

AN  
INTRODUCTION TO  

---

KOREAN  
CULTURE

*edited by John H. Koo & Andrew C. Nahm*

**HOLLYM**

**Elizabeth, NJ · SEOUL**

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When these consonants are aspirated which is shown by adding an apostrophe ( ' ) behind the letter, they are pronounced as in the English words:

**'ch'** like the **ch** of **chance**  
**k'** like the **k** of **king**  
**p'** like the **p** of **peace**  
**t'** like the **t** of **toy**

In certain cases, an apostrophe is also used to separate the pronunciation of two consonant sounds as in the cases of *Tan'gun* and *han'gil*, etc. Several compound consonants are pronounced as single consonants:

**ss** like the **s** of **Sam**

**tt** like the **d** of **dam**

Those Korean words not Romanized in accordance with the McCune-Reischauer System, not widely used or well-known, are kept in their original form. They include personal names such as Syngman Rhee, names of places such as Seoul and P'yongyang, industrial firm names such as Hyundai and Daewoo, and educational institutions such as Ewha Womans University and Yonsei University. In contrast, all Chinese words are Romanized in accordance with the Pinyin System.

# 1

## *The Land, Climate, and People* by Clark Sorensen

## Location, Size and Population

Korea occupies, in addition to a small part of the adjacent Asian mainland, the central of three large peninsulas (Kamchatka, Korean Malaysian) that protrude south from the eastern edge of the Asian continent. A mountainous country of some 220,847 square kilometers, Korea extends north to south some 1,000 kilometers, from 43 degrees north latitude along the arc of the Tumen River in North Hamgyŏng Province to 33 degrees north latitude on the southern coast of Cheju Island, Korea; latitude is similar to that of the most populated parts of Japan, of Spain or of the American state of Virginia.

Sheltered from the Pacific Ocean by the main islands of Japan Korea is surrounded on three sides by smaller seas that both separate and connect it to China and Japan. To the east is the deep, cold Sea of Japan (the East Sea) on which are located the important North Korean ports of Najin, Ch'ŏngjin, Hamhŭng, and Wŏnsan, as well as Russia's two most important naval and commercial ports on the Pacific, Vladivostok and Nakhodka. Ch'ŏngjin and Najin, having good rail connections to the interior, can serve as outlets for northern Manchuria as well as Korea. In recent years, North Korea has been setting up a free trade zone in the area around Najin and its neighboring harbor of Sŏnbong, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program. In contrast to North Korea and Russia, South Korea and Japan have few important ports on the Sea of Japan. South Korea's east coast is separated from the most populated parts of the country by the rugged Taebaek Mountains and

has few good harbors. The Japanese port of Niigata is on the Sea of Japan, but most of Japan's important seaports are on the east (Pacific Ocean) side of Japan.

To the west is the shallow, warm Yellow Sea upon which both North and South Korea have important ports Nampo'o and Haegu in the north, and Inch'ön, Kunsan, and Mokp'o in the south. Unlike the east coast, the west coast of Korea has great tidal variations: 5 meters at Nampo'o, 7 at Haegu, and 9 at Inch'ön, where low tide exposes extensive tidal flats going out thousands of meters. Because of these tides, the dock areas of both Nampo'o and Inch'ön are protected by dikes and locks to maintain water at a constant level. China's Shandong Peninsula is within 180 kilometers across the Yellow Sea from Cape Changsan in North Korea's Hwanghae Province, and it has long been an important destination of seaborne trade between the two countries. The Yellow Sea also extends north past the Chinese port of Dalian, gateway to Manchuria, and connects with the Gulf of Bohai upon which is located Tianjin, the main port for Beijing. Ferries run from Inch'ön to Tianjin and the Shandong Peninsula.

The southeast corner of the Korean Peninsula faces the Korea Strait that separates Korea from Japan. Here is located South Korea's most important port, Pusan. By ferry from Pusan to the Japanese port of Fukuoka across the strait is some 200 kilometers, but the Japanese Island of Tsushima, located in the middle of the strait, is just visible from the Korean mainland on a good day.

The southwest corner of the peninsula faces the East China Sea served by the port of Yösu. Cheju Island, a large volcanic cone some 80 kilometers south of the Korean mainland in the East China Sea, is the southernmost part of Korea.

Since 1948, Korea has been divided into two competing states, one socialist, the other capitalist. In the north, the socialist *Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (DPRK), or North Korea, occupies 122,100 square kilometers. To the south the capitalist *Republic of Korea* (ROK), or South Korea, occupies slightly less than 100,000 square kilometers of the peninsula. In terms of land area, North Korea occupies about 55 percent of Korea and South Korea 45 percent. In terms of population, on the other hand, South Korea, with almost 44 million residents, has about 65 percent of the population, while North Korea, with slightly more than 22 million residents, has about 35 percent.

