his attitude and temperament as illustrated in the Oriental classics and tradition, whereas Superman is characteristically occidental. Insofar as Wanderer ultimately seeks harmony with and within Nature, his ideal is not so different from either the Confucian ideal or from the Hindu or Buddhist ideals. Insofar as Superman strives for more power, for his perpetual expansion, his ideal is not really different from the Christian ideal, which seeks man's ultimate answer not in the present and here, but in the future, in an another world of transcendence. This suggests the ideological character of these two conceptions of man and two different conceptions of the value of and in life. Even if both Taoism and the thought of Nietzsche are presented as the two most radical critiques of the two prevailing ideologies of their respective societies and cultures, they are not entirely free from the ideologies they criticized and debunked. It appears that they were also prisoners of their respective societies, and thus remain as ideologies.

Victims of their own culture, which is perhaps the ultimate fate of all thought, Taoism and the philosophy of Nietzsche fascinate us beyond their societal and cultural boundaries, and beyond the confines of narrowly defined academic philosophical circles. The reason is that they are more refreshing and relevant than ever, than any other great thought. Their reflection on language is surprisingly up to date, and their critiques of other ideologies are profound and relevant to us. They teach us to re-examine our beliefs and values; they demand that we reflect once again and constantly upon the true and yet hidden meaning of the ideologies of a given society. And their own ideologies, their new proposals about for what and how we should live, present themselves as two possible alternatives to the old ideologies. And yet, as we have seen, the two proposals are incompatible. How to choose between them? How to choose between Wanderer and Superman, between relaxed Wanderer and combative Superman?

No one can deny the wonders of scientific progress and its astounding benefit to mankind. Often scientific achievement is more than miraculous. And no one would be blind about the fact that science is the product of the West, the achievement of the restless Western drive, embodied in the character of Faust, in the Crucifixion of Jesus, and in Superman.

And yet, no one is blind today to either the dangers of scientific technology or of its unlimited application. Overpopulation, pollution, exhaustion of natural resources and possibility of nuclear war with possible annihilation of the human race, as well as other creatures on earth, are some examples of the negative aspect of the product of scientific development. With science man could become the cause of ultimate destruction of himself and other creatures on earth. Man's restless drive for power, for transcendence, may transform itself into the seed of his own annihilation. Superman could be self-destructive; the value of power could become self-defeating.

Given this diagnosis, perhaps Wanderer appears wiser than Superman; the ideology of Wanderer appears to be the only alternative to the rest. Without transcendence, without striving for more and more, Wanderer is free, happy and at peace. Why couldn't wandering be a value in itself, the ultimate value. Perhaps we can find a wiser lesson from Lao Tzu than Nietzsche, regardless of our cultural origin and background.

NOTES

1. Wing-Tsit Chan, tr. and compiler, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 139
2. Op. cit., p. 183.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will-to-Power*, tr. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 550.
4. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1978), p. 6.
5. Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris, P.U.F., 1967), p. 117
6. F. Nietzsche, *Das Philosophen-Buch*, ed. Angele K. Marietti (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1969), p. 142, tr. Park Yn-hui.
7. F. Nietzsche, *The Will-to-Power*, op. cit., p. 266.
8. F. Nietzsche, *Das Philosophen-Buch*, op. cit., p. 117.
9. Chuang Tzu, *The Texts of Taoism*, tr. and ed. James Legge (New York: Dover, 1962), p. 185.
10. F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, tr. R. J. Hollingdale (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), p. 38.
11. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 192.
12. F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols*, op. cit., p. 38.
13. F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, tr. F. Giffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956).
14. F. Nietzsche, *Nachlass*, ed. Schlechta, p. 712, quoted by A. Danto, in *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, p. 225, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1965).
15. *Ibid.*
16. Quoted by Arthur Danto in *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, p. 212.
17. *Ibid.*

Annual Report of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1981

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland was established by King George IV in 1824 for:

“the purpose of investigation of subjects connected with or for the encouragement of science, literature and arts in relation to Asia.”

The Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded on June 16, 1900 by a small group of foreigners who were concerned with the scholarly investigation of Korea and her neighbors.

The activity of the Korea Branch has been strongly influenced by the historical events which took place in this country, and by the continuously growing interest in its history and culture among its residents and scholars both at home and abroad. The size of the membership of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society has grown consistently from its initial 17 members in 1900 to almost 1,500 members in 1981, meeting regularly in Seoul as well as in our Taegu and Taejon chapters.

Memberships—The membership increased this year from a total of 1,373 members in January 1981 to a total of 1,486 as of the end of November. This total amount of members comprises 56 life members, 442 overseas members and 988 regular members residing in Korea.

Programs—As of today we have sponsored 20 meetings in Seoul this year. The attendance at these meetings totaled 2,390, with the largest turnout of about 350 members at the Mangu Taetak Kut (Shaman Ritual) performance. This was the first meeting of the fall season and brought in many new members.

Tours—In view of the growing interest in visiting sites of historic and cultural importance, the Council adopted a more varied and flexible tour program. In 1981 we took 1,943 tourgoers on 39 tours, including seven overnight ones. The Garden Party, held at the Royal Swedish Embassy, had about 250 people in attendance.

Publications—This year we published:

- Royal Asiatic Society Transaction Vol. 55, 1980
- Taegu Guide
- Essays on Korean Traditional Music
- Pioneer American Businessman in Korea

Finance—Due to the constructive development of the Korea Branch's activities the finances are in a healthy state.

