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Map of Northwestern United States and  
Neighboring Canadian Provinces

Montana, Shining Mountain Treasureland

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26 in Natural Colors

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# Roaming Korea South of the Iron Curtain

BY ENZO DE CHETELAT

**I**MAGINE the United States divided into North and South by a border from east to west at about the latitude of San Francisco, with a Communist curtain over the North and guerrillas raiding the South. Then you will have some idea of the difficulties faced by Korea.

The arbitrary division into Northern and Southern Zones, which began as a military expedient for disarming of Japanese troops by American and Russian forces, became Korea's real tragedy.

Now turned into a rigid political barrier between Communist-dominated northern and democratic southern Korea, the 38th parallel cuts across villages, mountains, streams, roads, and the country's resources (map, page 779).

North Korea is rich in minerals, timber, and hydroelectric power; here was concentrated heavy industry. South Korea is the food-producing half, though it also has some industry and mineral resources. It is primarily agricultural, has well-developed fisheries, and contains the capital city, Seoul.

## Trains, Mines, Industries Going Again

As I viewed the problem at close range, the difficulties in the way of the new free government at Seoul seemed almost insuperable. But, comparing Korea's present condition with the complete disruption which it faced at first, one sees striking progress.

Assisted first by American Military Government and later by the Economic Cooperation Administration, South Korea today is getting its railways repaired and its trains running on schedule.\*

Short extension lines are being built in the South to tie in the tungsten, coal, and other minerals of the east coast district which formerly fed Japan's war industries (page 790). Mine operations are being extended and new mineral deposits opened.

There is still a shortage of electric power, but steam facilities are being expanded and new hydroelectric projects are under way. Industries that were completely halted when Russia turned off the power from the north (page 795) have again started to run; so there are more cotton cloth, paper, bicycles, and other products to supply local needs.

Thanks to imported fertilizers, the heavy importations of grain have declined. The Seoul Government and ECA estimate that, barring unforeseen disasters, the 1950 rice crop will supply South Korea's own needs and also should yield a surplus.

When, in January, 1948, I was asked to go to South Korea as adviser to the chief of the Geological Survey of Korea, my feelings were mixed. I had heard that the country afforded difficult living conditions for Americans. Friends and family advised me not to go there because of the proximity of the "Iron Curtain." But my curiosity and eagerness for travel soon overrode my hesitation.

## Seoul a Crowded Capital

Two months later I stepped ashore at Inchon, busy port about 20 miles east of Seoul (page 794).

The Korean capital was crowded. The population had practically doubled in the last 10 years. Since the war there had been a heavy influx of refugees from the Russian Zone and Korean repatriates from Japan, China, and islands of the Pacific. Materials were short during war years and since; every house and building needed repair and a good coat of paint.

Seoul is beautifully located in the midst of steep granite hills. Wide avenues give it a Western atmosphere, as do the many new modern buildings built when Korea was part of the Japanese Empire (pages 778, 782, 783). But many of its streets are unpaved and bordered by humble shops.

Oddly assorted vehicles clogged avenues and narrow streets—oxcarts; dilapidated Japanese three-wheeled cars and motorcycles; gaily painted buses drawn by gaunt horses; rickshas; flashy new American cars of high Korean officials; U. S. Army staff cars, jeeps, and trucks; and streetcars bursting beyond capacity with passengers hanging from the steps.

Traffic policemen, like those of Japanese cities, were as busy as ballet dancers. Their dramatic gesticulations looked like a ballet version of an American policeman directing traffic.

Seoul's male population wears mixed garb, part Western and part Oriental. In contrast are the women's dresses, their style unchanged for centuries. Those of older women are white, with embroidered velvet bonnets; younger women and girls have long high-waisted skirts and short bodices in pastel colors—pink, robin's-egg blue, and aquamarine. Many mothers carry babies slung on their backs in bright red and green quilts.

Here, too, are schoolboys in high-collared jackets and caps, children in bright-yellow

\* See "With the U. S. Army in Korea," by Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, June, 1947.





### Korean Armed Forces Parade in Seoul to Celebrate the Republic's First Birthday

Army and Coast Guard units swing along the wide avenue to the domed, Jap-built capital. Ceremonies recalled August 15, 1948, when U. S. Army officers transferred power to newly elected Korean officials (page 796).



and red dresses (page 804), and ragged coolies carrying tremendous loads on wooden racks strapped to their shoulders.

### Seoul Bursts into Bloom

During my first few days in Seoul the weather was still cold and the trees barren. A week later, as if by a sudden explosion, everything burst into bloom. Masses of yellow forsythia were succeeded by snow-white cherry blossoms.

The city has several fine parks, such as the Royal Gardens, Pagoda Park, and the capitol grounds, landscaped with ponds, pavilions, and centuries-old monuments. The temples show how Korean architecture has been influenced by the Chinese for more than a thousand years.

Fifty yards from my Quonset hut in a park was a sleepy pond where stood the ruins of an elegant octagonal-shaped pavilion in Korean-Chinese style.

Once settled, I reported for duty as adviser to the Geological Survey. I was well received by the director, Dr. Park Dong Kil, a learned, quiet gentleman who did his best, with the little means at his disposal, to facilitate my work in Korea. The Geological Survey had a personnel of about 50.

After the Japanese occupation at the beginning of the century, Japan realized that Korea could be an important source of materials in her plans for dominating the Far East.\* In 1919 the Geological Survey of Chosen (Korea) was organized. Laboratories and libraries were set up in a group of modern buildings overlooking the Han River five miles west of downtown Seoul.

Japanese geologists and engineers explored



Drawn by Theodora P. Thompson and Irvin E. Alleman

### A Nation-splitting Boundary Is Modern Korea's Tragedy

Potsdam Conference, in July, 1945, established the 38th parallel as the Korean boundary between U. S. and Russian forces. This political frontier cuts across villages, streams, and roads. Heavy industry is concentrated in North Korea, rich in minerals, timber, and hydroelectric power. The South, chiefly devoted to farming and fishing, is the food-producing half.

all Korea to locate and develop mineral deposits. Coal, copper, zinc, lead, graphite, and tungsten deposits were developed. The gold industry was heavily subsidized, and all Korea produced more than 27 metric tons of lode and placer gold a year in the period preceding World War II.

### Koreans Trained to Replace Japanese

To save foreign exchange, the Japanese worked the mines under the autocratic system used in other totalitarian countries, and pro-

\* See "Jap Rule in the Hermit Kingdom," by Willard Price, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, October, 1945.



duction costs were not taken into account. Many of these mines opened by the Japanese cannot operate profitably in a competitive world market.

During her 40-year occupation, Japan allowed few Koreans to hold important jobs. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, all Japanese in South Korea were sent back home. There was a shortage of trained technicians, foremen, and administrators to run the country. Whole corps have had to be trained.

Koreans are extremely intelligent and charming, but highly individualistic. I found them cooperative and efficient if allowances were made for the etiquette and procedure of the Far East. They are always afraid of losing face.

The worst mistake an American could make in dealing with them would be to criticize them in front of equals or subordinates. A Korean thus offended would never forget the insult.

#### 5,000,000 More Mouths to Feed

One of the country's biggest problems is overpopulation, without enough tillable land available for more crops. Before the war, Korea south of the 38th parallel had about 15,000,000 people—in an area roughly the size of Maine. There are more than 20,000,000 now. The big increase in less than ten years is due to the high birth rate and the influx of refugees and repatriates.