South Korea is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with an overall density of 440 people per square kilometer. North Korea, on the other hand, has a population density of only 181 people

per square kilometer. South Korea's population density is higher than Japan (329), China (121), or India (266), and is surpassed in Asia only by Bangladesh (778) and Taiwan (572). Although by the end of the colonial period in 1945 some three quarters of a million Japanese and around 75,000 Chinese lived in Korea (primarily in the large cities), virtually all of the Japanese and a good number of the Chinese left after liberation. Except for some 30,000 overseas Chinese concentrated in Seoul and Inch'ön, the population of both parts of Korea is entirely ethnic Korean.

North Korea shares a 1,025 kilometer border with China along the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. In the extreme northeast, North Korea also shares a border with Russia along the last 25 kilometers of the Tumen River which empties into the Sea of Japan. A rail line between Vladivostok and Najin runs across this common border. Because of the North Korea-Russian border, China does not have direct access to the Sea of Japan from Manchuria. There has been some talk of dredging the shallow Tumen River to allow shipping to sail directly up the river to an inland Chinese river port, but the economic and technical feasibility of this project has not yet been determined.

South Korea's only land border is with North Korea. The original border, the 38th parallel that cuts across the Korean peninsula some 40 kilometers north of Seoul, was an arbitrary boundary agreed upon by the Soviet Union and the United States for the purposes of disarming Japanese troops in 1945, and was not intended to be permanent. The development of the Cold War and the creation of two separate states on the Korean peninsula in 1948 led to a civil war from 1950 to 1953 between the North and the South that eventually involved troops from the United States and twelve other members of the United Nations on the side of the south, and China (with the support of the Soviet Union) on the side of the north. The present boundary between North and South Korea follows the armistice line agreed upon by the United States, North Korea, and China on July 27, 1953. It runs considerably north of the 38th parallel in the mountainous east, but south of the 38th parallel along the Imjin River in the west just north of Seoul. This boundary is heavily fortified and is bordered by a four kilometer demilitarized zone (DMZ) on either side. A neutral compound where the two sides can meet, if necessary, is maintained on the DMZ near the village of Panmunjöm.

板門店 = 非軍事區

### *T'aebaek System*

The main system of mountains that forms the backbone of the Korean Peninsula is the T'aebaek Mountain System which runs south from Mt. Paektu along the boundary of North Korea's Kanggye and Yanggang Provinces, curves around Yöngdüng Bay, and then runs along the east side of the peninsula as far as the Taegu-P'ohang Valley in South Korea. The northern portion of this mountain system, known as the Nangnim Range, runs south from Mt. Paektu on the Chinese border to just north of the city of Wönsan, and has peaks more than 2,000 meters high. The southern portion of the system, known as the T'aebaek Range, runs from the famous and scenic 1,500 meter peaks of the Diamond (Kümgang) Mountains south of Wönsan to the Taegu-P'ohang Valley in South Korea. These two ranges, connected by a number of minor ranges with peaks seldom reaching more than 1,000 meters high, have a general northeast-southwest orientation. These lower ranges allow the east coast port of Wönsan to enjoy good communications with Seoul, along the Chugaryöng Valley (pass at 600 meters), and with P'yöngyang along the more serpentine Ahobiröng Valley.

### *Hamgyöng Range*

East of, and almost perpendicular to, the Nangnim Range is the high Hamgyöng Range that parallels the Sea of Japan coast and separates North Korea's inland Yanggang Province from the coastal provinces of North and South Hamgyöng. Along with Mt. Paektu, the Nangnim and Hamgyöng Ranges together form a triangle that encloses the rugged Kaema Upland (Yanggang Province) around the upper reaches of the Tumen River. To the east of the Nangnim Range, the Hamgyöng Range continues as the Myohyang Mountains that separate the provinces of Kanggye, and North and South P'yöngan. This is a somewhat lower range than the Hamgyöng, but it has spectacular scenery second only to that of the Diamond Mountains.

## 2

### Topography and Physical Features

Koreans celebrate their nation as extending from Mt. Paektu to Mt. Halla. Mt. Paektu, at 2,755 meters the tallest mountain of Korea, is an extinct volcano on the North Korea-Manchuria border whose crater is filled by Lake Chönji from which flows the headwaters of Manchuria's Sungari River. Mt. Halla, whose cone rises symmetrically from the sea to 1,950 meters to form Cheju Island, is the tallest peak in South Korea. Mt. Paektu last erupted in 1702 A.D., and Mt. Halla in 1007 A.D. These volcanoes are not actually typical of the Korean Peninsula, which is geologically stable and not subject to the violent volcanic eruptions and frequent earthquakes of Japan and the Philippines.