Seoul Programs

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
January 14	China: The Way We Saw It (Panel Discussion) Ms. Mary Alice Ball Mr. Ben Kremenak Mr. John Lee Mrs. Barbara Mintz	210
January 28	The Socialization of a Monk (Mr. Bill Brehm)	140
February 11	The Validity of Korean Mask Dance Drama as Theatre of Participation (Dr. Kim Ho-Soon)	100
February 25	Blindness in Korea (Dr. Edwin R. Lewinson)	80
March 11	Local Gentlemen in Yi Dynasty Korea (Dr. Fujiya Kawashima)	100
March 25	An Introduction to Chu-yok (Mr. Gary Rector)	135
April 8	Lao Tzu and Nietzsche: Wanderer and Superman (Dr. Park Ynhui)	80
April 22	Korean Postage Stamps (Dr. Lyman Hale)	80
May 13	South Korea's Changing Financial Sector (Mr. Norman Thorpe)	120
May 27	North Korea: Yesterday and Today (Mr. Adrian Buzo)	220
June 10	Strong Men and Virtuous Women: Changing Sex Roles in Korea (Dr. Jack Balswick)	140
June 24	Indo-Korean Relations (Dr. Alka Gupta)	45
August 26	Mangu Taetak Kut/ So-No-Ri Kut (Shaman Ritual) (from Hwanghaedo Province)	350
September 9	Walter D. Townsend: Pioneer American Businessman in Korea (Dr. Harold F. Cook)	80
September 23	Legal Aid Center and the Korean Family Law (Mrs. Sonia Strawn)	80

October 14	Korean Attitudes toward Heterodox Confucianism (Dr. Martina Deuchler)	80
October 18	The Mudang Kut as Drama (Father Daniel Kister)	90
November 11	Neo-Confucian Revolution of Values in the Early Yi Dynasty—the Implications for Legal Thought (Dr. William Shaw)	80
November 25	Romanization of Korean: Do Armchair Linguists have the Answer? (Dr. Edward F. Klein)	180
December 9	Elements of Korean Dance (Mrs. Judy Van Zile)	100

1981 Tours

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Participants</i>
February 7	Yong P'yōng Ski Tour	34
March 28	Kyunghyang Restaurant and Insa-dong	40
April 5	Shard Collecting Tour	30
April 11	Ch'ōnan Onyang and Hyōnch'ungsa	33
April 12	Emille Museum	72
April 18	Artists in Their Studies	23
April 25	Realm of the Immortals	110
April 26	Naksōnje and Piwon	109
May 1-3	Namsan in Kyōngju and Yongdong Village	30
May 9	Kanghwa-do and Jungsu-sa	35
May 16	Journey to the Center of the Earth	61
May 23-25	Hallyo Sudo	32
May 30	Garden Party	250
May 31	Inchon to Suwon on the Narrow Gauge	52
June 6	Pulgoji on the Han	112
June 14	Inchon Harbor and Islands	43
June 20	Puyō, and Kongju	35
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ERRATA

Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, Volume 55, 1980.

- p 42 Last line of paragraph 5: *Change reference number 15 to 14.*
- p 51 Lines 15 and 17: *Change Kyunyo's to Kyunyō's.*
 Line 15: *Change sibwōn-ga to Sibwōn-ga.*
 Line 16: *Change them to theme.*
- p 55 Last line of first paragraph: *The reference to note 30 should follow the word similarities.*
- p 54 Lines 10 and 25: *Change chongum to chōngūm.*
 Line 15: *Change Koryo-sa to Koryō-sa.*
 Line 19: *Change Koryo to Koryō.*
 Line 21: *Change Chong kwa-jong to Chōng kwa-jōng.*
 Line 21: *Change Kyunyo's to Kyunyō's.*
- p 59 Note 12, line 1: *珍 should follow the word character.*
- p 60 Note 13, line 2: *Change iso to isō.*
- p 85 Line 17: *The third word is and.*
- p 93 Bottom of the page: ... the first accredited: *should read the first accredited envoy from a Western nation. Of his experience on May 20, Foote commented:*
- p 94 Line 13: *Change Chong-dong to Chōng-dong and Toksu to Tōksu.*
- p 101 Line 36 *should read Korea nearly a century ago.*
- p 103 Third line from the bottom: *Change Taro to Tarō*
- p 106 Line 18: *Change memoirs of Li Hung-chang to (Memoirs of Li Hung-chang.)*
 Line 27: *Delete everything in the parantheses.*
 Line 29: *Delete the material in the parantheses.*

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Taegu Programs

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| January 21 | Dr. Kong Ch'ang-p'yo (Kyemyōng University), Modern Korean Architecture and City Planning. |
| February 18 | Mrs. Dorothy Underwood (Ewha Womans University), Kagok, the Modern Korean Art Song |
| March 18 | A presentation of films taken of Korea by Archabbot Weber (The Benedictine Order in the 1920's.) |
| April 15 | Dr. James Hoyt (Cultural Attache, United States Embassy) Characteristics of Korean Literature. |
| May 20 | Dr. John Sommerville (Sungjōn University), Social Mobility in Late Yi Dynasty Korea. |
| June 18 | Kyemyōng University Masked Dance Troupe, Performance of the Masked Dance, Kōsong Ogwangdae |
| September 16 | Dr. Jon C. Covell, Korean Art Treasures Taken to Japan. |
| October 28 | Mr. Mark Peterson (Fulbright Commission), Un-Confucian Women in the Shillok. |
| November 18 | Mrs. Sonia Strawn (United Methodist Mission), Korean Legal Aid Center for Family Relations. |
| December 16 | Dr. William Shaw (Fulbright Exchange Professor), Korean Legal System of the Early Yi Dynasty. |

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