The American occupation forces did an excellent job in taking care of the refugees by checking and improving sanitation, by vaccination, controlling the drinking water, and conducting delousing campaigns. During my stay I heard of no serious epidemic of cholera, typhus, or other infectious disease. Ironically, however, these measures aggravated the problem of overpopulation!

Geographically, this peninsula country presents two contrasting faces.

The west coast has a partly submerged shore line with almost fjordlike bays and many islands. The waters of the Pacific Ocean rush into the Yellow Sea, causing high tides which fluctuate up to 25 feet and more, and have created broad tidal mud flats.

The east coast has a straight, steep shore line. Mountain slopes plunge precipitously to the sea or form narrow beaches. Here the water, instead of being muddy as on the west coast, is clear and ideal for swimming.

The contrasting east and west coast features indicate that Korea has been tilted down on the west and up on the east. As a result of this tilt, the principal drainage divide is parallel to the east shore and only about 15 miles inland.

Small, short streams descend abruptly to the Sea of Japan. Rivers reaching the Yellow Sea, however, meander tortuously through several chains of mountains.

#### Peering Past the Iron Curtain

I arrived in Korea two months before election of the new free government took place, on May 10, 1948, under United Nations supervision. Much to my satisfaction, I was made a civilian observer.

A temporary United Nations Mission for Korea, sent out in January that year, was refused permission by the Russians to investigate North Korea.

In the Southern Zone, the American Military Government gave all facilities to permit the Korean people to have a really free election. Two American civilian observers were sent to each *gun*, which corresponds to a county in the United States.

Before leaving Seoul, we had been given orders to refrain from interference in these elections in any way whatsoever. We were merely to observe and report any irregularities.

I was lucky in being assigned to one of the most scenic sections of Korea, the Kangwon Do. This *do*, or province, cut almost in half by the 38th parallel, is very mountainous and one of the few regions in South Korea which still have tracts of virgin forest.

We left Seoul in a convoy of jeeps and trucks and arrived the same evening in Chunchon, capital of the province, only eight miles from the Russian line. I had opportunity in the course of my stay to go to the 38th parallel, but I saw no Russians. The men I saw in the distance were probably Russian-trained North Korea soldiers.

#### Election Postponed Because of Eclipse

On May 7 I left Chunchon by jeep with a young GI driver from Alabama, a Korean interpreter, and two cases of Army C rations. We arrived late that evening at Pyongchang, a typical small Korean town, seat of the Pyongchang gun, where I joined another American civilian.

We slept in Korean fashion on the floor in the house of the district governor. Not being accustomed to sleeping with only a quilt over a straw mat, I found the first night rather hard on my bones.

The following morning I started early and inspected all the voting polls in the northern part of the gun. Every man was busy that day, helping set up voting places. For the first time in Korean history a free election was to take place, and everybody recognized the importance of the event.





### Feather Pompon on Swivel Button Gyrates Madly When a Korean Dances

Most of the year this man tills his rice fields, but in the off season he joins other farmers in performing old folk dances for community entertainment.

Many of these dance routines consist of complicated steps requiring skill and endurance. They go on for hours to the accompaniment of throbbing drums and clashing gongs.

The dancer's gold teeth, capped by a Japanese dentist, flash when he smiles. He wears the rainbow-hued banded sleeves favored for children's festival costumes, brides' gowns, and robes of professional women entertainers, known as *kisang*.

Korean *kisang* occupy a position like that of the Japanese geisha. Girls are trained from childhood in the art of entertainment. They learn to provide music, dancing, and pleasant conversation at parties and banquets attended by men, who leave their dutiful wives at home.

During the 40 years when Japan controlled the country, little effort was made to make the people more than servants of the Empire. Improvements were introduced only when they would serve Japan.

Though freed of Japanese rule, Korea remains a house divided, for separate governments exist on each side of the 38th parallel, the postwar boundary established when the American and Soviet forces drew up their zones of occupation.

During the occupation of South Korea, American Military Government officials served as advisers until Koreans were trained to conduct political affairs.

United States Military Government terminated in August, 1948, and the last of our occupying forces withdrew in June, 1949. However, the Republic retains an advisory military mission of some 500 persons to help train its security forces.





**Stars and Stripes and Hammer and Sickle Flank the Korean Emblem at Duk Soo Palace, Seoul**

Meetings held here by the U. S.-Soviet Joint Commission ended in stalemate. In 1948 the Republic of Korea was set up under auspices of the United Nations.



## Built for Japanese, Seoul City Hall Now Serves Koreans

The Republic's flag (right) embodies ancient symbols of the Orient. Its circular pattern, called *tae guk*, is made up of comma-like halves, one red, one blue. They represent the mythical *yang* and *yin* principles, familiar in ancient Chinese art and literature, which express the opposites in Nature—male and female, heaven and earth, fire and water, summer and winter, construction and destruction.

Trigrams in the four corners made up of broken and unbroken black lines likewise carry the idea of opposites and of balance. Three unbroken lines (upper left) stand for heaven; broken ones (lower right) represent earth. In the upper right, two solid lines with a broken line between (not shown) symbolize fire; the one diagonally opposite signifies water.

These trigrams have many supplementary meanings, and by some are taken to connote the unity of the Korean people.

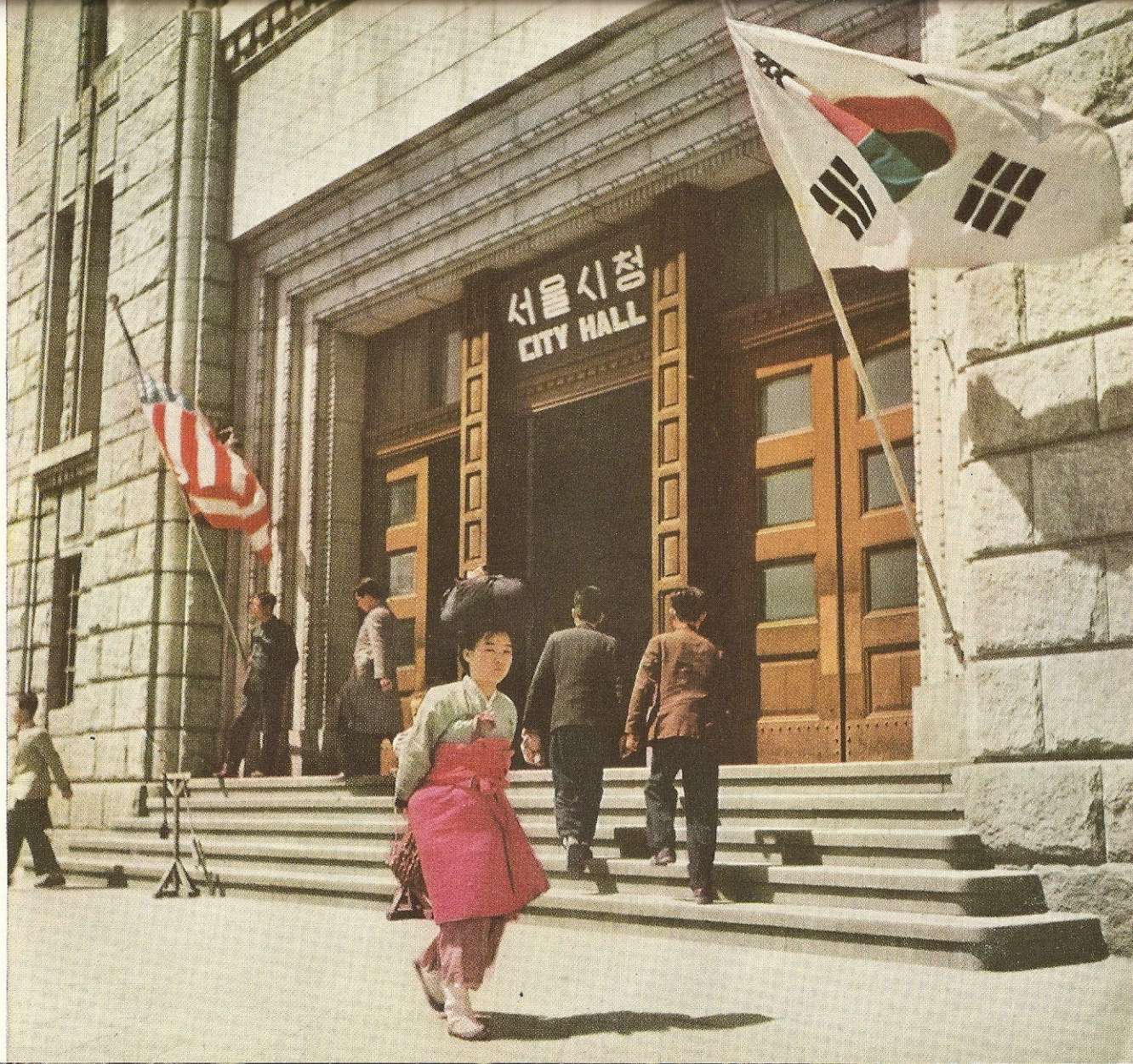
Korean words above the door are written in a phonetic alphabetical script, not in ideographic characters as in Chinese. The alphabet consists of fourteen consonants and eleven vowels.