The mountainous nature of Korea means that only 20 percent of the land can be cultivated. Although Korea's mountains outside the far north are not particularly high, the slopes are steep, and they determine much of the geography of the peninsula. Mountains frame the river valleys, densely populated with people; they separate the provinces; and they shape the transportation routes that tie the different regions together.

### Sobaek Range

Farther south beginning at T'aebaek Mountain in the T'aebaek Range, the Sobaek Range that separates South Korea's Yöngnam region from the rest of Korea, branches off in a southwesterly direction terminating in 1,915 meter Mt. Chiri in the southwest corner of the peninsula.

The general tilt of the Korean peninsula is from east to west. The T'aebaek Range hugs the east coast of Korea providing for only a narrow coastal littoral along the East Coast. The crest of the T'aebaek Range, while only 20 kilometers from the Sea of Japan, is more than 100 kilometers from the Yellow Sea. The eastern escarpment is thus steep with short, swift rivers, but the western side is more gentle with longer, larger rivers the Taedong, Imjin, Han, and Küm. The Naktong River which originates in the Sobaek Mountains is the only major river that flows south. It empties into the Korea Strait near Kimhae. Thus, with the exception of the Hamhüng plain, all the large plains—P'yöngyang-Chaeryöng plain, Kyönggi lowlands, North Chölla plain—and the population concentrations are on the western side of the Main Korean Range, or south of the Sobaek Range. Even the largest of these plains, however, does not compare in size with the Kantö Plain of Japan nor with the huge North China plain. On the whole, Korea has a small-scale landscape that traditionally was dotted with small villages of several dozen houses and occasional towns, rather than the big cities and large villages of China with several thousand households.

Table 1 : Korea's Rivers

A. Rivers that empty into the Yellow Sea		navigable length	
Yalu (Amnok)	813 km	length	243
Taedong	431	length	298
Han	482	length	121
Imjin	254	length	120
Küm	402	length	
B. Rivers that empty into the Korea Strait		navigable length	
Naktong	526 km	length	340 km
C. Rivers that empty into the Sea of Japan		navigable length	
Tumen (Tuman)	516	length	

### Climate

Korea's climate is characterized by alterations of the continental influence of the large land mass of Asia and Siberia, and by the maritime influences of the seas surrounding the Korean Peninsula. In the winter, continental influences predominate leading to a cold, dry season. During the summer, maritime influences predominate bringing warm, moist air from the southern seas. Most areas get between 100 and 200 centimeters of annual precipitation concentrated during the growing season, so that Korea supports a lush native vegetation of great variety, as well as good agriculture. The climate of the peninsular parts of Korea, where maritime influence is strongest, is warm-temperate. The coldest month has an average temperature near freezing, while the hottest month (usually August) has a temperature above 25 degrees Centigrade. This is similar to comparable latitudes on the East Coast of the United States. North of a line linking Anju with Söngjin, and in highland regions, continental influences predominate and the climate is cold-temperate. More than three months have a mean daily temperature below freezing, though the hottest month (usually July) still has a mean daily temperature above 25 degrees.

The southernmost parts of the Korean peninsula receive rainfall throughout the year, but most of the Korean peninsula exhibits striking seasonality in precipitation. Only small amounts of rain or snow fall from October through March, while the rains that begin in the spring gradually increase to a peak in July or August, then taper off in September. This cycle is caused by global wind patterns ultimately attributable to the large size of the Asian continent, to the height of the Himalayan Mountains, to the spin of the earth on its axis, and to the uneven heating of the earth's surface.

During the winter, extreme cooling of the Asian continent causes a large mass of dense, cold air to settle over northeastern Siberia. This dense mass of air, known as the Siberian High, drains toward lower pressure areas, such as the West Pacific, sweeping over Korea and North China on its way. The winter winds from Siberia have not been able to pick up moisture, so they are dry as well as cold, and little precipitation falls during the winter. The opposite happens in the summer. The summer sun heats up the Asian continent—particularly north India and Mongolia. The hot air rises, creating a low pressure zone, the Mongolian Low, that draws in warm, moist air from the oceans. This moist air, the Northeast Asian Monsoon, brings the steady, heavy rains to Korea (and North China) in July that are known in Korean as the *changma*. As the sun-

mer progresses, the heat and the low pressure zone move farther and farther north drawing the summer monsoon, and the rains it brings, farther and farther north, reaching the most northern portions of Korea in August.