Newspapers utilize a combination of both Chinese characters and the native language, but the Chinese ideographs are being eliminated.

Korean children are now being taught their own language, which was outlawed during Japanese rule.

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Anseo color by Arthur Reef







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Kodachrome by Rae Gilman

↑ **Husband Wears Western Garments;  
Wife Clings to Antique Dress**

This young couple walks the dusty country road because transportation is inadequate. They drink at a roadside well, Korea's refreshment stand. The woman's voluminous skirt is carried at armpit level and covered with a brief jacket.

↓ **Youngsters Bloom in Bright Silks  
for a New Year's Festival**

In some country districts the New Year is celebrated in late January or early February, in agreement with the old lunar calendar. These children (one melancholy boy in brown among seven girls) clutch candies, the photographer's gift for posing.

Kodachrome by James P. Lockard, Jr.







### Chanting Priest and Prostrate Woman Worship at White Buddha Shrine near Seoul

As he recites his prayer, the priest taps a rattle to attract the god's attention. The shrine has received a food offering (tray on shelf). Confucianism is Korea's most popular faith, though Buddhism appeals to many women.







## Headbands, Plumed Hats, and Bright Sashes Transform Farmers' Everyday Dress into Dance Costumes

Originating in ancient days as simple rites to celebrate festive occasions, some farm folk dances have grown into energetic routines through the addition of more complicated steps.

Some farmer-dancers have almost a professional status; and, when not busy caring for their crops, they travel in troupes from village to village, giving performances and competing against other teams.

At left, a drummer beats a rhythm on an hourglass-shaped long drum.

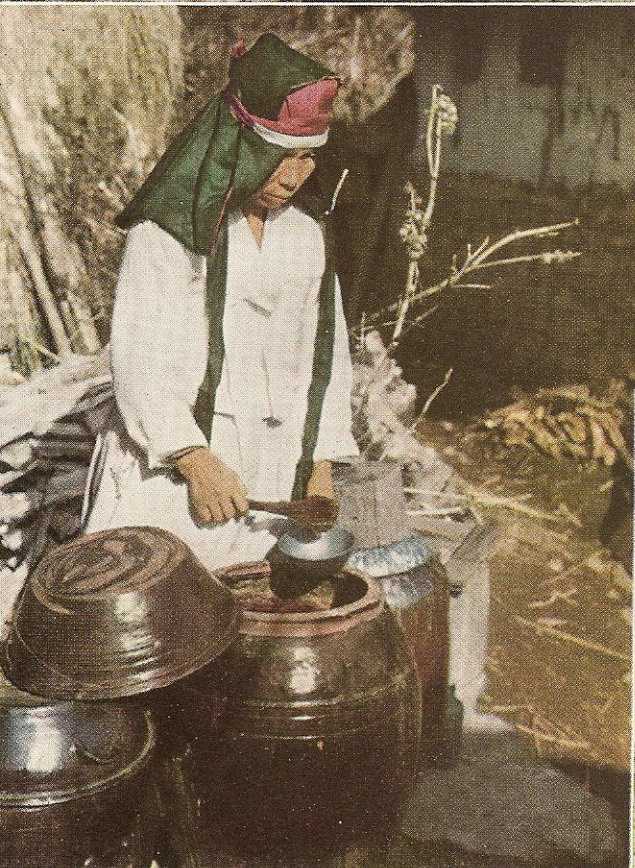
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Kodachromes by J. Tobin







### Strange to Western Eyes and Taste Are the Dishes Prepared by Korean Housewives

The girl spreads rice, dried fish, bean curd, sliced turnip, and the national dish called *kimchi*, a spicy mixture of cabbage flavored with garlic, ginger, red peppers, and broth. Women ladle soybean sauce (left) and rice.



On the morning of May 9, we were treated to an eclipse of the sun. In fact, the elections had been postponed one day because of that event.

Earlier I had visited the site near Chonan where an expedition, sponsored by the National Geographic Society, had been set up to observe the eclipse.\*

As we passed through a village, people were looking at the eclipse by watching the reflection in streams or pools. When I suggested that it would be much better to use smoked glass, the whole village went hunting for broken glass.

That day I visited a school and talked with the electoral committee about setting up the polls. When I came out, the American driver had disappeared with the jeep.

For a few minutes I was worried, but at length saw the jeep kicking up a swirling cloud of dust. The driver had been unable to resist the pleas of the village children to give them a ride. It was against Army rules to seat more than four people in a jeep, but in this I counted 17 youngsters, all having a marvelous time (page 792).

#### Communist Raider Killed at Polls

At 8 o'clock the following morning, May 10, the polls opened. I had to inspect about 25 voting places. Each was decorated with gay banners and Korean flags (page 783), and everybody, even the sick and the aged, turned out.

In front of each booth were photographs of the four candidates of the district with the corresponding symbols, I, II, III, IIII, like bars, placed above them. The ballots had four columns, each headed by a bar symbol, and the voter had only to mark a cross in the column that corresponded to his candidate (page 793).

Women not only were free to vote, but were encouraged to do so. However, there was a typical example of Korean compromise. Most polling places had special lines for women, and they were the first to vote. By 9 o'clock most of them had already gone back home to attend to domestic duties. The men voted at leisure until 5 p. m., when the polls closed.

We had been instructed to make sure that a secret voting space was provided, to see that the voting boxes were sealed, and also to report any fraudulent actions or disturbances at the polls.

The only serious incident in my gun that day was the reported shooting of a Communist by Korean police at Poll No. 42.

When I reached the spot, in a thick forest, several Korean policemen told me that the

Communist had just been buried. During the previous night a band of roving troublemakers had come south from the Russian Zone and clashed with a Korean patrol.

#### Whole Convent Turns Out to Vote

Returning from Poll No. 42, I saw a line of a dozen persons wearing white or gray robes walking the mountain road with their hands clasped as if in prayer. Because of their shaven heads, I first took them for men, but the interpreter informed me that they were Buddhist nuns. The Mother Superior was leading the whole convent to the polls!