As the oceans in the western Pacific warm up in late summer, typhoons become more and more likely. Hurricanes in the Pacific Ocean are called typhoons. Korea, being fairly far north and protected from the Pacific Ocean by islands, is not as subject to typhoons as the Philippines, Taiwan, the South China Coast, or even Japan, but typhoons that form in late July or early September sometimes hit the southern part of Korea. By the time they reach as far as Korea, they often have lost some of their strength. The most danger tends to be from floods and landslides caused by intense rain rather than wind damage. If the typhoon hits in September, however, it may knock down the rice crops that are almost ready for harvest, and this has a devastating effect on the agricultural areas hit by the typhoon.

### Agriculture

Until the post-war industrialization of the peninsula, most Koreans subsisted by peasant agriculture. Each household endeavored to produce most of what it needed on land it either owned or rented. Farms were exceedingly small, averaging half a hectare (1.2 acres).

Koreans divide their land into two categories: *riceland*, or *non*, and *rainfall field*, or *pat*. Riceland consists of fields suitable for the cultivation of rice that have been leveled, diked, and provided with a source of irrigation. These are the most valuable lands. Rainfall fields are used for unirrigated grain and bean crops, vegetables, and orchards.

Although some people kept horses for riding purposes, most plowed with oxen who were fed on straw, kaoliang, grass cut on the hills, and weeds growing alongside paths and irrigation ditches. Deliberately cultivated pasture was rare, and dairy farming unknown. Farmers with little or no land sometimes moved into the hills and practiced fire-field (*hwujŏn*) farming, a type of farming in which they would burn over the natural vegetation on steep slopes, plant field crops for a couple of years, and then abandon the fields to let them rejuvenate with natural vegetation.

Which crops were grown depended upon household needs and environmental conditions such as length of the growing season, availability of irrigation water, and amount of rainfall. Wherever possible, people leveled

and terraced fields to make them suitable for rice growing. Two fifths of the total cultivated acreage of Korea was riceland (not all of which had a secure source of irrigation) with the rest being rainfall field. Each household tried to farm a little of each type of land so that they would have a variety of food to eat. Ideally they would grow enough regular rice to feed their family, and enough glutinous rice to make rice cake (*ttŏk*) and brew rice beer (*makkolli*). The rest they would sell for cash. On part of their rainfall fields they would grow vegetables for home use—cabbage, hot peppers, radishes, garlic, lettuce, zucchini, and squash. On another part they would grow field crops such as barley, millet, kaoliang, beans of all types (soy, red, mung), and wheat; and if they still had some field left over, they might plant mulberry trees whose leaves are used to feed silkworms. Peasants often planted a fruit tree or two near their house—persimmons in the south, and cherries, jujubes, apples, pears, peaches, or chestnuts in other areas. Specialized fruit orchards were not common because transporting fruit to market was difficult. In addition to food crops, people grew hemp, ramie (a kind of fine grass that was woven into cloth), and cotton to make clothes, and such specialized crops as tobacco and sesame (which was pressed into a cooking oil). In coastal areas people commonly planted sweet potatoes, while in the mountains they often planted buckwheat and white potatoes.

The diet consisted of steamed grain, seasonal vegetables, and usually a soup. Rice was the preferred grain, but it was so expensive that poorer families often sold their rice for cash and purchased cheaper grains such as barley, millet, or kaoliang that were grown at home or imported from Manchuria. A large proportion of the rice crop was exported to Japan, where it was well-appreciated since Korean rice is the same as that grown by the Japanese. Peasants often ran out of rice toward the end of winter and subsisted on barley. They called the time of food shortages, barley pass (*pori kogae*), in the early spring, when agricultural work is intense but crops are not yet ready to be harvested. Fresh fruit and vegetables followed the seasons. Housewives put great effort into making *kimchi*, a mixture of cabbage, radishes, red pepper, and garlic preserved in brine. It was important in providing vitamins during the winter when no fresh vegetables were available. People often added roast chestnuts and sweet potatoes to their diet at that time of year. Wheat and buckwheat were not made into bread, but rather into noodles which could be substituted for steamed grain. Beans could be steamed like grain, but many were eaten as sprouts. Soybeans could also be mashed and mixed with wheat to make a fermented soup stock known as *toenjang*. Sometimes soybeans were also made into a beancake known as *tubu*. Koreans like meat (beef,



pork, chicken, goat, even dog) eggs, and fish, but until recently only the wealthy ate meat very regularly. Seaweed, however, was a good source of protein for coastal people. People ate the brown kind known as *miyŏk* in a soup flavored with sesame, while the green kinds known as *kim* were dried, pressed into thin sheets, and wrapped around balls of rice.