Through my interpreter she asked if I would visit the nunnery near by and the Buddhist pagoda of Ohdea San.

This temple was a jewel of early Korean architecture. The setting was a large tract of forest of huge pines and spruces, large oaks and maples, starting to bud. There was a rushing stream with banks bordered by wild azaleas.

The Mother Superior told me that she wished the United States forces would stay in Korea. She said the beautiful religious properties and monasteries in the Russian Zone had been confiscated and the timber surrounding every Buddhist temple felled.

The Korean people on the whole are not highly religious. Buddhism, powerful up to the late 14th century, has lost much of its influence. Many of the better-class Koreans try to follow the rules set down by Confucius. Buddhism appeals more strongly to the female population, but is distorted by many superstitions (page 785).

The average Korean, excluding the Christians, believes in a mixture of spirit worship or animism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Spirits dwell in everything. One of the most important groups inhabits the mountains.

#### Sake Flows Freely at Korean Banquet

Much of our time was devoted to supervising the balloting at the county seat of Pyongchang, where a full 99 percent of the registrants voted.

After the election we were invited by the electoral committee to a Korean banquet. It was my initiation into real Korean hospitality. Some 30 of us sat on the mat-covered floor in a large room with no furniture except long, low tables about a foot high.

My interpreter explained that in Korea it was impolite to refuse a drink. If anybody in the party offered a guest his cup, the guest had to accept it.

\* See "Operation Eclipse: 1948," by William A. Kinney, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, March, 1949.





Robert A. Kinney

### Manpower, Yoked to a Rope Sling, Moves Rocks to Build a Mountain Railroad

Chanting as they work, two-man teams carry boulders up to 600 pounds in this way. At left, Dr. Edgar A. J. Johnson, Director of ECA's Korea Program, watches one of the native "bulldozers" in operation. Built with ECA funds, the single-track road links an isolated east-coast mining area to the rest of South Korea through rugged country (page 777).

As all members of the committee began offering me their cups, I realized I should have to drink at least 30 cups of strong warm *sake* (rice brandy).

Fortunately I got a timely tip from one of the *kisang* girls, professional entertainers corresponding to Japanese geisha girls. I saw her touch her lips to the cup and dump the rest into a big can, used as an ash tray, hidden under the table. I followed her example!

### How a Korean Farmer Lives

A few days later I visited the Sangdong tungsten mine, one of the most important deposits of this material in the world.

When the Japanese-built mill is reconditioned and new equipment is installed, the mine will provide Korea with a sizable source of foreign exchange through export of tungsten concentrates.

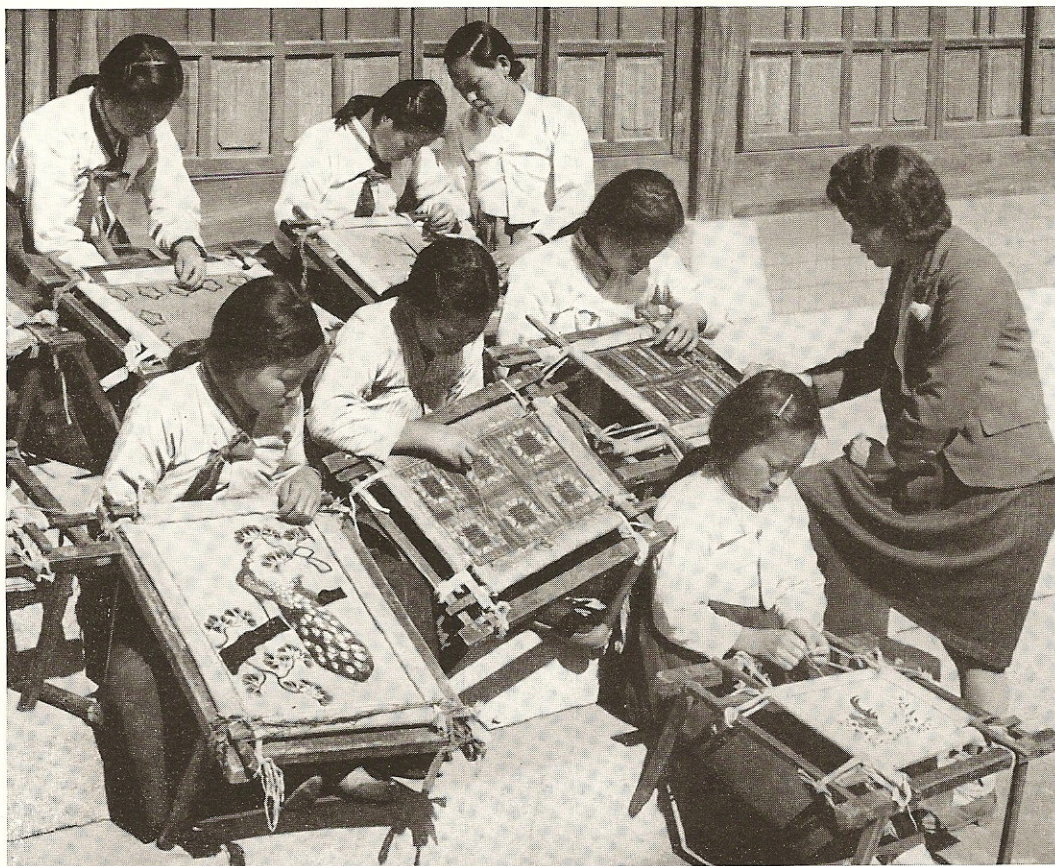
Traveling in a jeep, I stopped with my interpreter and Korean driver to eat our lunch near a sparkling mountain creek. Nowhere can a foreigner stop on a Korean road without being surrounded in a few seconds by dozens of children and later by staring adults.

A kindly middle-aged man invited us to his farmhouse to have our rations warmed up and to enjoy protection from the chill air of early spring. I accepted, partly to see how a peasant of this area lives.

My host was a fairly prosperous farmer living in a rugged, not too overpopulated, district. Unlike many sections of Korea, this area still has plenty of timber and wood for heating. As a rule, wood is extremely scarce, and every twig and leaf is used, either for heating or for making compost.

The farm had about ten acres of beautifully terraced rice fields, following the contours of the valley bottom. Every flat space of ground





U. S. Army, Official

### Bowed Heads and Deft Fingers Concentrate on 4-H Club Needlework

American Military Government planted the 4-H clover-leaf symbol in South Korea in 1946. By latest count, Kyonggi Province, where this picture was taken, has more than 24,000 boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20 in its clubs. Contrary to Oriental custom, girls take a prominent part in the activities.

was under cultivation. It was the season when rice was being transplanted from seedling beds into flooded fields previously tilled with a primitive wooden plow and harrow pulled by a placid-looking bullock (pages 786, 800).

Soybeans, hemp, wheat, barley, and a variety of vegetables were cultivated in dry fields.

More than three-fourths of the population of South Korea is engaged in farming, and a farmer is virtually self-sufficient. In contrast to the urban population, he has no worries over food rationing and shortage of power.

The farmer raises his own food, and his womenfolk spin and weave cotton, silk, and hemp. Almost every village has a potter and a blacksmith. Protein is provided by soybean products, chickens, eggs, fish caught in the river, and a little game trapped in the woods. The farmer barter some of his products for dried and salted sea fish, matches, canoe-shaped rubber shoes, and tobacco (page 799).

His biggest need, of course, is fertilizer for his crops. Formerly, much of it was supplied from the North; with that source cut off, fertilizers must be imported from abroad. Temporarily, American aid has eased this urgent need, but the Republic is exploring ways to provide the bulk of its own requirements.

In most homes women and men have separate quarters, divided by a courtyard. The courtyard of this farm home was filled with tall jars of a wonderful brown luster. They are used especially to store pickled cabbage, a highly seasoned dish called *kimchi*, eaten at every meal (page 798).

The large sliding doors were covered with strong translucent paper to admit light. Glass in windows is virtually unknown in rural Korea. Extremely bare, the floors were covered only with springy matting or shiny oiled paper. Against the walls were beautiful old lacquered chests inlaid with mother-of-pearl and equipped with heavy brass hinges and





Enzo de Chetelat

### GI Joe Takes 17 Korean Youngsters for a Ride—All at Once!

Begging for a ride, the small fry besieged the driver while he waited for the author outside a village schoolhouse. When he said "O. K.," they quickly swarmed over the jeep, squeezing into every inch of space. Here, after their whirl up the dusty main street and back, they pose with driver and interpreters.



Acme

### GI's Are Gone Now, but Latitude 38 Still Divides Korea

When the U. S. and Russia failed to agree on an all-Korea government, the U. S. sponsored an election in the South and transferred its power to elected natives. Russians set up their own régime in the North. More than 20,000,000 people crowd the Maine-size South; North's population is about half as large.

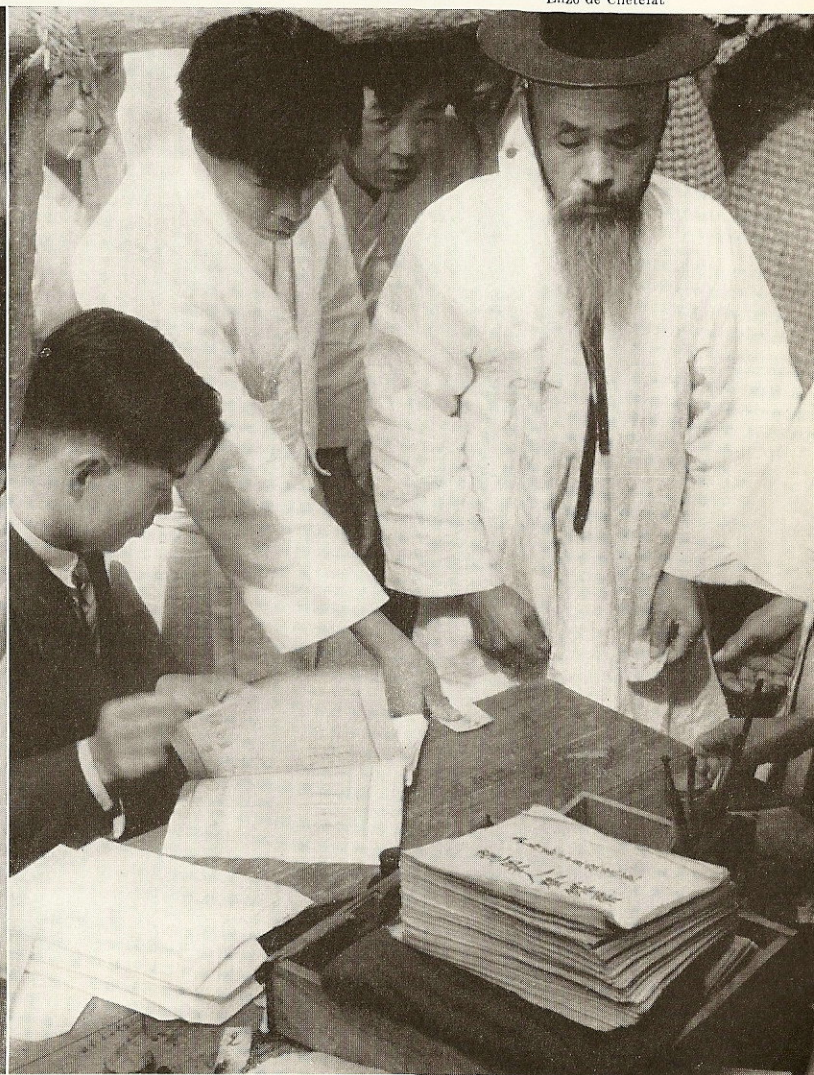


May 10, 1948: South Koreans Flock to the Polls for the First Free Election in Their Country's History

More than 92 percent of the registered voters cast ballots. Posted outside the village polling place at left are the likenesses of local candidates. Bars above the pictures, reproduced on ballots, aided illiterate voters. Right, a voter "signs" the election list with his thumb print before entering the secret booth. Women were encouraged to vote; most did so during the first hour. The author acted as an election observer in mountainous Kangwon Province (pages 780, 789).

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Enzo de Chetelat







U. S. Army, Official

### Lining the Dock at Inchon, Soldier-Husbands Eagerly Await Their "VIP's" from the States

The officers are members of the U. S. Korean Military Advisory Group, which helps train the Republic of Korea's security forces. They are gathered to greet their families—"Very Important Persons" indeed—arriving on an Army transport. Inchon, on Korea's indented west coast, is the port for Seoul, the capital.

locks. In them were kept the holiday dresses and family heirlooms.

#### Koreans in Mourning Wear White

We found our genial farmer's family dressed in cotton or stiff hemp cloth of white, the traditional color of mourning in Korea. An uncle had died the preceding year. Since white is worn for three years for close relatives, Korean families are in mourning much of the time.

The aged grandfather of the family was wearing an old-style horsehair hat. This hat consists of three parts: a bonnet made of horsehair net, worn all the time; a high horsehair hat, similar to a Welsh woman's head-dress, perched atop the bonnet when out of doors; and a conical oiled-paper overcap for use in wet weather.

The old gentleman was smoking a yard-long pipe with a tiny brass bowl—just enough for a few puffs. When I gave him a cigarette, he tore the paper off and smoked the tobacco in

his pipe. The one cigarette made three fillings.

The menfolk were dressed in white pantaloons and a short vest worn over a balloon-sleeved shirt. The women wore white high-waisted skirts much shorter than those I had seen in the town, and small narrow bodices which only partly concealed their breasts. Naked youngsters played in the courtyard or in the irrigation ditch near by.

The women brought our warmed rations and Korean dishes on low tables, bowed deeply, and disappeared. Peasant women never associate with men not of their own family.

#### Into Korea's Coal Country

One of my field trips was to study the geology of the Samchok anthracite basin near the coast of the Sea of Japan. This basin is the largest producer of coal in South Korea. Much of the fuel is a poor anthracite and hard to burn unless mixed with bituminous coal, but its use reduces imports of other fuels.



During its peak wartime year under Japanese operation, this mine had an output of more than 830,000 tons, roughly three-fifths of all the anthracite and lignite mined in South Korea. In this past year its production has been brought back to one-half of its peak level. With the assistance of our Economic Cooperation Administration, plans are being made for the installation of new crushing and grading equipment to remove waste material here at the source to cut transportation costs.

Coal from here is used to fire the near-by Yongwol power plant, largest single source of electricity in South Korea since the Russians, on May 14, 1948, pulled the switches and shut off two-thirds of the power South Korea normally uses (page 808).

En route to the mine, my Korean driver, unfamiliar with the road, missed a detour around a washed-out bridge. Fortunately, by swerving we landed in the embankment instead of the river. Although there were a village and several farmhouses near by, no one had bothered to put up a warning sign.