The growing season varies in different parts of Korea. On the south coast, or on Cheju Island, the growing season lasts almost eleven months, but in the north it may last only seven months. Five different agricultural regions can be distinguished: (1) the subtropical south, (2) temperate south, (3) central, (4) north, (5) Kaema upland. The subtropical south is confined to Cheju Island, a very narrow strip along the south coast warm enough so that crops can be grown almost all year round. Both riceland and rainfall field are double cropped, and certain tropical crops that do not grow elsewhere in Korea (such as taro and Mandarin oranges) can be cultivated.

The temperate south includes the rest of North and South Chŏlla, and North and South Kyŏngsang Provinces. Here half or more of the land was riceland on which rice was grown from spring to fall, and a catch crop of barley was planted in the winter. Because riceland is so productive and requires a lot of labor, farms in this part of Korea were small averaging about a third of a hectare (less than an acre). Bamboo grows in this part of Korea, and some villages in south Cholla province specialized in producing bamboo implements in the off season.

Central Korea, consisting of Kyŏnggi and the Ch'ungch'ŏng Provinces, was similar to the temperate south in which riceland predominated. The growing season was too short to grow winter barley on riceland because the barley harvest came too late for the rice to be planted on time. Winter barley could be grown on rainfall fields, however. In the northern zone—Hwanghae, North and South P'yŏngan, and North and South Hamgyŏng Provinces—less abundant water and a shorter growing season made rice cultivation more difficult. In these provinces fewer than a quarter of the fields were riceland, and such rainfall field grain crops as wheat, millet, kaoliang, soybeans, and maize were widely grown. Because rainfall fields are less productive than rice fields, farms on the average were 2/3 of a hectare twice as large as in the temperate south. The Kaema-upland North Korea's Chagang Province was unique. Here farmers cultivated little rice and concentrated on oats, millet, buckwheat, beans, and potatoes on farms of a hectare or more. Firefield farming was especially common here.

Before World War II, farm tenancy was a serious problem. Over the years of Japanese rule, many Korean farmers had lost their land so that

by 1931 more than half of all the agricultural land was cultivated by tenants who were the majority of the farmers and paid rents to landowners amounting to about half of their crop. In the north, less than half the land was tenanted, but in the rich rice-growing areas of the south, almost three quarters of the riceland, and more than half the rainfall field, was owned by landlords who did not cultivate their land. Some of the largest landlords were Japanese, but the great majority were Korean. The largest landlords tended to live in the cities and left their lands in the care of agents. The tenants most commonly were sharecroppers who paid half their harvest to their landlords, or paid a rent in kind determined by the landlord on the basis of the crop. Because rents were so high, most tenants barely lived at the subsistence level and had little incentive to improve their agricultural practices.

Not only did the tenancy system discourage agricultural innovation, but it aggravated rural poverty and created resentment and political unrest, so that upon liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, the question of land reform was one of burning importance. Land reform was carried out in North Korea in the spring of 1946 when lands were expropriated from landlords without compensation and distributed among tenants. A large number of the former landlords fled to South Korea at this time. Buying and selling of land in North Korea was prohibited. The lands distributed to tenants were collectivized after the Korean War. Since 1958 agriculture in North Korea has been carried out on cooperative farms (*nyŏptong nongjang*) that are cotermious with administrative villages. Many people moved to the cities to work in factories during the period of collectivization so that today only about a quarter of the North Korean GNP is provided by agriculture. The present-day collective farms are run by managers answerable to local and county farm committees. North Korean agricultural policy has concentrated on attaining food self-sufficiency by encouraging large-scale grain farming using scientific methods. Tractor stations are maintained in rural administrative centers to encourage mechanization. This system has led to productivity improvements, but not to the hoped for extent. Reports of food shortages have periodically emerged from North Korea. As North Korea is almost entirely in the northern agricultural zone where rice is less commonly grown, even today almost 60 percent of the grains grown are rainfall grains such as wheat, barley, maize, and kaoliang.

South Korea also embarked on land reform after 1945, but in a more gradual manner. The ten percent of the agricultural land in the south that had been owned by Japanese was seized and managed by the American Military Government's New Korea Company until sold to ten-

ants for three times the annual harvest in 1947. The Republic of Korea's land reform law, with similar provisions, was passed in 1949 and was implemented between 1950 and 1955. According to its provisions, tenanted land was to be sold to tenants, and farm size was limited to three hectares. About 25 percent of the land of South Korea changed hands in this manner. There were many irregularities; however, and another 25 percent was privately sold from landlords to tenants during the 1945-1955 period. Even so, by 1955 tenancy rates in South Korea had been reduced from almost 70 percent to less than five percent. Although successful in reducing the tenancy rate, the South Korean land reform was less successful in the short run in improving agriculture and rural living standards. Many of the new farms were too small to be viable, so many who received land soon sold it for subsistence. Those who were able to succeed at farming rarely had capital for improvements or the technical knowledge to improve their agriculture. South Korean agriculture has gradually improved since then, however, due to a combination of rural-urban migration, changed market conditions, and government support.

The industrialization and urbanization that began in the 1960s in South Korea drained unemployed and surplus population out of the countryside and created urban demand for agricultural products. At the same time, the government instituted price supports for the basic crops and implemented a comprehensive agricultural extension program run through the Agricultural Guidance Office and the Office of Rural Development. The Agricultural Cooperative was merged with the Agricultural Bank in the early sixties to form the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, a comprehensive organization with branches in each rural township that could disseminate seed, fertilizer, tools, and credit to farmers while providing a cooperative means of marketing their crops. These measures have led to a profound change in South Korea's agriculture. The number of farmers has fallen drastically to less than 15 percent of the population, while farm size has tripled to an average of 1.2 hectares (about 3 acres).

Most farmers now plow with small tractors, use chemical fertilizers, control weeds and pests with insecticides, and may even transplant rice mechanically. Rice productivity has shot up, while field crops such as wheat, barley, millet, rye, and sorghum have been declined to less than 15 percent of the grains grown. Grains such as wheat can be purchased cheaply on international markets, so they have been replaced by higher value fruit, vegetable, medicinal, and industrial crops. Cheju Island, for example, now specializes in citrus, while some farmers on the south coast grow cut flowers for the Japanese market. Animal husbandry has become

much more important. Cattle are no longer used as draft animals, but hundreds of thousands are raised for slaughter, as are even larger numbers of pigs, chickens, and ducks. Dairy farming has emerged around the major cities.

The living standard of South Korean farmers has improved greatly over the years, but improvement of the standard of living in rural areas has lagged the cities. This has been a major cause of rural to urban migration. Farm price supports are a significant government expense. Farmer indebtedness has emerged as a problem when farmers borrow to expand their scale of production or to cultivate a new sideline only to find that prices have crashed. South Korean farmers are especially fearful of a crash in agricultural prices if domestic markets are freely opened to international imports.

## 3

## The Economic Geography of North and South Korea

North Korea has built its economy by using its abundance of natural resources. The mountainous terrain provides many opportunities for developing hydroelectric resources. Coal (anthracite) is found in North and South Pyöngan Provinces and South Hamgyöng Province. Iron ore, gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc are also found. The Tanchön and Köndök mines in South Hamgyöng Province are said to contain the world's largest deposit of magnetite. South Korea also has good hydroelectric power sources, but its mineral sources (though they include cement and coal) are inferior to those found in the north. This lack is made up in part by superior agricultural potential in the south.

Both North and South Korea have become highly industrialized and urbanized since 1945, but the pattern of urbanization in each is different. In 1990, South Korea was almost 75 percent urban, and was dominated by a few very large cities—Seoul, the capital, with almost 11 million residents, and five other cities with more than a million residents each. Sixty-three percent of the population lived in cities larger than 100,000 in 1985. North Korea was 60 percent urban in 1987, but the capital, P'yöngyang with 2.4 million, was the only city of more than a million, and 61 percent of the urban population lived in cities smaller than 100,000.

Table 2 : Largest Cities in North Korea (1987)

Cities	Population
Pyöngyang	2,355,000
Hamhüing	701,000
Chöngjin	520,000
Sinjüju	289,000
Tanchön	284,000

Table 3 : Largest Cities in South Korea (1991)

Cities	Population
Seoul	10,918,000
Pusan	3,877,000
Taegu	2,286,000
Inchön	1,728,000
Kwangju	1,234,000

The North Korean economy is based on the ideology of *Juche* (self-reliance) and is centrally planned. The North Korean leadership endeavors to create an economy that can provide for as many of its own needs with domestic production as possible, by importing only what is absolutely necessary and by exporting only after domestic needs have been met. Trade amounts to less than 20 percent of the GNP, with Russia, China, and Japan being the major trading partners. Domestically mined coal provides some 90 percent of North Korea's energy, with hydroelectric power contributing the rest. The nuclear plants at Yöngbyön are still considered experimental, so big nuclear power generation capacity is not expected for North Korea until the late nineties. Since petroleum has to be imported from either Russia, China, or the Middle East, North Korea has avoided heavy dependence on this as a source of energy.