We wasted several hours before a Korean truck pulled us out of the hole. Since we could not reach the mine that evening, we stopped near Chechon at a native inn famous for its hot springs.

I eagerly availed myself of the luxury of a hot bath. Returning to my room along a veranda, I could not help seeing into three rooms where Korean parties were going full blast. They had all varieties of food, American and Korean whisky, beer, and kisan girls singing and dancing. I took for granted that the hosts were of some prominence.

To my astonishment, my interpreter told me that the "big men" were Korean truck drivers spending the night on the long haul from Seoul to Pusan. He explained that the truck drivers and big black-market operators were the only people in Korea who really were "in the money" at that time.

I was not surprised. Train schedules then were limited and bus service infrequent. Truck drivers thus could charge good prices for carrying innumerable passengers on top of their loads, a practice apparently tolerated by their employers.

#### **Inflation Hard on Government Workers**

In Korea I found the same inflation pattern that I had observed earlier in North Africa, France, and Italy. Inflation here is not so serious as in China, but uncontrolled prices, in terms of *won*, the local currency, have increased a thousandfold in less than ten years.

In the middle of 1948 the purchasing power

of the *won* corresponded to more than 600 to a dollar, though the official rate of exchange was 50 *won* to a dollar. Few dollars, I was told, were exchanged at the legal rate. Private transactions between Americans and Koreans were generally based on cigarettes, soap, candy bars, whisky, and beer.

Although illegal, such transactions helped a lot of refugees, especially women and children, make a living. Hawkers profited a few hundred *won* a day by selling these black-market goods openly in the street.

Some inflation still exists. The official rate has since been raised to 900 *won* to the dollar, and unofficial transactions go on at a rate as high as 3,500 to 1.

Another effect of inflation, since corrected to some degree, was the plight of people with fixed incomes. This was especially true of Korean Government employees. Taking into account the basic food purchased at controlled prices, a man's salary often had a purchasing power insufficient to feed a family, even by Far Eastern standards.

How some of the Government employees subsisted was a mystery to me. Apparently some accepted bribes, some dug into capital, some held several jobs, while others were probably just starving. I saw several instances of serious underfeeding among the geologists and surveyors employed by the Geological Survey. They were either too honest or too proud to go in for bribes or the black market.

#### **Bride's Face Masked with White Powder**

In my many wanderings through South Korea I visited the town of Wonju. My host was a young United States Army lieutenant who was adviser to a Korean constabulary regiment. He had been invited to the wedding ceremony and banquet of a young Korean officer, and he took me along.

It was a typical upper-class marriage, which followed many old customs but was influenced by the newer Western ideas. As a concession to these ideas, the bridegroom had known the bride socially for a long time.

The bride wore a beautiful silk costume consisting of a bright-red skirt and green blouse, with bands of yellow and red on the big flowing sleeves. Her face was heavily masked with a thick white powder. Her shiny hair was topped by a multicolored beaded crown. Long, flowing, jewel-studded ribbons hung down her back. The blank expression on her face never changed throughout the elaborate ceremony.

Instead of the fancy Korean costume which is usual for the man, the bridegroom wore a new American-made uniform.

After the rites the bride disappeared with



the female members of the family, and I never saw her again. We followed the bridegroom to his quarters, where we joined in a banquet for men only.

In keeping with old custom, which varies now and then, the bridegroom stays with his bride for three days in his father-in-law's house before returning with her to his own parents' house.

Real manhood begins only after marriage. Even if he is 70, a bachelor's opinion has little influence! Because of the belief in Confucianism and spirit worship, the Korean's aim in life is to have as many children as possible, especially boys, so that the family will continue and his descendants will worship his spirit.

This practice, however, can cause hardships. A well-educated friend of mine in Seoul had been compelled by his family to marry at 19, since he was an only son. At 22, besides a wife and two children to support, his family included a mother, grandfather, grandmother, and great-uncle—none of whom was a breadwinner.

My friend was a Government employee, and his upbringing prevented him from doing manual work, which would have brought better wages. The family had made ends meet only by selling heirlooms and by extra money or food the husband got as interpreter and middleman for the GI's. He looked grimly into the future, and his outlook on life was that of an old man.

#### Communists Short-circuit Power Line

During my sojourn in Korea there were, paradoxically, few Communist disturbances near the border between North and South Korea. But Communist agents and troublemakers were busy on the island of Cheju and in the southern Province of Cholla.

While I was at the Hwasun coal mine near Kwangju one afternoon, the American adviser told me that Communist trouble was expected that night.

After sundown his Japanese-built house was crowded with the Korean manager's and assistant manager's families, who felt safer in an American billet because, from what I heard, the Communist policy at the time avoided as far as possible harming American citizens.

Suddenly the lights went out. Communists had thrown a chain across the high-tension power line. We passed part of the night on watch with our carbines handy.

I was given the task of watching the side of a hill close to the house. It was late June and I could see faint lights on the hillside. One excitable member of our group was cer-

tain that they were glowing cigarettes smoked by Communists while waiting for a general attack.

But the lights were only fireflies! Reassured of this, everybody felt much better, and I went to sleep. Throughout the night there was some shooting in the vicinity between Communists and Korean police.

#### August 15 Korean Independence Day

By the beginning of July, 1948, the duties and activities of the U. S. Military Government were gradually being transferred to the Korean administration. Formal proclamation of Korean independence was set for August 15.

Throughout the week prior to that promised day, Seoul became busier than usual. Crews feverishly repaired the pavements of the main avenues; others were building colorful arches of triumph with big signs in both Korean and English, "Long Live the Republic of Korea," and "Welcome General MacArthur."

Fortunately, the big day was beautiful and sunny, though very hot. By early morning the capital was in a turmoil, and long lines of school children, youth organizations, and clubs prepared for the parade. Orchestras and bands, both Korean and Western, played gay tunes. Flags and banners decorated every building (page 778).

The main avenue leading to the capitol was lined with constables and impressive mounted police carrying red fanions. A dense crowd representing a cross section of all Korean classes of society jammed into the spacious court of the capitol and lined the avenue leading to it.

By 11 o'clock the platform which had been especially erected for this occasion was filled with the high officials of the new Korean Government, headed by President Syngman Rhee; Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge, the commanding general, and his staff; the United Nations Mission; and accredited consuls. I did not see any Russian uniforms. White jeeps driven by American MP's were constantly patrolling the avenues.

Half an hour later an impressive parade of armored cars, staff cars, and jeeps approached the capitol. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, accompanied by Mrs. MacArthur, stepped briskly out of a staff car and mounted the podium. Wild applause greeted the speeches of President Rhee, General Hodge, and General MacArthur.

After 1 p.m., General MacArthur left Seoul for the airport and returned to Japan. The rest of the day the Korean crowd paraded the streets. Artistic and often humorous floats





### Women Reel Shimmering Threads from the Silken Chambers of Insects

Korea, like China, has raised silkworms for centuries. Japanese learned the sericulture art from Koreans. During the Japanese occupation the Korean industry was stimulated to maintain Japan's dominance in the world silk market.

Much of Korea's silk is the product of home industry, though some power-driven filatures have been built for reeling silk.

Growing silkworms feed on fresh mulberry leaves. Some Korean mulberry trees grow wild, but most are hand-planted. Groves cover hillsides unsuitable to rice cultivation.

Voracious eaters, silkworm larvae mature in about six weeks. They develop two glands containing a clear, viscous fluid. This material, when ejected through orifices on the worm's lower lip, dries into a continuous twin filament immediately upon exposure. In such fashion the larva spins its cocoon upon entering the pupal stage of its transformation into an adult moth.

Silkworms shrink rapidly as they spin the filaments about their bodies. Completed cocoons, such as those seen in the basket, are about one and one-half inches long, whereas the larvae may measure three inches.

The raw cocoon is exposed to steam or hot air to destroy the living pupa. After drying it is scalded to permit unreeling.

A single cocoon may yield 400 to 1,000 yards of filament. Single strands are so delicate that customarily several cocoons are unwound together.

Some 2,000 to 3,000 cocoons are required to produce a pound of silk.

The number of silk crops produced in a year depends upon climate. In some countries production is almost continuous. Korea grows three crops—in spring, summer, and autumn. The earliest of these gives the best yield.

Many of Korea's gaily colored festival costumes, wedding clothes, and women's blouses are silk. Everyday dress is cotton. White, traditionally the color of mourning, predominates.

Numerous ancient customs survive in this Land of Morning Calm. Many are the outgrowth of the people's belief in animism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.



## Farm Children Dress in Silks and Smiles for a Festival

Like most homes in rural Korea, this house is roofed with thick thatch carefully bound down to resist destruction by the wind. Mud-covered walls are whitewashed; doors are covered with paper.

This view shows the summer section. Its floor is raised a foot above ground to afford ventilation.

The winter section has flues in earthen floors through which air from a primitive furnace circulates beneath the rooms—a mode of heating now being explored by some Western architects.

Grain and soybean sauce are stored in the large earthenware jars (left). The blackened pit (lower right) is the mouth of an earthen oven.

These children, seen near Taegu, celebrate birthdays, pilgrimage days, kite-flying competitions, and the New Year, depending on the season. Two boys on the narrow porch hurry to dress up and join girls in the courtyard.



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Ektachrome by Horace Bristol



### Like Drying Laundry, Korean Tobacco Cures on Rope Lines

Tobacco is a Korean Government monopoly.

Although production was increased under the Japanese regime, Koreans had less tobacco for their own enjoyment, for Japan exported a large quantity to bolster her own economy.

Since the war, Korea has produced 8,900 to 13,700 metric tons a year.

Everywhere the traveler sees older Koreans smoking long-stemmed pipes with bowls so tiny that they hold tobacco enough for only a few puffs. Young moderns prefer cigarettes.

This grass-thatched roof supports sprawling gourd vines and drying red peppers. The latter will spice the family *kimchi* (page 788).

Walls of bamboo and wattle are smeared with mud.

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Kodachrome by Horace Bristol

**Man and Ox Ankle-deep in a Puree of Mud Harrow a Rice Field. Spring Planting Gets Under Way North of Seoul**

Stooped figures in the distance pull seedlings from a green bed; other workers transplant them at left. Every bit of work is done by hand.



## Soggy Pulp of Used Newspapers Is Washed in Streams, Rolled into Sheets, and Dried Against Walls for New Editions

South Korea has an acute shortage of paper owing to the lack of wood pulp and power. These commodities normally come from industrial North Korea in exchange for food. Political differences have shut off virtually all trade between the South and the Communist-dominated North.

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Kodachromes by Rae Gilman







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Ektachrome by Horace Bristol

**The Han, Though Less than 250 Miles Long, Becomes a Lordly River as It Sweeps Past Flatlands near Seoul**  
Small craft and flat-bottomed junks sail nearly two-thirds the river's length. Here raftsmen guide a log shipment downstream from the mountains.



## Heavy Rains on Denuded Mountains Often Turn Korean Rivers into Bridge-shattering Torrents

These men, rebuilding a frail structure near Chungju, bind timbers with ropes. They will pave the trestle with twigs and earth.

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Anseo color by Horace Bristol







### Babies Ride the Rumble Seat When Mothers Shop for Groceries in Seoul

School-age girls wear long full skirts and short jackets fashioned in the same style as their mothers'. Small boys, off to school, carry books and pencils in knapsacks on their backs.



and big paper dragons were mounted on trucks and horse-drawn carts. Every Korean face shone with pride and happiness. Korea had again become a sovereign nation.

In the afternoon President Rhee held a reception at the former residence of the Japanese governor general, which had also been used as living quarters by General Hodge. White-robed Dr. Rhee, and Mrs. Rhee, a charming Viennese woman in Korean dress, graciously greeted the long line of Korean officials and Americans.

### Flood Damages a Lignite Mine

At the end of August I was sent to Kyongsang Pukto and Kyongsang Namdo, two large Provinces in the southeast, with instructions to investigate the bottleneck at the lignite mines there. Gasoline and power shortages had substantially reduced their output.

On this trip I visited the town of Kyongju, capital of the old kingdom of Silla. This kingdom reached a high civilization in the early Christian era. Many ruins of this civilization are found in and about the town. I was especially impressed by the huge mound tombs for kings and princes, now covered with twisted pines.

The temple of Sukka Yurai is simple, with pure lines and arches made of huge blocks of granite set without mortar. There is also a large subterranean room roofed with a cupola made of granite blocks. This room was formerly used for the storage of ice. Near these monuments stand the well-preserved remains of a tower which was used as an observatory.

Rain had been falling constantly for two days when we arrived in the evening at the Yongil lignite mine in a flat valley five miles from the Sea of Japan. All night rain beat a deafening tattoo on the tin roof.

The next morning I looked out the paper window and saw that the near-by stream was almost flush with its protecting dike. Tree trunks, roots, and sometimes cows and hogs were floating by.

Realizing the flood danger, I asked the mine manager if it would not be wise to move my things. He seemed a little annoyed at my anxiety and suggested that we first have breakfast. However, I persuaded him to have my sleeping bag and suitcase put in my truck.

Later we went to the assistant manager's house for a substantial Korean breakfast. *In the middle of the meal scared women, children, and dogs came scurrying through the dining room. The dike had broken and flooded the kitchen.*

The men rushed out to patch up the broken dike with sandbags. Unsuccessful in this at-

tempt, we waded waist-deep through the strong current to high ground.

We got in our cars and drove to the near-by port of Kuryongpori. Only a few minutes after we crossed a bridge over the irrigation canal it was swept away. At the mine nobody was drowned, but extensive damage was done to the mine itself, with considerable loss of personal property. In the upper valley, unfortunately, four people were drowned.

At the port of Kuryongpori we saw fishermen pulling their craft out of the water to high ground. A typhoon was coming from the south, but by the time it struck Kuryongpori it had lost most of its strength. A few roofs were blown off; there was little other damage.

I found myself blocked for four days in this attractive corner of South Korea until the flood subsided. There was no decent inn in the place, but through Mr. Kim, the mine manager, I was invited to the home of a dried-fish trader and agent for the salt monopoly.

Fishing is an important industry here. Sardines, herring, tunas, flounders, cod, shrimps, crabs, anchovies, abalones, and huge mussels are a few of the many fish and sea foods that abound along this coast. The meat of the abalone makes fine eating, and the beautiful shells are used by the Koreans in inlaid lacquer work.

### Eager Buyers Snap Up Whales

Whaling is also important. Koreans are fond of whale meat, which looks like beef.

A few months before, I had seen a 25-foot whale caught near the port of Pohang. Twenty minutes after it was pulled in to the dock the whale was practically gone. Buyers were snapping at the chance of having fresh meat at an advantageous price.

During my four days in Kuryongpori I examined some interesting outcrops of lignite, did some oil painting, and went swimming with my Korean friends. We took food, drinks, and watermelons to the splendid beaches.