Heavy and chemical industries have been given great emphasis with major concentrations near P'yöngyang, Hamhüing, and Ch'öngjin. Iron and steel and the machine-building industries are all important, with the steel mill at Kimch'aek being the largest. Light manufactures have been given more emphasis in recent years than in the past. Many consumer goods are produced locally rather than in the large industrial cities.

North Korea has a well-developed railway network. In 1980 they had more than 5,000 kilometers of track, 63 percent of which had been electrified. Some 90 percent of North Korea's freight and passengers are

carried by rail. Since trains can be powered by domestically produced electricity or domestically mined coal, heavy dependence on rail transport facilitates energy self-reliance. Highway transport that requires the use of imported petroleum is less developed, but more than 350 kilometers of superhighway connect P'yŏngyang with Namp'o and Wŏnsan.

**Table 4 : North Korean Ports by Tonnage**

Cities	Tonnage
Namp'o*	about 1,500,000
Ch'ŏngjin*	
Hamhŭng	

\* Foreign ships may land

The South Korean economy is capitalist but with significant government planning and ownership of infrastructure such as rail, power, and steel. Since the sixties, international trade has fostered rapid growth in GNP and per capita income. Per capita GNP has passed \$10,000 vaulting South Korea into the lower ranks of the world's high income countries. Trade amounts to about 75 percent of the GNP. South Korea imports machinery, intermediate manufactured goods, petroleum, and other raw materials and exports finished manufactured products, from consumer products like microwave ovens to steel, ships, and automobiles. Textiles, clothing, and footwear, important industries of the past, have begun to decline and move offshore to China and Indonesia as Korean labor has become more expensive, but they are still important to the economy. Similar to North Korea, South Korea has well-developed hydroelectric power resources and modest coal deposits, but all domestic sources together supply only about a third of the country's power needs. Almost half its energy is supplied by petroleum imported from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Almost 15 percent of its energy (half of the electricity generated) is supplied by nuclear power.

A large portion of South Korea's industry is located near Seoul, particularly in the Kuro and Puyŏng districts between Seoul and Inch'ŏn. Other concentrations of industry are in Taegu (textiles and automobile parts), and the southeast coast including P'ohang (iron and steel), Ulsan (chemicals, automobiles, shipbuilding), Pusan (shoes and shipbuilding), and Masan (machine tools, textiles). The Yŏsu peninsula on the southwest coast has a large concentration of chemical refining plants. The concentration of industry in Seoul and the southeast has recently become a source of political tension. Efforts are now being made to spread industry more

evenly around Korea.

South Korea has a well-developed railway network with almost 6,500 kilometers of track in 1990. Only 3 percent of that track is electrified. The country has concentrated much more than North Korea on developing highway transport. South Korea has more than 40,000 kilometers of paved highway and more than 1,500 kilometers of superhighway connecting all parts of the country. South Korea's railways, while they haul in tonnage about as much as North Korean railways, haul a much smaller proportion of South Korea's total freight and passengers. Railways and the subways in Seoul and Pusan together carry about 10 percent of the passenger traffic, with the rest going either by bus (both high-speed highway and rural), or increasingly by private automobile. In 1989, 28 percent of the freight went by rail, 60 percent by highway, and 11 percent by ship. In recent years, as private car ownership has skyrocketed, South Korea's highways have begun to suffer from the clogged traffic typical of developed countries.

**Table 5 : South Korean Ports by Tonnage and Cargo**

	Most important cargo	Tonnage
P'ohang	iron ore, coal, steel	35,416,000
Kwangyang	oil	34,679,000
Pusan*	general cargo	31,301,000
Inch'ŏn*	general cargo	22,877,000
Ulsan	automobiles	14,338,000
Tonghae	general cargo	10,038,000

\* Foreign ships may land

## 4

## The People

The discovery of Paleolithic artifacts proves Korea was inhabited as long ago as 500,000 years. However, any inhabitants of the Korean peninsula that far back in history would have been premodern (*Homo erectus* or *neanderthalensis*) and are not likely to be directly ancestral to today's Koreans. Today's Koreans are descended from numerous waves of migrants from Northeast Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, and North China who began drifting into Korea from around 5000 B.C. These migrants undoubtedly belonged to a variety of tribes and cultures who came to Korea at different times and gradually merged, intermarried, and developed a common society on the Korean peninsula. Koreans today consider themselves a homogeneous race and culture, but the merging of originally distinct tribes into a single common society was not completed until after Shilla united the Korean peninsula in 668.