On the fifth day scouts sent on foot by Mr. Kim brought word that the rivers and creeks again were low enough, but bridges and sections of the road were washed out.

Fortunately, our Army three-quarter-ton truck with a winch in front was an ideal vehicle for use on such unpredictable roads. It took us seven hours to make the 15 miles from Kuryongpori to Pohang. Often we had to follow the river bed to avoid huge boulders and soft sandy spots.

Using front-wheel drive and the winch, we managed to get out of the river bed onto the undamaged sections of the road. It was a real relief finally to get back to the provincial





U. S. Army, Official

### Budding Artists Draw American Scenes as Young Koreans Study the U. S. A.

American magazines, teacher-explained, are the chief texts on the subject. Murals show the National Capitol, Manhattan skyscrapers, and, possibly, the Tree that Grows in Brooklyn. The students are fifth-graders in an experimental teacher-training school in Seoul.

highway. A few bridges had been washed out, but traffic had already been resumed.

One Sunday I was invited by a Korean friend living in Ulsan to go on a picnic. Koreans love to spend the day in a cool wooded spot, eating and drinking.

We arrived by truck at the foot of the mountain in the early afternoon and climbed through a beautiful wooded section to a Buddhist temple. The path was lined with piles of small stones placed by pilgrims to appease malevolent spirits of woods and mountain.

### Kisang Girls Sing at a Picnic

After half an hour of steep walking, we arrived at a quaint old Buddhist shrine attended by a monk and half a dozen acolytes. On the veranda of a small pavilion at the side of the shrine, the wife of my host with her maids was already preparing food which they had brought up an hour before. Also four kisang girls from Ulsan were there waiting.

The party consisted of seven men. First came the Korean meal and usual routine of toasts. Later the kisang entertainers sang melodious old Korean folk songs, accompanying themselves on the typical Korean gongs and hourglass-shaped drums.

Koreans are musical people, and their music, although influenced by the Chinese, is not so harsh as that of the Chinese or Japanese. Community singing is popular. Every American who has been in Korea knows the *Arirang*, a sad, melodious, romantic love song.

Korean orchestras play not only their native tunes but many Western airs. In the latter they have an excellent sense of the melody, but not of the rhythm.

The Korean folk dances are highly symbolic and not always easy for a Westerner to follow (pages 781, 787).

We left before midnight, walking back down the trail lighted by a faint moon, singing and listening to crickets and night birds.



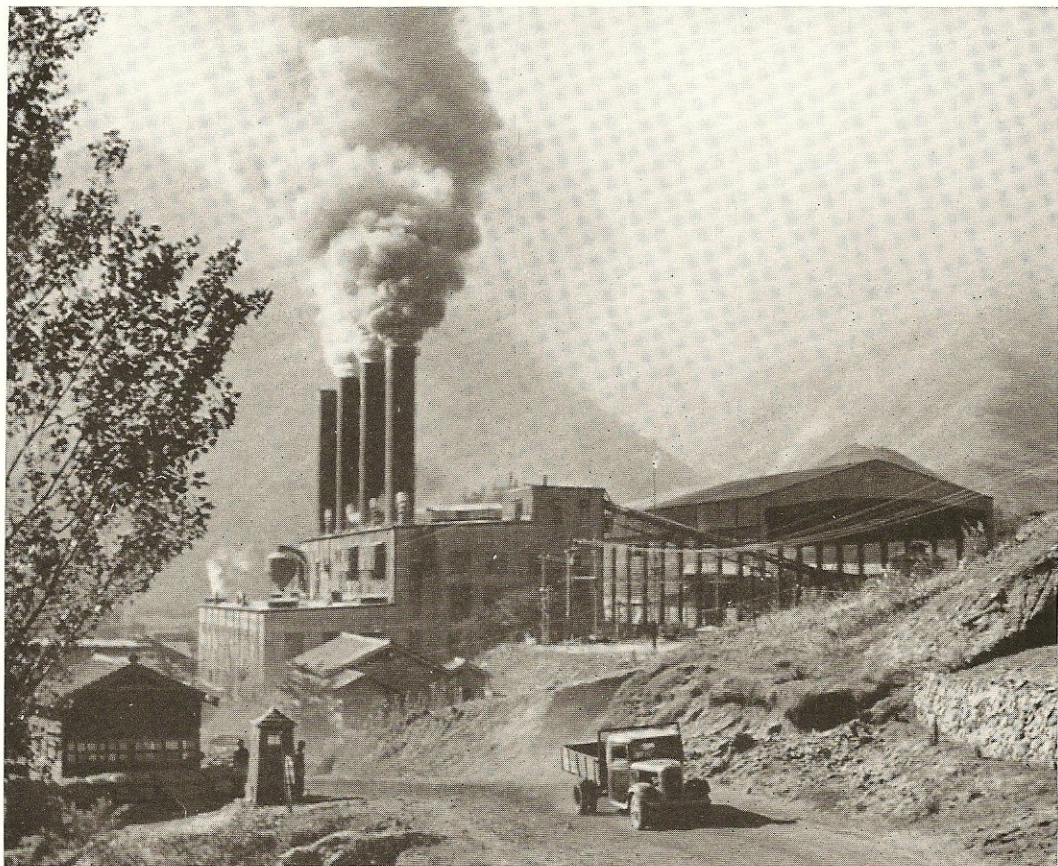


J. L. Kaukonen

### Necks Crane as Seoul, in Holiday Mood, Chooses a Harvest Festival "Swing Queen"

The swinger, starting from a standstill, "pumps" frantically to reach the rope stretched high between poles in the background. For greater safety her feet are strapped to the swing. Flag-decked supports tower 60 feet. Swinging is almost a national sport with Korean women; men seldom participate.





ECA

### Belching Smoke, Yongwol Feeds Power-hungry South Korea

Until the Soviets cut it off in May, 1948, two-thirds of the South's electricity came from big Jap-built hydro installations in North Korea. Now Yongwol is the South's largest power source (page 795). ECA plans vital new hydro and steam plants. Some 45 percent of Korea's low-grade coal is ash; it goes up the chimney in smoke. New equipment at the mines will remove the ash, improve the coal.

When the time came for me to leave the country, I found out how precious a prize is an American automobile.

A month after my arrival I bought a car from a colonel who was returning to the States. For his 1939 Hudson I paid \$680.

As soon as it became known that I was leaving, Koreans in Seoul clamored to buy my car. They offered from \$1,200 to \$2,500.

I told them that according to Army regulations my car could be sold only through the Provost Marshal to Americans and at a price not higher than I had paid.

To a man who was particularly insistent, I added that I could not make out a bill of sale if I sold the car to him and that he could be thrown into jail if the police found it in his possession.

"Don't worry," he answered. "The day before you leave Korea, you declare that your car has been stolen. By that time it will be

over the 38th parallel, and no one on this side will see it again."

Naturally I declined, and I got my money back by selling the car to an American friend. Later I was told that it could bring the equivalent of \$5,000 in the Russian Zone.

During the months I spent in South Korea, hundreds of cars, jeeps, and trucks were stolen. Many, however, were recovered by American MP's or Korean police. An automobile not carefully watched was the prey of organized bands of thieves who stripped it of headlights, tires, and all movable equipment if unable to drive it away.

All in all, there never was a dull moment in this "Land of Morning Calm." \*

\* See "Chosen—Land of Morning Calm," by Mabel Craft Deering, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, October, 1933. For additional articles on Korea, see "NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE Cumulative Index, 1899-1949."