Based on linguistic and archaeological evidence, the basic stock of the Korean people seem to have migrated from northeastern Siberia into Manchuria and then down into the Korean peninsula. Some continued across the Korea Strait into Japan, which has continued to receive Korean migrants, though the number has been relatively small since the Shilla unification. The original northeast Siberia stock received significant admixtures of blood from China—particularly during the 400 years, from 100 B.C. to 300 A.D., that Chinese commanderies existed in north Korea. Significant migration of ethnic Chinese and northeast Asian tribes from

China and Manchuria continued through Koryŏ times when significant numbers of ethnic Koreans also migrated to China's Shandong Peninsula for trade purposes. Because of these ancient migrations to and from Korea, and because of the mingling with neighboring people, Koreans physically closely resemble northern and eastern Chinese to their west, and Japanese of the Inland Sea area to their east.

Koreans are a medium-sized people. Studies done during the thirties found the men to average 163 cm (5'4") and the women 148 (4'10"). This was several inches shorter than Chinese from Hebei near Beijing, about the same as Chinese in the eastern provinces of Jiangsu and Shandong, and one to two inches taller than the Japanese or southern Chinese. Both men and women tended to be somewhat taller in the north than the south. Improved nutrition since World War II has led people to grow taller than in the past in both Korea and Japan. Studies in the late fifties in South Korea showed most men ranging between 161 and 171 cm (5'3" and 5'7") and women between 152 and 162 cm (4'10" and 5'3"). The stature of South Koreans today is now probably an inch or so taller than the earlier studies found, because nutrition has improved since that time.

Multivariate studies of Korean skull measurements show them to be quite similar to those of Manchus, Mongols, and northern Chinese. Koreans tend to have a relatively large head—tall and broad in front, but narrow front to back. Like Mongols and Manchus, Koreans tend to have prominent cheekbones with a relatively straight nose. These protruding cheekbones give the face a somewhat flat aspect. It is thought that high cheekbones might function to protect the eyes from wind and glare. Most Koreans have an oval face. Almost all Koreans (like the Chinese and Japanese) have straight black, or chestnut, hair (which tends to be darker on males than females). A small number of males (less than one percent) have slightly wavy hair. Most Koreans have chestnut colored eyes, though the darkness varies somewhat from person to person and tends to be somewhat lighter in females than in males. Skin color for Koreans, as for Japanese and northern Chinese, is quite light, comparable to southern Europeans. The slight yellowish tint of East Asians' skin comes from a subcutaneous layer of fat that protects people's faces from cold rather than from skin color per se. Many Koreans' cheeks turn bright red when they are exposed to cold, when they exercise, or when they drink alcohol. About 80 percent of Koreans have an epicanthic eye fold, but up to 20 percent are completely without this feature.

Studies of the ABO blood groups show Koreans to be typical for northeast Asia: 28% O, 32% A, 30% B, and 10% AB. As in all of East

Asia, Rh negative blood is extremely rare. The distribution of blood types in Korea is notable primarily for the low frequency of O type blood, the type that is most common worldwide. High frequencies of A type blood are characteristic of Europe, but B type blood is relatively uncommon there. On the other hand, B type blood is extremely common in Northern India and Mongolia, but A type blood is relatively uncommon. Korea, Japan, and Manchuria are characterized by relatively high frequencies of both A and B type blood, hence low frequencies of O type. It has been hypothesized that frequencies of blood types might be a consequence of each type's superior resistance to different endemic diseases, as well as heredity, but no comprehensive explanation for the world-wide distribution of blood types has been forthcoming. In Korea the frequencies of A and B tend to vary from north to south with B type blood slightly more common in the north, and A type blood more common in the south. This shows the transitional character of Korea, in that A type blood is more common in Japan (closest to the south) while B type is more common in China and Mongolia (closest to the north). Like many peoples for whom dairy farming is not traditional, adult Koreans often lack the enzyme lactase that aids in the digestion of fresh milk. These adults, if they consume fresh milk, are likely to get stomach cramps or diarrhea.

Although in the aggregate Koreans have a distinctive physical profile, one should not underestimate the diversity of the Korean people. There is a good deal of overlap in the features of Koreans, Japanese, and north Chinese. Although one might be able to statistically distinguish a large group of Koreans from a large group of northern Chinese or Japanese on physical features alone (that is, even if they wore the same clothing and had the same hair style), it is difficult to do this on an individual level since the features of most northern and eastern Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans fall within the normal range of variation for all of these countries. All of the physical features found in Korea are also found in Japan and China, but at different frequencies. Ethnic Koreans who have grown up in China or Japan and have learned to speak the local language and dress and act according to local norms, have easily blended into the local population. Ethnic Chinese and Japanese could do the same in Korea, though this has rarely actually happened for cultural and economic reasons that have nothing to do with physical or racial appearance.

### Suggested Further Reading

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